

REPORT

Office of the Mayor

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of
Council,
Regular Council Meeting

Date: April 22, 2024

From: Denise A Tambellini
Manager Intergovernmental and
Community Relations

File:

Item #: 2024-251

Subject: **New Westminster Grant Funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth
Climate Action Fund Program**

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Council accept this report for information announcing \$206,000 (\$150,000 USD) from the **Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund** for New Westminster Youth Climate Action initiatives.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to announce \$206,000 (\$150,000 USD) of funding from the Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund for youth engagement in climate action and summarize the New Westminster Program.

SUMMARY

The City has received funding from the Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund to advance youth directed climate action initiatives and encourage a youth voice at the local government decision-making table. This report summarizes the New Westminster project and opportunities for the community.

BACKGROUND

In 2019, Council declared a climate emergency and committed to bold action to achieve greenhouse gas reductions required to keep global temperature increases below 1.5°C.

Council went further with the development of the Seven Bold Steps for Climate Action with the goal of moving New Westminster towards a zero carbon future by 2050. The City has prioritized Climate Action as a driving motivation for strategic planning and budgeting. To achieve climate targets, the entire community must be involved, ensuring special consideration is given to those most vulnerable. The city continues to protect our ecosystem and urban forest while preparing for the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Global temperatures have now reached critical levels in 2023 and the need for action continues to intensify.

Urbanization is rapidly accelerating. More than half of the world's population lives in cities and sixty percent of those residents are expected to be under 18 years old by 2030. Sixty percent of youth cite climate as a top concern, seventy five percent report being frightened by the future, and more than sixty percent say that government is not doing enough to avoid climate catastrophe or take their concerns seriously.¹ To ignite climate action at a global and local level, youth need to be empowered to understand and integrate in the government process; to have decision making power to advance local and global climate action.

To advance youth climate action goals, on February 26, 2024 Council approved the following resolutions:

THAT Council provide feedback on a potential submission to the Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund as described in this report;

THAT the Chief Administrative Officer and Corporate Officer be authorized to enter into a funding agreement with the Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund; and

THAT staff release the above Council resolutions to the public at a subsequent meeting of Council once the funding is approved.

Funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund has now been approved.

Integrating Youth in Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE)²

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) is a term adopted by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to denote work under Article 6 of the Convention and Article 12 of the Paris Agreement. The over-arching goal of ACE is to empower all members of society to engage in climate action, through the six ACE elements - climate change education and public awareness, training, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation on these issues.

¹ World Economic Forum <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/10/chart-shows-global-youth-perspectives-on-climate-change/>

² Action for Climate Empowerment <https://unfccc.int/topics/education-and-youth/big-picture/ACE>

The six program elements for empowerment determined at the COP27 in Glasgow are:



Implementation of all six ACE elements is crucial to the global response to climate change. Everyone, including and especially the young, must understand and participate in the transition to a low-emission, climate-resilient world.

Sustainable lifestyles, sustainable patterns of consumption and production, are fundamental to reducing greenhouse emissions and enhancing resilience to the inevitable effects of climate change. Success will require broad collaboration between all levels of government and all sectors of society.

Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund: Connecting Local Government with Youth across the World

Mayors (and city councils) are on the frontlines of climate change and are raising ambition to make progress faster against the climate crisis. In 2015 in Paris, at the signing of the Paris Agreement, municipal mayors were invited to the sidelines of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) to elevate local climate action. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in the United Arab Emirates (COP28), mayors were invited to be center stage, demonstrating how to cut emissions, expand collaborations, and meet climate goals.

In order to activate the empowerment of youth at a local government level, Bloomberg Philanthropies invited municipal mayors from across the world to attend the [COP28 Local Climate Action Summit](#) (LCAS) hosted by the COP28 Presidency and Bloomberg Philanthropies. Over 500 mayors, governors, and other local leaders from over 60 countries gathered to discuss change at a local level.

With 84 percent of youth around the world reporting that they are worried climate change threatens people and the planet, Bloomberg Philanthropies launched the Youth Climate Action Fund which will provide technical assistance and funding for 100 mayors to activate tens of thousands of young people ages of 15 – 24 years to design, produce,

and govern urgent climate solutions in their cities. The cities in the Fund span 38 countries across six continents, representing over 62 million residents.

