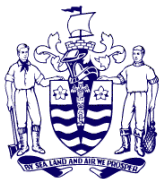


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CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: March 2, 2006
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Meeting Date: March 7, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of Social Planning and General Manager, Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: World Health Organization: Age-Friendly Urban Community Project

CONSIDERATION

- A. THAT Council endorse the City's application to participate as BC's Community Partner in the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Urban Community Project, in accordance with the program criteria as outlined in Appendix A.

OR

- B. THAT Council not endorse the City's application to participate as BC's Community Partner in the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Urban Community Project, in accordance with the program criteria as outlined in Appendix A.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager submits this report for Council's CONSIDERATION.

COUNCIL POLICY

There is no applicable Council Policy.

PURPOSE

This report asks for Council's consideration of endorsing an application to participate as BC's community partner in the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Urban Community Project. The city chosen as a community partner will have an opportunity to showcase its work in creating an age-friendly city, and will be expected to develop an action plan for future work.

BACKGROUND

The World Health Organization (WHO), in cooperation with the Province of British Columbia, 2010 Legacies Now, BC Recreation and Parks Association and the UBCM, is sponsoring an Age-Friendly Urban Community Project. Applications are being sought from interested BC cities, due March 15, 2006. To apply to become BC's partner community, a city must:

- have a population of at least 10,000;
- the application must have the support of Mayor and Council;
- the City must pay travel costs for at least one representative to attend a meeting in Europe in October, 2006; and
- the City must have a demonstrated commitment to an age-friendly community, and be willing to conduct community focus groups (with some funding support from the Province), and develop, implement and evaluate an action plan.

The project begins with a meeting in Vancouver in April, 2006, develops plans November, 2006-May, 2007, and finishes with the publication of an Age-Friendly City Index on October 1, 2007 (The International Day of Older Persons).

A submission outlining how Vancouver would meet the application criteria must be submitted to the Province by March 15, 2006.

DISCUSSION

Vancouver can demonstrate a long-standing commitment to becoming an age-friendly community. Given the aging of the population, responding to the needs of an increased number of older persons will remain an important objective in the coming years.

The City has undertaken a number of initiatives to support an age-friendly community. Some examples include:

- Curb cut program; audible pedestrian signals; disabled parking.
- Programs for seniors through City Community Centres; reduced program fees for seniors and low-income individuals.
- Community Services Grants funding to support the operation of non-profit societies providing peer counselling, information, education and social programs for seniors.
- Seniors Supportive and Assisted Housing - guidelines for siting and interior design to promote aging in place.
- Seniors Advisory Committee of Council, which advises on housing, transportation and other issues affecting seniors.

- Work on the development of Section 3.7 of the Building Code, on accessible design; input to the accessible design of Skytrain Stations.
- Community consultations with seniors in ethno-cultural communities on seniors' needs and issues; participation in national Seniors Quality of Life research; Sponsor of AMSSA Multicultural Health Fair.
- CPTED - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design; support to Community Policing Offices.

Project requirements

Becoming BC's community partner in this project would involve a number of tasks, including conducting focus groups with older persons and community representatives to identify local environmental and social barriers to active aging, consulting with other WHO-Cities, developing a plan for further age-friendly initiatives, and an evaluation report.

A proposed approach would be to form a Working Group, made up of Park Board and City staff, Vancouver Coastal Health staff, and representatives from seniors' groups and other stakeholders, to assist with the focus groups and development of an action plan for Council's consideration. This initiative would require staff time to assist the Working Group and manage the focus groups. The program information provided states that Provincial funding would be available to run the focus groups.

Should Vancouver be chosen as a WHO community partner, staff will report back on the details of the proposed approach and confirmation of Provincial funding.

Expected Outcomes

Participation as a BC Partner Community in the WHO Age Friendly Urban Community Project will permit Vancouver to learn strategies from partner cities around the world that will assist Vancouver to move even further forward as an age friendly community.

We will also be able to share with others on the international stage, the extent of our work to-date, setting a high standard for those aging in our communities and ensuring a profile for our City.

This Partner City process will also include focus groups of older persons and specialists in aging, continuing our community involvement even further.

Our participation in this Program will also add to world wide research to the benefit of other communities who may have only begun their consideration of how to become age friendly. The WHO will be publishing a Global Age-Friendly City Index in which we will be included as a tangible result from this work and they will announce this on October 1, 2007, The International Day of Older Persons.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Participation in the project would require staff time in preparing materials, supervising focus groups, and preparing and reporting on an action plan. The City would be responsible for covering travel costs of at least one City representative to a workshop in Europe in October, 2006. If Vancouver is selected for this project, staff will report back on project details including available Provincial funding.

CONCLUSION

If Vancouver is chosen as BC's community partner, the WHO project represents an opportunity to profile the City's work to date and to support the City's further development as an age-friendly city.

