

DATE: March 22, 2024

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Andy Beesley, Director, Civic Facilities and Events

SUBJECT: Rick Hansen Foundation Participation Agreement Grant Funding

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

- a. *APPROVES Administration to accept grant funding through the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) participation agreement with the City of Prince George*
- b. *APPROVES amending the Financial Plan for project #1467 Accessibility Improvements to increase the budget from \$150,000 (comprised of funding sources of \$30,000 Capital Expenditure Reserve and \$120,000 BC Growing Communities Fund), to include the addition of \$82,500 in RHF grant funding for a total of \$232,500.*
- c. *AUTHORIZES the Manager of Project Delivery and Maintenance to sign the RHF participation agreement and associated funding agreements.*

PURPOSE:

Administration requests Council's authorization to accept accessibility improvement grant funding through the City of Prince George participation agreement with the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF), and to amend the Financial Plan to increase the #1467 Accessibility Improvement capital budget with the additional RHF funding source.

BACKGROUND:

In November 2022, Administration entered into a participation agreement with the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) to create more inclusive and welcoming places through accessibility improvements and training. The City of Prince George was one of ten municipalities and Indigenous communities that were selected by the RHF to receive funding from the Province of British Columbia through the RHF accessibility improvements program. Administration has advanced the RHF participation agreement accessibility improvements as a 2024 action item through the 2023-2026 Accessibility Work Plan presented to Council on January 8, 2024.

The RHF participation agreement includes accessibility training and facility ratings through the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) program. The RHFAC program provides a national rating system to measure the universal accessibility of buildings and sites. The RHF participation agreement provided RHFAC certificate training for three (3) City staff along with City-wide staff accessibility awareness training. Three (3) City sites at City Hall, Plaza Parkade and the Two Rivers Art Gallery received rating scores through the RHFAC program. Both City Hall and the Two Rivers Art Gallery achieved the RHF Accessibility Certification and have been listed on the public [RHFAC Registry](#).

The RHF participation agreement also provides grant funding up to a maximum of \$82,500 for accessibility improvements for the RHFAC rated sites. Administration engaged the services of universal design consultants to assess the RHFAC ratings and provide a prioritized list of accessibility improvements with Class D estimates. These assessments were used to develop a short-list of improvements that would achieve the key goals of providing meaningful universal access and addressing unfunded high priority safety items and winter city considerations. The accessibility improvements would address lower scoring items such as emergency services, accessible washrooms, stairs and ramps, wayfinding signage, and doors at City Hall and the Two Rivers Art Gallery. Accessibility improvements at the Plaza Parkade are pending ongoing investigation and planning.

Administration is looking to pursue next steps in the RHF participation agreement with stakeholder engagement, design and construction of the accessibility improvements in 2024, followed by post-improvement RHFAC ratings, RHFAC certification site labels, final reporting, and updates to the RHFAC Registry.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The RHFAC accessibility program meets the Council's Strategic Plan priorities for City Government and Infrastructure relationship development that would advance shared priorities, as well as the Social Health and Well-being priority to maximize the quality of life for all residents. The program also align with the Age-Friendly Action Plan Action #12: Continue to audit civic facilities and parks in order to identify and prioritize funding for addressing accessibility barriers.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Council previously approved the #1467 Accessibility Improvements capital budget amount of \$150,000 in 2023. The RHF accessibility program has provided \$82,500 in grant funding for use in combination with the previously approved #1467 Accessibility Improvements capital budget funding source to expand the RHF funded accessibility improvement project.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

In 2022, Administration entered into a participation agreement with the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) that provides training and improvements to expand the universal accessibility of City spaces. The RHF training and accessibility ratings have progressed in 2023 and Administration is seeking Council's approval of RHF grant funding to pursue accessibility improvements at City Hall and Two Rivers Art Gallery in 2024. These accessibility improvements are included in Administration's 2023-2026 Accessibility Workplan and will provide meaningful universal access in these publicly accessible civic facilities.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Andy Beesley, Director, Civic Facilities and Events

PREPARED BY: Laurie-Ann Kosec, Project Manager, Project Delivery

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2024/04/08