With more than 60 percent of young people saying that government is not doing enough to avoid climate catastrophe or taking their concerns seriously enough, few city halls have the organizational capacity, capabilities, and confidence to unleash youth energy on solution-building. The intention of the fund is to increase the ambition and capacity of what local governments are doing and engage and empower youth to be part of the decision-making at a local government level. This is a key opportunity for local mayors to enable youth led climate adaptation programs and encourage a youth voice at the governance table.

Program Summary:

1. Initial grant funding of US \$50,000 will be distributed in spring 2024 to rapidly launch and support youth led climate projects over 6 months through the local distribution of US \$1,000 to US \$5,000 micro grants.
2. Expertise and technical assistance will be provided on community engagement and delivered virtually through webinars, coaching calls and office hours.
3. Cities that complete the 6-month program will receive an additional US \$100,000 to distribute to additional local youth-led climate projects over 12 months.

Through the Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund, mayors will launch open calls in their cities for new and ambitious climate efforts led by young people. These ideas may include:

- Youth-led awareness, education, research, and development initiatives, including: youth-led climate education programs; youth climate hackathons; youth-developed climate surveys and research; youth-informed clubs or curriculum; and youth-designed public art and awareness campaigns.
- Youth-driven climate mitigation and adaptation projects, including: youth-led community gardening, tree planting, reforestation, and urban farming campaigns; youth-managed recycling and waste reduction programs; and youth-produced climate resilience workshops and disaster preparedness programs.
- Co-governed youth climate action plans, including: partnerships between city leaders and youth groups to inform climate-related policy ideas, decisions, or actions or the formation of youth climate ambassadors or advisory boards.

Eligible expenses to youth-serving organizations for:

- Awareness, education, research, co-development initiatives like youth led climate surveys and research

- Launching mitigation and adaptation initiatives like community gardens, tree planting and urban farming
- Involvement in Governance of Local Climate Action Plans like youth hosted climate town halls
- Supplies for mitigation projects (shovels, paint, plants)
- Funds to enable youth to participate (i.e. transit fare, per diem for food, gift cards for participation)
- Adult project sponsors from local NGO's, civic groups, neighborhood clubs, school administrators etc.

Micro grant-funded efforts, proposed by youth and selected by cities, are expected to ignite awareness and action in communities to advance climate goals as critical as meeting de-carbonization and reducing consumption-based emissions.

Powered by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation (BCPI) at Johns Hopkins University, the Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund will help cities rapidly learn and implement cutting-edge resident engagement approaches to holistically partner with young residents to propose, launch, and celebrate a wide range of climate-focused projects.

And finally, the application process required a Mayor's Commitment to the Youth Climate Action Fund:

I joined the Local Climate Action Summit at COP28 UAE and I am committed to administering this youth-led climate action program in a way that is consistent with New Westminster's climate action plans, and the Strategic Priority Plan of New Westminster City Council.

In New Westminster, we feel the urgency of this moment and are excited to be part of a cohort of global cities deploying microgrants to innovative youth engagement projects across our community within 6 months.

We can dedicate staff to launching and monitoring youth-led climate-focused microgrants, to participating in mandatory virtual technical assistance programming, and to sharing updates, impacts, and stories from the ground with Youth Climate Action Fund partners.

Bloomberg supports 100 Cities across the world

Funding for New Westminster was announced on April 10 and the press release from Bloomberg is included for information (attachment 1). New Westminster is one of 100 international cities and 6 Canadian cities to be part of the youth empowerment movement to support climate actions. The other Canadian cities are

- Guelph, Ont.
- Halifax, N.S.
- Kitchener, Ont.
- Oakville, Ont.
- The Blue Mountains, Alta.

Notable global cities part of the inaugural Youth Climate Action Fund included Athens, Greece; Bristol, United Kingdom.; Vejen, Denmark; Melbourne, Australia; Santiago, Chile; as well as American cities like Atlanta, Cincinnati, New Orleans and West Palm Beach. The full list is included in the attachment or with this link

<https://www.bloomberg.org/press/bloomberg-philanthropies-launches-youth-action-fund-to-activate-tens-of-thousands-of-young-people-in-driving-climate-solutions-in-100-cities-across-the-globe/>

ANALYSIS

The Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund is an opportunity for local youth between 15 and 24 years of age to be engaged in climate action projects. This program enables the city to forge creative solutions to achieve climate goals and have youth led projects completed across the city. Joining forces with mayors through the Youth Climate Action Fund is seen as an incredible opportunity for the world's youth, to step up, make their voices heard, and scale their impact at the local level.

