

REPORT

Parks and Recreation

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: May 27, 2024

From: Dean Gibson
Director of Parks and Recreation
File: 2496164

Item #: 2024-333

Subject: **Funding Agreement Authorization for Active Communities Grant (BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society)**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Parks and Recreation be authorized to enter into the funding agreement with BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society as per Attachment 1 to support staff training and the City's purchase of privacy screening for the creation new safe and inclusive swimming opportunities at the təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre .

PURPOSE

To seek authority to enter into a project funding agreement with the BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society to purchase privacy screening and support specialized training for the delivery of:

- All Bodies Swims - supporting the needs of the 2SLGBTQI+ community;
- Women Only Swims – supporting the needs of women who feel uncomfortable in mixed-gender swimming areas for religious, cultural or personal reasons and;
- Sensory Friendly Swims – supportive swims for those with neural processing sensitivities.

BACKGROUND

The City of New Westminster staff have been successful in the application for a \$40,000 Active Communities Grant with the BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society.

The Active Communities Grant Program provides resources to Indigenous and local governments to create or expand physical activity opportunities in their communities.

The purpose of the Active Communities Grants is to:

1. Support people in BC of all ages and abilities to increase their awareness of, and access to, community-based physical activity, sport, and recreation programs and opportunities.
2. Create physical and social environments within communities that encourage regular physical activity and ensure equitable and inclusive access and opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds, particularly those who come from disadvantaged or equity seeking groups.

DISCUSSION

təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Center is designed to follow Rick Hansen Foundation Gold Accessibility certification which considers people of differing levels of physical mobility, as well as addresses gender and cultural sensitivities. With two separate natatoriums and the addition of privacy screens, City staff will be able to program for different users in each separate pool space allowing swims (including All Bodies Swims, Women's Only Swims and Sensory Friendly Swims) to occur on a regular schedule throughout the year. These swims will require privacy screening for an enjoyable and safe swimming experience. The leisure pool was designed with automated high covering window blinds and a special in-ground anchor system to hold stanchions for privacy screening. Customized privacy screening is required to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all. New Westminster is a diverse and multicultural community. Staff have consulted and partnered with the Tri-City Muslim Community, Canucks Autism network and New West Pride Society in preparation for removing barriers to participation in aquatic facilities. The facility will aim to offer biweekly/monthly swim opportunities for:

- All Bodies Swims – supporting the needs of the 2SLGBTQI+ community.
- Women Only Swims – supporting the needs of women who feel uncomfortable in mixed-gender swimming areas for religious, cultural or personal reasons.
- Sensory Friendly Swims – supportive swims for those with neural processing sensitivities.

The current design for the privacy screening will allow the above swims to take place in the leisure pool natatorium (access to universal change areas with private change stalls), while allowing other aquatic activities to continue (access to gendered change rooms) in the 50 metre natatorium. Accommodating different needs simultaneously will allow all to participate and ensure the swims requiring the specialty privacy screens to occur during more preferred public swimming times.

The addition of accessible and inclusive swim opportunities will initially require staff support in the form of an Assistant Program Coordinator (APC) for 4 hours a week approximately 48 weeks of the year. The APC position will continue discussions and program planning with local community serving agencies, create a marketing plan to advertise the new services, create training for staff and analyze attendance data and customer feedback throughout the first year.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Partnerships with community organizations including but not limited to The BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society, Tri-City Muslim community, New West Pride, Canucks Autism Network and Fraser Health will be developed and strengthened through this grant opportunity that will provide the infrastructure for these program initiatives. A coordination and collaboration of support services will create more readily available resources for residents of New Westminster.

Full program details are available in the Applicant Guide included as Attachment 2 to this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society has considered and approved \$40,000 funding for the program proposal. 100% of the direct project cost is funded by the Active Communities Grant. Key provisions of the funding agreement Attachment 1 include:

Amount:	\$40,000 inclusive of any applicable taxes
Term:	May 16th, 2024 to November 30th 2025 BCAHL will disburse 90% of the Funding to the City of New Westminster upon signing of this Agreement. The remaining 10% will be disbursed upon receipt of the final reporting documents.
Scope:	\$5K Assistant Program Coordinator to oversee inclusive swim programs, collect data, liase with community agencies and support marketing initiatives; Specialized inclusive swims In-service training – done in partnership with community serving agencies; \$35K Privacy Screens; Privacy Screen fastening equipment; Stainless steel stanchions to hold screening
City Deliverables:	The City of New Westminster is responsible for all expenses incurred by the City of New Westminster in fulfilling the terms of the Agreement and carrying out the Project. All expenditures made by the City of New Westminster for the Project must be reasonable, prudent, and necessary for the Project. The City will maintain inclusive swim programming practices in perpetuity following initial grant investment.

	The City of New Westminster will maintain full and complete books and records of all receipts and disbursements of the Funding and a complete record of all agreements, deeds, vouchers, receipts and invoices that document how the City of New Westminster used the Funding. Upon the completion of the Project, the City of New Westminster will provide BCAHL with a final report and statement of expenditures for the Project. The City of New Westminster will follow guidelines for project communications as outlined in Appendix B of Attachment 1
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The \$40,000 is considered sufficient to execute on program scope and deliverables, resulting in no incremental impacts on the approved 2024 budget. As per the draft Letter of Agreement Attachment 1, the funding will be received through a single installment as soon as the agreement is signed and completed.

All staff hiring related to the program will be temporary in nature. Any adjustments or extensions to the operating budget or staff hiring beyond the current term of the program will be presented to Council as part of the 2025 operating budget proposal.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

This report was created in liaison with Finance Department, Recreation Services, and the CAO's Office.

OPTIONS

1. THAT the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Parks and Recreation be authorized to enter into the funding agreement with BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society as per Attachment #1 to support staff training and the City's purchase of privacy screening for the creation new safe and inclusive swimming opportunities at the təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre .
2. THAT Council provide staff with alternate direction.

Staff recommend option #1.

CONCLUSION

The funding provided through the BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society will assist the City in advancing its priorities related to diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism. Staff are recommending the acceptance of the funding agreement for implementation of the above-mentioned programs to deliver initiatives that reduce barriers to participation in aquatic facilities. The intention is to support all residents of New Westminster in participating in aquatic services.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Letter of Agreement with BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society

Attachment 2 – 2024 BC Active Communities Grant Guide

APPROVALS

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