

REPORT

Office of the Mayor and Parks and Recreation

To: Mayor Cote and Members of Council **Date:** February 14, 2022

From: Dean Gibson Director Parks and Recreation **File:** 2025928

Denise A. Tambellini Intergovernmental
and Community Relations Manager

Item #: 2022-109

Subject: Provincial Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program
Funding Approval for the Riverfront Tugger – Community Gathering
and Play Space

RECOMMENDATION

That Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to finalize a funding agreement with the Province of British Columbia for the amount of \$305,480 from the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Fund-Destination Development Stream, to upgrade the Riverfront Tugger - Community Gathering and Play Space.

PURPOSE

The City has successfully applied to the Provincial Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Fund and been awarded \$305,480 toward the upgrade of the Riverfront Tugger - Community Gathering and Play Space. This report provides an update to Council and requests authorization to finalize a project funding agreement with the Province of British Columbia.

SUMMARY

The City has successfully applied to the Provincial Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program – Destination Development Stream and been awarded \$305,480, in the second round of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

announcements, toward the upgrade of the Riverfront Tugger - Community Gathering and Play Space located on the waterfront at the River Market. This report presents an update to Council and seeks authorization to finalize a project funding agreement with the Province of British Columbia.

BACKGROUND

The City applied to the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program – Destination Development Stream - managed by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, in October 2021, to upgrade the Riverfront Tugger - Community Gathering and Play Space located on the waterfront at the River Market.

A renewed Riverfront public space will be constructed that reinforces place making, creates a comfortable social/gathering space and encourages a unique play experience along the Riverfront that celebrates New Westminster's rich river heritage. Designed as a unique iconic feature at a prominent location on the Riverfront, the public space will enrich public outdoor life by supporting day-to-day activities as well as special events hosted by community organizations and local businesses.

Council initially approved the following resolution in March 2019:

THAT staff proceed with the proposed removal and replacement of the Tugger Pilot House located at 830 Quayside Drive along the Waterfront Esplanade between the River Market and Fraser River Discovery Centre (FRDC).

The public space along New Westminster's Riverfront (830 Quayside Drive) is designed to create a family-friendly community gathering space, strengthen the place-making qualities of this riverfront destination in Downtown and help tell the story of the "working riverfront" with a playful experience unique to New Westminster. The installation will serve as a community hub as it is located along a multi-use regional greenway and adjacent to local shops, the Fraser River Discovery Centre, major transit station, Westminster Pier Park and provides a prime viewpoint to the marine activity on the river.

New Westminster has made exceptional progress in re-defining the riverfront as a valuable asset. The City is committed to reconnecting residents, visitors and businesses with the two rivers that define our community. In 2016, Council endorsed (in principle) the concept of an expanded Riverfront Vision that incorporates the full riverfront throughout the City. (<https://www.newwestcity.ca/riverfrontvision>).

This vision is supported by three goals:

1. **Continuity:** Create a continuous network of attractive greenways and parks.
2. **Connectivity:** Provide connections from all neighbourhoods to the river.

3. Activity: Program and animate the riverfront with an active, engaging and dynamic series of experiences compatible with existing industrial uses that entice visitors to explore its many destinations and adjacent amenities.

This project aligns with the Riverfront Vision and the City's Official Community Plan.

Community Benefit of the Riverfront Tugger Project

A truly great urban waterfront, one that sustains a variety of public activities in multiple areas, can be a significant cultural and economic asset. The replacement of the Tugger along the Riverfront Esplanade contributes to the City's Vision to further connect our riverfront through a system of animated parks and greenways running the length of the City. The new design for the Tugger will contribute to place-making at this key outdoor destination and social gathering space along the Fraser River, particularly as the number of people visiting city's riverfront has increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the proposed public space will greatly enhance the play experience for children, better serve the current and future riverfront public space needs, support community events and contribute to the success of adjacent local businesses and the Q2Q ferry.

This area is a regional draw including the amenities along the waterfront including the New Westminster Quay, River Market, the Fraser River Discovery Centre. The area is easily accessible through public transit and is on the BC Parkway Active Transportation Greenway.

Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program

Under the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (CERIP), the Province committed up to \$90 million to support community economic resilience, tourism, heritage, and urban and rural economic development projects.

Projects will help communities impacted by COVID-19 and support B.C.'s post-pandemic economic recovery.

Eligible applicants can receive a one-time, 100% funded provincial grant to support key streams:

- Community Economic Resilience (CER)
- Destination Development (DD)
- Unique Heritage Infrastructure (UHI)

Projects must start by December 31, 2021 and end by March 31, 2023. Applicants can receive a grant up to a maximum of \$1 million. The Destination Development (DD) funding stream is focused on projects that bring visitors back to B.C. communities:

- New or enhanced tourism infrastructure and attractions to attract visitors, including:

- Interpretive, cultural or tourism welcome centres
- Tourism causeways
- Construction of destination trails
- Event facilities
- Pivoting mountain resorts to all season destinations
- Tourism products and amenities that improve the visitor experience, including:
 - Wayfinding, interpretive and First Nations signage
 - Washroom facilities, lighted pathways, and accessibility improvements
 - Seasonal adaptation and expansion projects

CERIP Economic recovery objectives:

- Shovel-ready projects that can be expedited
- Provides job opportunities and immediate stimulus
- Strengthens the destination offering to elevate B.C.'s competitiveness and reputation as a 'must visit' travel destination
- Supports B.C.'s 19 [destination development local areas plans](#)
- Increases the capacity of tourism destinations to welcome visitors, including adjusting to COVID-19 protocols

ANALYSIS

The City was recently notified that the Riverfront Tugger - Community Gathering and Play Space was successfully awarded funding from the Provincial CERIP- Destination Development Stream. The CERIP funding will offset the eligible costs for the project.

The Provincial approval recognizes the key contribution this project has in animating the waterfront and improving tourism and the livability of the City of New Westminster. The City is committed to improving tourism assets and will continue to look for partners and senior government funding to continue to animate the waterfront and increase tourism and livability in the City.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

This projects add to the vibrancy and livability of the downtown and enhances the financial sustainability of the City. The Quay is an important gathering place for many families with small children along the riverfront. The new design concept for the Tugger provides a safe, accessible place for all members of the community to meet, gather and play. The newly constructed Tugger and seating area will continue to play an integral role in the place making on the Riverfront in New Westminster.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The CERIP funding will offset the construction costs for the project, per the provincial agreement, up to a maximum of \$305,480. All contracts will be awarded in accordance with the City's purchasing Policies.

The City is grateful for the contributions to this well used public amenity. The Riverfront Tugger Project includes the following financial contributions:

Contributor	Amount	Project Contribution
Province of British Columbia (CERIP)	\$305,480	Construction of informal play features, seating, event staging and small tugger structures
New Westminster Rotary Club	\$50,000	Commemoration of Dr. Irwin Stewart (plaque, sound tubes and the Stewart name on one of the tugboats)
Kal's Replay Fund (Kal Tire Canada)	\$10,000	Recycled rubber surfacing

OPTIONS

1. Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to finalize a funding agreement with the Province of British Columbia for **\$305,480**, from the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program, Destination Development Stream, to upgrade the Riverfront Tugger - Community Gathering and Play Space.
2. Council provide other direction.
3. Staff recommend option 1.

CONCLUSION

The City has successfully applied to the Provincial Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program – Destination Development Stream. The City was awarded \$305,480, in the second round of announcements, toward the upgrade of the Riverfront Tugger - Community Gathering and Play Space. This report presents an update to Council and recommends entering into a funding agreement with the Province of British Columbia.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Projects funded by the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program

This report was prepared by:

Denise A Tambellini Intergovernmental and Community Relations Manager

Erika Mashig Manager, Parks and Open Space Planning, Design and Construction

This report was reviewed by:

Harji Varn, CFO/ Director of Finance

This report was approved by:

Dean Gibson, Director of Parks and Recreation

Denise A Tambellini, Intergovernmental and Community Relations Manager

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer