

TO: Mayor Jeff Lehman

FROM: Leonard Luthe, Intern

TOPIC: Neighbourhood Matching Grant

DATE: September 28, 2012

This memorandum is with regard to a possible Neighbourhood Matching Grant in the City of Barrie; to strengthen the ties within the community, beautify the neighbourhoods and improve community involvement

Many cities throughout North America have implemented and seen the benefit of such grant programs. This Community Matching Grant program would provide neighborhood groups with matched City funds for community-driven projects that enhance and strengthen their neighbourhood.

The City of Seattle has been leading the way on these types of community based initiatives. Introduced in 1988, the City of Seattle has had great success administering the "Neighborhood Matching Fund Program", and has inspired many other communities in North America to replicate this program. This fund was created to provide neighborhood groups with City resources for community-driven projects that enhance and strengthen their own neighborhoods. All projects are initiated, planned and implemented by community members in partnership with the City. The City of Seattle was awarded the *Innovations in American Government Award* by the Harvard Kennedy School in 1991 for this program, noting that "the Fund quickly developed a citywide reputation as a resource to address a set of pervasive neighborhood problems, which could not be adequately resolved without the collaboration of the City and neighborhoods". Since 1988, the Fund has awarded more than \$49 million to more than 4,000 projects throughout Seattle, generated an additional \$72 million of community match, and engaged more than 86,000 volunteers who have donated over 574,000 hours. In a series of interviews with Seattle city officials, the program was said to dramatically increase the number of citizens active in their communities, help develop better relationships between citizens and city staff, bring more resources to underserved neighbourhoods and help Neighbourhood Associations take a more active role in bettering their own community.

Sixteen programs throughout North America were reviewed and eight were comparable with respect to size and program intent. Allocation systems are not consistent and differ significantly. Similarities were found in allocation and eligibility criteria. More than half of the comparable eight cities require *documented*

neighbourhood support, benefits to the neighbourhood and the involvement and empowerment of the members of the neighbourhood.

The consistent applied matching scheme is a 1:1 match. Four out of eight cities match up to \$5,000 per project as their cap. The resident match sometimes does exceed what City funding they are applying for, thus larger scale projects with large budgets larger are more likely to be completed. Total budgets for this type of grant program ranged between \$15,000 and \$50,000 for comparably sized cities.

Phone interviews were held with program coordinators of several cities that have already introduced a comparable program. Of these interviews, two were especially informative and relevant: Abbotsford, BC, that started a pilot-program this year, and London, ON, that has for three years successfully administered this program.

The Community Developer of the City of Abbotsford, BC shared her experiences. In order to spread the word about the program, meetings with citizens were held to advise of what types of projects would be suitable and she has very satisfied with the response to and the success of the program. Ten significant projects were realized during this pilot year.

The City of Abbotsford introduced the neighbourhood matching fund to the community through a neighbourhood contest. The *Neighbourhood Spirit* Contest offered prizes and promoted the matching grant as an opportunity to finance projects entering the competition. The program was very well received and the projects were successful, positive initiatives.

Events and beautification projects were in most demand and the funds allocated originated from the crime prevention fund. The majority of the neighbourhood match was through volunteer work. The City of Abbotsford administers the fund by granting half of the amount and holds back the second half until project completion. The Community Developer is not involved in the funding process in order to maintain an unbiased relationship.

The Neighbourhood Coordinator of the City of London, ON, shared valuable insight into their program. Two committees (feasibility and allocation) review and evaluate applications. She expressed overall satisfaction with the response to the program and considered the results they saw from the program to be "wonderful".

Events and environmental projects usually generate most demand and projects have to be resident-led, although a partner organization with a charitable number is required. This requirement provides improved accountability and tracking of funds, as well as a positive way for organizations and neighbourhoods to

get involved in community building projects together. Eligible events have to be neighbourhood specific and not pre-existing. In the majority of cases, the neighbourhood match is volunteer work. At times, partial amounts are granted and the Neighbourhood Coordinator provides help to applicants to reduce costs. Granted funds are disbursed to the organizations, not to the individual neighbour. The City of London takes over maintenance should a project be on public grounds.

Flyers, posters and emails were used to promote the program, but the Neighbourhood Coordinator is still searching for a best practice and promotion at local events is planned. The application deadline was considered very important for administration and marketing reasons.

Also, the Neighbourhood Coordinator shared two great examples of projects: A private landlord allowed a church to build a garden and the food grown is donated to those in need; a public school and an environmental organization created birdhouses to attract a certain species of birds to the City. These are both excellent opportunities to build a stronger, more connected community.

What is the “Council’s Community Matching Fund”?

The program provides neighbourhood groups and associations with resources for community-driven projects that enhance and strengthen their own neighbourhoods. The city will match the in-kind donations (monetary donations, donated materials, volunteer work, and donated professional services) from the community up to a total of \$5,000 per project.