* * * * *

WHO Age Friendly Urban Community Project Selection of a BC Partner Community

Background

An age-friendly community is characterized by supportive and enabling physical and social environments. These environments include all the settings of life in the city, all the services that are provided or exchanged and the products that are used in the activities of daily living.

In the developed world, about 75 percent of older adults live in metropolitan areas and the proportion will grow to 82 percent by 2025. Making cities age-friendly is one of the most effective policy strategies to respond to demographic aging, which is taking place throughout the developed world, and particularly in BC. The WHO is targeting major urban centres because they generally have more economic and human resources than small communities enabling them to make age-friendly changes. By their example, they can lead the way for other communities in BC and Canada.

An age-friendly community benefits everyone. Removing barriers in buildings and on streets increases the mobility and independence of a 28 year-old, as well as a 78 year-old person with a disability. Reduction of environmental pollutants promotes healthy child development. Secure neighbourhoods protect children and women alone from harm as well as older adults. Community members benefit from the participation of older persons in volunteer or paid work, civic activities and educational programs. Local businesses and workers benefit from the patronage of older adult consumers. Safe communities support and enable older persons to age in place without needed to leave their home communities. Age-friendly service-providers, public officials, community and faith leaders and businesspeople anticipate and respond to aging-related needs, respect seniors' choices and promote their inclusion and contributions. In short, an age-friendly community is a community for all ages.

The Age-Friendly Urban Community Project will provide existing Canadian age-friendly initiatives with an opportunity to gain international visibility, and partner cities in particular will benefit. In developing countries, societal gains will include increased awareness of the environmental and social barriers experienced by seniors and plans for action to address them. Globally, dissemination of a WHO Global Age-Friendly Index, with indicators and guidelines, will serve as a long-term basis for policy action.

Partners

Partners engaged with WHO in the Age-Friendly Urban Community Project to date include Canada and its provincial partners (British Columbia, Manitoba, and Quebec), Australia (Western Australia and Victoria), Brazil, the Silver Economy Network of European Regions (SENER), Costa Rica, Argentina and Mexico. Other international non-government organizations providing leadership on issues involving older persons

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will also be involved. Within Canada, two partner cities already selected are Montreal, QC (pop. 3.6 million), and Brandon, MA (pop. 40,000). The third partner municipality will be from British Columbia.

Requirements of a BC partner community

A British Columbia partner community would play an active role in developing age-friendly city indicators and guidelines. WHO and partner countries and cities will first consult with older persons, local communities and gerontology experts to identify the major physical and social barriers to active ageing and develop possible solutions. Each partner community will then develop, implement and evaluate local action plans to become more age-friendly. WHO will compile and disseminate all the learnings from the consultations, planning and action phases into practical, easy-to-use Age-Friendly Urban Community guidelines for use by other urban communities around the world.

A BC partner community would also be an active participant at the planning and action meetings and workshops (outlined below).

Activities and Timetable

The entire project will span 19 months, from March 2006 to October 1, 2007.

- **April 2006:** The first international project meeting is being held in Vancouver on April 19-21, 2006. This meeting will involve presentations of three-four age-friendly community initiatives, presentations of individual community profiles, review of the WHO Age-Friendly Urban Community project and development of next steps and timelines.
- **May-July 2006:** Conduct focus groups with older persons and community representatives to identify local environmental and social barriers to active aging. Preparation of focus group report to WHO.
- **October 2006:** A workshop with partners and experts to review local consultation results regarding barriers to age-friendly communities, and develop frameworks for local planning and action implementation to address the barriers will be held in October, 2006. A location, likely to be in Europe, is to be determined.
- **November 2006-May 2007:** Develop and implement age-friendly plans in partner communities, and prepare evaluation reports.
- **October 1, 2007:** The final phase of the project, publication, translation and dissemination of the Age-Friendly City Index, will take place over 2007, with the Global Age-Friendly City Index disseminated globally on October 1, 2007 (The International Day of Older Persons).

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How to apply to become BC's partner community

A BC partner community will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Population of at least 10,000.
- Support received from Mayor and Council.
- Willingness and ability to provide at least one representative to attend the key meetings and workshops. The first meeting will be in Vancouver, April 19-21, 2006. A workshop will be held in October 2007 – actual date and location to be determined, however location will likely be in Europe. The partner city will be responsible for its representatives' travel costs (some funding may be available to help support the second international meeting but partner city should anticipate some costs). The Ministry of Health will provide funding to assist with the focus group and pilot study in the chosen community
- Demonstrated commitment from the municipality and/or the local community to an age-friendly community. This will include actions and/or plans in place and/or implemented that will achieve the result of a more age-friendly community.

Please provide a brief submission of no more than three-five pages expressing your interest that describes how you meet the above-mentioned criteria by **March 15, 2006**.

We will review applications and provide you with our decision by **March 31, 2006**.

For more information

If you have questions about the extent of participation, or requirements for the submission, please contact:

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