Minute No. 793
Report – Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks – September 6, 2022

Item No. 2 Health Canada Air Quality Funding

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks and adopted the following:

1. That grant funding in the amount of $130,000 from Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada through Health Canada Air Quality group for the purpose of the City of Winnipeg Clean Air Spaces project, be approved.

2. That the City enter into, execute and deliver a contribution agreement with Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada and such other agreements as determined necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to implement the intent of the foregoing ("Ancillary Agreements").

3. That authority be delegated to the Chief Financial Officer to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of the contribution agreement with Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada and the Ancillary Agreements, in accordance with this report and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

4. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks – September 6, 2022

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Rollins,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks be adopted by consent.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On September 14, 2022, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On September 6, 2022, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Health Canada Air Quality Funding

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks - Executive Policy Committee - Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
L. Gilmour	R. Sneath Acting Chief	R. Provencher, Acting CFO	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Air quality events caused by wildfire smoke are on the rise globally due to climate change leading to an increase in wildland fires. In Winnipeg, poor air quality conditions are still not common, but Summer 2021 was one of the worst years on record, with smoke impacting the City from as far away as British Columbia. Poor air quality can have significant health impacts on both healthy and vulnerable populations and access to spaces with clean air during air quality events can be critical to mitigating health risks. Currently, the City of Winnipeg has no designated clean air spaces for citizens to access if needed during an air quality event.

The Office of Emergency Management successfully submitted a proposal to Health Canada to receive funding for the development and application of a facility assessment tool to identify potential clean air spaces in Winnipeg. Utilizing the Health Canada “Guidance for Clean Air Spaces during Wildfire Smoke Events” document, the City will work with a consultant to develop an assessment tool to evaluate the ability of existing community facilities to function as a clean air space, and identify the existing gaps to meet the clean air space criteria. The outcome of this project will be the identification of potential clean air spaces in Winnipeg and the work required to achieve these types of sites, with an ultimate goal of having a designated clean air space in place for Summer 2023.

The Public Service requests approval to enter into a contribution agreement with Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada through Health Canada in order to receive funding for an Air Quality Assessment Tool in the amount of $130,000.00.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That grant funding in the amount of $130,000 from Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada through Health Canada Air Quality group for the purpose of the City of Winnipeg Clean Air Spaces project, be approved.

2. That the City enter into, execute and deliver a contribution agreement with Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada and such other agreements as determined necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to implement the intent of the foregoing ("Ancillary Agreements").

3. That authority be delegated to the Chief Financial Officer to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of the contribution agreement with Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada and the Ancillary Agreements, in accordance with this report and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

4. That the proper officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

Council approval is required to receive grants and enter into the contribution agreement with Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Health, and any Ancillary Agreements.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The contribution agreement must be signed and returned to the Minister of Health Canada in order to receive the funding by October 1, 2022.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

At its February 24, 2022 meeting, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks and adopted the following:

1. The Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back within 90 days to the relevant Committee of Council with an update regarding progress on:

    A. Information regarding the Pilot Project with respect to Purple Monitors to include timing, the number of monitors, and details regarding jurisdictional ownership of the program;

    B. Clean Air shelters;

    C. Communications with Health Canada and the Province of Manitoba regarding the AQHI scale.

On May 3, 2022 the Standing Policy Committee on Water and Waste, Riverbank Management and the Environment received the *Air Quality Program and Protective Information* report as information.

This report continues to build on the clean air shelter work.
From May to August 31, 2021, Winnipeg saw 239 smoke hours making it the second smokiest year for Winnipeg, behind only 1953[1]. The smoke was a result of fires from across Canada, and it is expected that due to climate change and rising temperatures, the number of fires will continue to increase in coming years.