There are two types of available grants: small projects and large projects.

	Small projects	Large projects
Awards	Up to \$1,000	Up to \$5,000
Application Deadline	Within funding year	March 31 st
Notice of decision	2-3 weeks*	4-6 weeks (after deadline)

*Estimated time, given no amendments to the application necessary during the application process.

How does the grant work?

If a project is approved, the City of Barrie supplies funds to match the equivalent contribution the neighbourhood makes through a combination of other funds raised; donated services; donated materials and supplies; and volunteer labour. For example, if a neighbourhood group contributes in-kind donations for a value of \$2,500, the City of Barrie matches this contribution with up to \$2,500 for an approved project.

Projects with a requested grant that does not exceed \$1,000 will be evaluated and awarded through the small grant program. The small grant is allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis and until the total budget for a fiscal year is spent.

Projects with a requested grant that exceeds \$1,000 but not \$5,000 will be awarded through the large grant program. Applications must be received by March 31st at 4:00 pm of the respective year. Applications received after March 31st will not be accepted but may be re-submitted the following year. Applications will be reviewed by a departmental committee and evaluated by a committee of citizens. To successful projects 75% of the city’s match will be granted upfront and the remaining 25% as soon as the project is completed and a final report has been submitted.

What are the eligibility criteria?

Neighbourhood Associations, not-for-profit organizations and (groups of) residents (with the endorsement of a not-for-profit organization should the requested grant exceed \$1,000) are eligible.

Eligible projects have one of the following purposes:

- Community building
- Child and Youth Engagement
- Encouragement of multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion
- Historical Awareness
- Neighbourhood Beautification / Improvement
- Recreation
- Crime prevention and Safety

Neighbourhood projects need to be community-driven. Documented neighbourhood support is required for all projects. An eligible project must be completed within 12 months and a minimum of 25% of the in-kind donations originating from within the neighbourhood will be required. Existing or previously funded events, projects that duplicate others and fundraising (as sole purpose of the event), gala or sporting events will not be eligible for these funds, as the intent is to spark new community ties, new events, new change and new projects that are reflective of the priorities of the neighbourhoods. Events will furthermore only be eligible for the small fund. Projects that received money and resources from other City of Barrie sources, funds and services are not eligible.

What are the selection criteria?

- Benefits to the neighbourhood
How well are the eligibility criteria met? Does the project fit the neighbourhoods' strategies & objectives?
- Involvement of neighbourhood members
Does the neighbourhood support the project and are there opportunities for all neighbours to participate?
- Project Feasibility & Need
Are there major difficulties to overcome? Does the project fulfil the needs of the specific neighbourhood?
- The commitment and capacity of the requesting applicants
Is the budget accurate and credible, outlining expenses, resources and match requirement?

How to apply?

All applicants must complete and submit the application form (see Appendix A), a project timeline, a budget (see Appendix B) and proof of neighbourhood support. It is highly recommended to **consult with the Program Coordinator** prior to submitting a final application.

The Small Grant requires the Waiver (Appendix E) be completed for all volunteers for liability issues. The Large Grant requires the Waiver be completed by all volunteers, as well as a partnering, not for-profit organization with a tax number.

Although there may be opportunities to amend an application, the version submitted to March 31st of the respective year will be final and reviewed by involved City Departments and evaluated by the Citizens Committee. There is no application deadline for small projects, as the funds are distributed on a first-come, first-served within the year until the program's budget is expired.

The application is broken into three sections, applicant information, project information and supporting documentation. The more information you provide, the better the Citizens Committee can evaluate your project.

Value of matched contributions

There are four types of contributions that applicants can present to match the 'Council's Community Matching Fund' contribution. They include cash, volunteer labour, donated professional services and donated materials and supplies. The specific rules governing each type are as follows:

- **Volunteer Labour**

Individuals can contribute time to a project in many ways, including: serving on project committees; implementing action steps from the workplan; attending community meetings; leading the group, etc. Volunteer labour is valued at \$20.00 per hour. Volunteer time spent on planning, fundraising, design and organizing will be tallied commencing on the application approval date. Past work already completed cannot be included for matching purposes.

- **Donated Professional Services**

Donated professional services must be relevant to the project and proportionate to its needs.

Examples include a web designer, graphic designer, photographer, landscape architect, printer, etc. Donors must document the hourly value of their professional services on their letterhead.

Services are valued at their customary rates, up to a maximum of \$50.00 per hour. An individual or business that will be compensated for any project-related work cannot also pledge their time as a volunteer nor donate other goods or services to the project.

- **Donated Materials and Supplies**

All donated materials and supplies (food, paper, flowers, wood, paint, tools, etc.) are valued at their retail prices. Borrowed equipment can also be considered as part of the match, valued at the standard rental fee. Donors of the materials and supplies must provide documentation on their letterhead of the value of the match.