New Westminster can be creative in the implementation of this program. It can partner with youth as co-designers, co-creators, and co-governors of climate-focused projects, moving beyond simply getting feedback from youth on city-proposed climate projects.

To advance this program, three main areas will be developed to direct New Westminster's funding:

- 1. Create a Youth Climate Action Caucus (NWYCAC)**

The caucus will meet monthly or quarterly with the Mayor and interested councilors as well as Climate Action and Parks staff, to address climate change issues of importance to the city. This may include creative ideas around achieving Seven Bold Steps and encourage youth to take ownership over climate action in the city; and

- 2. Develop a Youth Employment Training Program focused on Climate Action**

Through a key partnership with the Youth Climate Corp of British Columbia (YCCBC), New Westminster will also add a youth employment component to this initiative to create legacy, provide further support for local youth groups and train youth to work in the climate action field. These youth will also serve as mentors for future cohorts of the NWYCAC; and

- 3. Support Youth Led Projects across the City**

Youth groups can identify and submit climate action projects for activation. Youth climate focused groups will be supported through various ways by the NWYACC including funding, sharing of expertise, workers, marketing and supplies. Further information will be available once the NWYCAC is established.

Partnerships to Deliver the Program:

The City will work with two youth focused organizations to facilitate the program:

1. The Youth Climate Corps of British Columbia (YCCBC)

Youth Climate Corps British Columbia (YCCBC) is a climate action program that builds on youth leadership to foster climate resilience and a livable, low-carbon future while paying young people a living wage. YCCBC has run programs in six communities across BC, and delivered over 7,000 working days of youth-led climate action. YCCBC strives to scale up climate action, build community resilience and provide young people with a pathway to a good career that betters their community. Youth Climate Corps BC envisions a fair, just, and thriving future for everyone. <https://www.youthclimatecorps.com/> and

2. CityHive

CityHive is an award-winning youth-run not-for-profit organization based in Metro Vancouver. For over 8 years they have been transforming the way that young people are engaged in shaping their cities - on issues as varied as climate, housing, and mental health. With a strong history in New Westminster, they have run a wide range of civic education and climate innovation programs for ages 13-30, both in and out of the classroom, while also working directly with local institutions to help them engage youth in planning and decision-making. Since their founding, CityHive's work, grounded in the principles of being youth-led, collaborative, and equity-centred, has resulted in more meaningful and reciprocal youth engagement practices across our region. <https://cityhive.ca/>

Project oversight will be facilitated through the Mayor's Office, with the support of experienced consultants until a suitable host can be determined, as City staff capacity is limited and this initiative is not in the workplan.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

This funding will contribute to youth employment in environmental areas and a series of youth led micro projects that are aimed at climate adaptation and meeting climate targets. Youth will also be engaged to help Council meet climate target in the Seven Bold Steps identified in Council's strategy. This initiative supports an approach outlined in the City's Community Energy and Emissions Plan 2050, which identifies the integral role that the community plays in taking independent action to support achieving the City's climate emergency targets.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action fund will provide a total of \$206,000 (\$150,000 USD) over the span of a year. The initial grant of \$72,500 (US \$50,000) will be distributed in the spring of 2024 to support youth-led climate projects over 6 months. Up to 20% of funds may be used to offset a portion of administrative costs for the Youth Climate Action Fund Program. Cities that commit the initial US \$50,000 within 6 months will receive a further \$138,000 (US \$100,000) in November 2024 to distribute to additional local youth-led climate projects over 12 more months.

Other external funding sources will be used to add value to this program but will not impact existing budgets.

As this is a new initiative, funding for staff support would be allocated to this grant.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. THAT Council accept this report for information announcing \$206,000 (\$150,000 USD) from the Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund for New Westminster Youth Climate Action initiatives; or
2. Provide other direction to staff.

Staff recommend option 1.

CONCLUSION

The City has received \$206,000 from the Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund to advance youth directed climate action projects and encourage a youth voice at the local government decision-making table. This report summarizes the New Westminster project and opportunities for the community.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Bloomberg Philanthropies Launches Youth Action Fund to Activate Tens of Thousands of Young People in Driving Climate Solutions in 100 Cities Across the Globe

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
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