**Minute No. 539**
**Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – May 31, 2023**

**Item No. 3 Health Canada Air Quality Funding Phase 2**

COUNCIL DECISION:

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

1. That grant funding in the amount of $100,000 from His Majesty the King in Right of Canada be approved for the purpose of the City of Winnipeg Clean Air Spaces project.

2. That the City enter into, execute and deliver an amending agreement with His Majesty the King 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 amending agreement with His Majesty the King 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 Winnipeg Public Service be directed to provide a verbal report to the Executive Policy Committee in 30 days on the status of air quality detection systems within the City of Winnipeg.

5. 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 Community Services – May 31, 2023**

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Orlikow,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services be adopted by consent.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On June 12, 2023, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services, with the following amendment:

- That the following new Recommendation 4 be added and the remaining recommendation be renumbered accordingly:

    "4. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to provide a verbal report to the Executive Policy Committee in 30 days on the status of air quality detection systems within the City of Winnipeg."

and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On May 31, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services 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 Phase 2

**Critical Path:** Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – Executive Policy Committee – Council

## AUTHORIZATION

| Author | Department Head | CFO | CAO |
|---|---|---|---|
| L. Gilmour | C. Schmidt | L. Pablo<br>Acting | M. Jack |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On September 22, 2022, Council approved Phase 1 funding from Health Canada for the Winnipeg Clean Air Spaces Project, which was used to develop an air quality assessment tool, review 50 Winnipeg sites as potential clean air spaces, and host a full-day workshop with community partners focusing on at-risk populations, to better understand perceptions and create awareness of air quality risks and what factors would motivate seeking shelter at clean air spaces.

A final report for Phase 1 was provided by the City to Health Canada on March 24, 2022, and the Public Service is currently reviewing the results of this work and incorporating it in clean air space planning going forward.

Given the success of Phase 1, Health Canada has agreed to amend the original contribution agreement to include Phase 2 and provide an additional $100,000 for the Winnipeg Clean Air Spaces Project. Phase 2 would include coordinating a clear air space exercise using a Phase 1 assessed facility, and identifying risk perceptions, expectations and concerns through workshop and/or community consultation to help develop communications tools and/or increase awareness related to air quality events. A report with lessons learned or outcomes of approved deliverables will be provided to Health Canada.

Should Council approve funding, Health Canada and the City must amend the original contribution agreement to account for the additional funding, deliverables, and term extension.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That grant funding in the amount of $100,000 from His Majesty the King in Right of Canada be approved for the purpose of the City of Winnipeg Clean Air Spaces project.

2. That the City enter into, execute and deliver an amending agreement with His Majesty the King 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 amending agreement with His Majesty the King 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 amending agreement with His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Health, and any Ancillary Agreements.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The amending agreement must be signed and returned to the Minister of Health Canada in order to receive the funding.

**HISTORY/DISCUSSION**

During the summer of 2021, the City of Winnipeg experienced the second worst smoke conditions on record (since tracking began in 1953)[1] as a result of wildfires burning in central and northern Manitoba, and from across the country. Winnipeg was unprepared for the intensity of an air quality event of this magnitude and it highlighted the need for future air quality hazard planning and awareness within the city.

While not a new hazard for Winnipeg, wildfire smoke is increasing. 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, 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 is not generally aware of the hazards posed by smoke or the personal and community-level mitigation tools required for protection.

On September 22, 2022, Council approved Phase 1 funding from Health Canada for the Winnipeg Clean Air Spaces Project, which was used to develop an air quality assessment tool, review 50 Winnipeg sites as potential clean air spaces, and host a full-day workshop with community partners focusing on at-risk populations, to better understand perceptions and create awareness of air quality risks and what factors would motivate seeking shelter at clean air spaces.

Building off the findings of the Phase 1 clean air space building assessments, Phase 2 of this project would have two components:

1) Continuing the work around a clean air space in Winnipeg through an exercise.

2) Developing communications for at-risk populations during wildfire smoke events.

Working with relevant City departments including Planning, Property and Development and Community Services, along with community partners, the Office of Emergency Management would review the findings of the Phase 1 clean air space building assessments and identify the

[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.

list of potential clean air spaces for Winnipeg. The space that would be used in an emergency could depend on the specifics of the hazard including location, duration, when it occurs, availability of the space and the most at-risk population needs. As such, the list will include multiple buildings. One of these will be selected for a full-scale exercise in 2024, including the site setup, staff training, site testing and simulating public attendance through exercise participants.

One of the findings of the At-Risk Population Workshop in Phase 1 was that awareness around the hazard of air quality is low among the general population of Winnipeg, including those considered to be of higher risk. Following the success of this year's Phase 1 workshop, a similar event will be held in Phase 2 to focus on the communication needs of at-risk populations, including how the risk perception around air quality can be improved. The results of the workshop will inform the development of joint communications materials that can be used to communicate with at-risk populations on the impacts of poor air quality, as well as individual and community mitigation options available.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

## Financial Impact Statement

**Date:** May 2, 2023

**Project Name:**
**Health Canada Air Quality Funding Phase 2**

**First Year of Program** **2023**

| | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **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 | 50,000 | 50,000 | | | |
| Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery | 50,000 | 50,000 | | | |
| Net Cost/(Benefit) | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Less: Existing Budget Amounts | - | - | - | - | - |
| Net Budget Adjustment Required | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |

**Additional Comments:**
The grant funding for phase 2 is inclusive of all applicable taxation.

*John Hall FCMA, CGMA*
Financial Controller
Fire Paramedic Service

## CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Legal Services

## 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, the Office of Emergency Management 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: Emergency Management
Prepared by: Lisa Gilmour
Date: May 2, 2023
File No: N/A

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.