- **Cash Donations**

Cash donations can be secured from fundraising events, individuals, foundations, businesses and the community.

How will applications be evaluated?

Small projects:

Submitted applications will be forwarded to City Departments that are affected by the project. The projects feasibility and conformity to City plans will be reviewed. Should no objections be made at this stage, the application will be forwarded to the Citizens Committee for review and evaluation.

Should no objections be made the grant will be awarded to the applicant until the fund is depleted. The funds awarded will be provided to the supporting organization or the individual applicant for distribution.

Large projects:

Step one

Once an application is submitted it will be forwarded to City Departments that are affected by the project. The projects feasibility and conformity to City's plans will be reviewed. Should Departments object to the project, an opportunity to amend the application will be given to the applicants.

Step two

A committee of at least three citizen-representatives, appointed by the City of Barrie, will evaluate the project. The evaluation will be in line with the described eligibility and selection criteria, and will utilize a ranking point system.

The Committee will rank the projects using a point system, and will determine the amount of funds that will be allocated to the project, until the budget is depleted. A minimum score of 10 will be mandatory.

The Mayor will present and award successful applications during a council meeting. The funds awarded will be provided to the supporting organization for distribution.

What are the reporting requirements?

All fund recipients must submit a final report describing the project outcomes and successes and verifying the project expenses and resources. A Financial Statement of expenditures and copies of receipts must be submitted within 90 days of project completion. Successful applicants should submit stories and photos of their activities to be documented and shared.

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Application

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Funding for your proposed project will be based, in part, on how much information you are able to provide. If necessary, you may be asked to provide further information and/or clarification regarding your answers. If you have difficulty, or need assistance, answering any of these questions, please contact the City's *Coordinator* at #.

Note: Once received, all information on this form is a matter of public record and may be released to third parties upon request.

Section 1: Applicant Information

Supporting Non-Profit Organization (for projects with a requested match that exceeds \$1000)

Organization:

Contact:

Tax Number:

Address:

Daytime Phone:

City:

Email:

Lead Project Contact Person

Name

Address:

Phone:

City:

Email:

Zip Code:

Alternate Project Contact Person

Name:

Address:

Phone:

City:

Email:

Please answer the following questions:

Does your proposed neighborhood project . . .

Help building the community? Yes No Unknown
How?

Promote child and youth engagement? Yes No Unknown
How?

Encourage multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion? Yes No Unknown
How?

Create historical awareness? Yes No Unknown
How?

Beautify or improve the neighbourhood? Yes No Unknown
How?

Provide a recreational opportunity? Yes No Unknown
How?

Support crime prevention and safety? Yes No Unknown
How?

Section 3: Supporting Documentation

Please complete and submit the following additional required forms.

- Budget Form (Appendix B)
- Waivers (Appendix C)
- Impacted Private Property Approval Form (Appendix D)
- Neighborhood Support Form (optional) (Appendix E)

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WAIVER / RELEASE

I _____ have agreed to participate in _____
Name Project Name

project and activities voluntarily, working in and around the City. I am aware of the possible hazards and risks associated with the activity related to this project and agree that it is my responsibility to wear suitable clothing and items for my personal protection, such as safety shoes, gloves and hard hats, where appropriate.

As a participant in this activity I assume all responsibility for property damage, personal injury, and bodily injury including death that may arise from my involvement in this activity. I further agree to hold harmless and release The Corporation of the City of Barrie, all of its employees and agents, from any liability with respect to damage or injury including death, resulting from my participation in such activity.

Executed at _____, on the _____ day of _____, 20__.

Participant Signature _____

Participant's Printed Name _____

Witness Signature _____
On Behalf of The Corporation of The City of Barrie

Witness' Printed Name _____

Impacted Private Property Approval Form

I, _____, am the owner of the property located
Owner Name (Please Print)
at _____ and am aware and hereby grant my approval
Address
for _____
Name of applying organization or individual(s)
to undertake the following work / project / improvement on or adjacent to my property.

Project Name: _____

Project Impact: Description how the project may impact the property (i.e. description of activity taking place on property; description of anticipated noise or nuisance from the project to the neighbouring property, etc):

Executed at _____, on the _____ day of _____, 20__.

Property Owner Signature _____

Property Owner's Printed Name _____

Witness Signature _____

Witness' Printed Name _____

Neighbourhood Support Form

Project Name: _____

Resident Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

____ I support the project and can provide the following:

____ Physical labour

____ Supplies / materials / tools

____ Cash donation of \$ _____

____ Food and drinks for volunteers

____ I support the project but I am unable to contribute at this time

____ I can help maintain the project when it is completed.

____ Other: _____

____ I do not support this project (Please explain objections).

Date _____

Resident Signature _____