



COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: September 10, 2024

From: Ron Bowles, CAO

File No: P 24-16

Subject: **Age-Friendly Communities 2024 Grant Application**

Report Prepared by: Melissa Hunt-Anderson, Community and Social Development Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION to Consider and Resolve:

THAT Council directs and approves of staff proceeding with the Age-friendly Communities grant application that was submitted to BC Healthy Communities on August 26, 2024 for \$25,000 for a City of West Kelowna *Age-Friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit*.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Invest in Infrastructure – We will invest in building, improving and maintaining infrastructure to meet the needs of, and to provide a high quality of life for, current and future generations.

Strengthen Our Community – We will provide opportunities for the residents of West Kelowna to build connections, celebrate successes, embrace the community's strengths and diversity, address shared needs, and contribute to shaping the community's future.

Foster Safety and Well-Being – We will pursue through direct action, advocacy, and collaboration with local and regional service providers, investments in community health, needs-based housing, emergency preparedness, policing, and other services that foster safety and well-being in West Kelowna.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Age-friendly Communities Grant Program is to facilitate independent living and community engagement among older adults by providing financial support to local governments. Local governments may apply for a Stream 1 - Planning Grant (up to \$25,000) for age-friendly assessments and action plans, or a Stream 2 - Program Grant (up to \$15,000) for age-friendly projects that are identified in the actions from the Stream 1 – Planning Grant. The grant application is focused on the Stream 1 - Planning to complete an *Age-friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit*.

Purpose, Outcomes and Next Steps of the Age-friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit

The purpose of the Audit will be for the consultant to evaluate the existing infrastructure that supports active transportation and connectivity in West Kelowna and identify barriers that prevent older adults, particularly those with accessibility challenges, from safely and conveniently navigating the community. The project will aim to develop an actionable overview to address critical gaps in the built environment, ensuring that transportation options are inclusive, equitable, and supportive of aging in place. Some aspects of accessible transportation that the audit will consider include sidewalks, street lighting, crosswalks, and parking. Ultimately, the project seeks to identify actions that will enhance the independence, safety, and social participation of older adults, contributing to a more age-friendly and accessible community for all residents.

The intended outcomes of the Age-Friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit include raising awareness of current transportation accessibility needs for older adults and people with disabilities in West Kelowna, strengthening collaboration with the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC), relationship building with organizations that support and involve older adults, and identifying key action areas for improvement. Additionally, the project aims to center best practices in accessibility throughout the audit process, ensuring that the findings lead to targeted, effective interventions in active transportation planning that enhance mobility, safety, and social participation for residents of all ages, particularly those facing accessibility challenges. The project is supported by our community partners (see Attachment 1).

Additionally, after successful completion of the audit, the City will be eligible to apply for BC Heathy Communities Age-friendly projects stream (Stream 2) that provides funding to carry out one or some of the actions (projects) identified in the planning phase.

Alignment with the AIC and Work Towards a West Kelowna Accessibility & Inclusion Plan

In July 2024, Council selected the members of the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC). The purpose of the AIC is to work collaboratively with the City of West Kelowna staff to discuss, develop, improve, promote, and sustain community accessibility and inclusion. This includes removing barriers associated with accessibility and inclusion, focusing on experiences of people with disabilities and foster and all-encompassing community. The AIC's role is to also advise Council on strategies to reduce social, physical, and sensory barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of community life.

The AIC is currently creating an Accessibility & Inclusion Plan designed to expand and improve accessibility options within our City. At the [May 15, 2024 AIC Meeting](#), members received an update on Round 1 of public engagement for the Accessibility & Inclusion Plan, including the [Consultation Summary Report](#).

The AIC continues to review and discuss actions that they would like to see included and adopted into the Accessibility & Inclusion Plan, which will be presented to Council this fall. One draft action is to initiate an Accessible Transportation Audit.

In light of this, the BC Healthy Communities – Age-friendly Communities grant application presents an initial opportunity to begin to consider options for age friendly design changes in line with the AIC’s draft goals. Due to Council’s meeting schedule in August and summer vacation (time-off) schedules for various City, community partner, and consulting staff, it was difficult to prepare the grant application prepared for Council before the Aug. 26th grant submission due date.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the City. The BC Healthy Communities: Age-friendly Communities grant (25,000) will cover the consultant costs associated with the Age-Friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit of \$26,900, with the consultants providing \$1,900 of support to develop the engagement strategy and survey. The consultant will be led under the Community and Social Development Coordinator with input from the AIC, and the work conducted will not impact other Development Services related Council priorities.

CONCLUSION

The City’s largest growing demographic is seniors/older adults. The funding of \$25,000 from BC Healthy Communities (and an additional of \$1,900 in-kind support from the supporting consultant) will support the City in completing an Age-Friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit, and work towards priorities identified in the AIC’s draft actions (Initiate an Accessible Transportation Audit). Upon completion of the Audit, the City will then be eligible to apply for Stream 2-Project funding to work on a project identified in the audit under Stream 1-Planning funding from the Age-Friendly Communities grant program.

Alternate Recommendation to Consider and Resolve:

THAT Council directs Staff to rescind the application and provide further information about the grant application.

REVIEWED BY

Brent Magnan, Director of Development Approvals

APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY

Trevor Seibel, Deputy CAO

Powerpoint: Yes No

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Support letter from Interior Health, Westside Health Network Society and United Way BC for the BC Healthy Communities Age-friendly Communities Grant Application

Attachment 2: City of West Kelowna's BC Healthy Communities Age-friendly Communities Grant Application – Submitted Aug. 26, 2024