While not a new hazard for Winnipeg, smoke is an increasing one and gaining more awareness. Smoke contains particles that are a dangerous type of air pollution for people's health. Due to their small size, they can penetrate deep into a person's lungs causing irritation and inflammation which can affect anyone. According to the World Health Organization, dense wildfire smoke can contain 50 times the amount of these tiny particles than the guidelines for safe exposure limits.[2] Some impacts include difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, coughing and irritation, and worsened asthma and other breathing problems. However, there is some evidence that other impacts could include low birth weight, stroke, cardiovascular disease and other health impacts related to exposure to wildfire smoke.[3]

One common mitigation practice to wildfire smoke is the development of publicly available spaces in a community termed "clean air spaces". These areas would be accessible, free and have appropriate ventilation that would clean the air entering the building making it a safer reprieve from outdoor smoke conditions. Winnipeg currently does not have an official clean air space and the population in general is not aware of the hazards posed by smoke or the personal and community level mitigation tools required for protection.

Working with Health Canada, the Office of Emergency Management has successfully submitted a proposal for $130,000.00 for a partnership program to assess and develop clean air spaces in Winnipeg. Using the Health Canada tool "Guidance for Cleaner Air Spaces during Wildfire Smoke Events" as a guiding document, the City would undergo an assessment on the suitability of indoor public spaces within Winnipeg to serve as clean air spaces during an air quality event. Spaces included for consideration of assessment would be City owned and managed buildings, partnering community centres and community partners around the downtown area such as shelters or pre-established community gathering places.

Upon completion of the assessment, which would include size, capacity, accessibility and engineering considerations, the program would have a list of potential clean air spaces and approximate costs for facility upgrades required to meet criteria as a clean air space. Working with community partners, the City would hope to prioritize a few locations geographically spread across the City and then work to find funding to support physical upgrades as required.

The final goal of this program would be the establishment of clean air spaces across Winnipeg that could be activated during an air quality event to provide a space for residents to access clean air and a reprieve from the harmful health effects of wildfire smoke.

[1] Statistic taken from a Canadian Meteorological Oceanographic Society bulletin which was originally published by Environment and Climate Change Canada.

[2] Statistic taken from the Climate Atlas of Canada on Wildfire Smoke and Climate Change.

[3] Background on health impacts taken from the Climate Atlas of Canada on Wildfire Smoke and Climate Change.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: August 19, 2022

Project Name:
Health Canada Air Quality Funding

First Year of Program **2022**

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Enter Description Here	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 75,000	$ 55,000			
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	75,000	55,000		-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	-	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Additional Comments:

This FIS includes MRST at prevailing rates and distributes the cost over the expected duration of the project. Actual cost will be incurred as when required during the project and grant funding will be obtained in arrears following the submission of status reports.

John Hall FCMA, CGMA
Financial Controller
Fire Paramedic Service

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

N/A

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Emergency Management aligns with Our Winnipeg 2045 goal of Good Health and Well Being, specifically 4.7 that states:

Provide capacity to prepare, mitigate, assess risk, respond to and recover from the impacts of climate change, extreme weather, human or natural emergencies, disasters and diseases, to promote community resilience within a changing hazard landscape.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

The Climate Action Plan recognizes the impacts of air quality pollution as a result of climate change on population health. The measures proposed align with Strategic Opportunity 7.1 Community Climate Resiliency Actions:

- 7.1 Implement Opportunities to Improve Winnipeg's Resilience and Adaptability to the Effects of a Changing Climate

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

The Air Quality Hazard actions, including the enhanced risk communications and development of clean air spaces, aligns with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Guiding Principle to Promote and Maintain Welfare of all residents and the Strategy Goal 4 "Community Well Being Supports for those In Greatest Need".

The Clean Air Space proposal includes sites across Winnipeg, but has focused on assessment of partner sites (such as shelters) in the downtown area with the consideration of the greater population in the area requiring safe indoor clear air during air quality events. Once the assessment is complete OEM would work with Community Services and End Homelessness Winnipeg to ensure that the chosen clean air spaces would address requirements across Winnipeg, with specific attention to those in areas with less access to shelter.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Fire Paramedic Service
Division: Office of Emergency Management
Prepared by: Lisa Gilmour
Date: August 19, 2022
File No:

Attachments:

APPENDIX A - Phillips, David. (2022). Canada's top 10 weather stories of 2021. Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society.

APPENDIX B - Wildfire Smoke and Climate Change. (2019). Climate Atlas of Canada.