



## THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

### OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

*MISSION STATEMENT: Committed to delivering cost-effective and efficient services for the residents of the Town of Amherstburg with a view to improve and enhance their quality of life.*

Author's Name: Heidi Baillargeon	Report Date: June 8, 2021
Author's Phone: 519 736-0012 ext. 2128	Date to Council: June 14, 2021
Author's E-mail: <a href="mailto:Hbaillargeon@amherstburg.ca">Hbaillargeon@amherstburg.ca</a>	Resolution #:

**To: Mayor and Members of Town Council**

**Subject: Approval for Grant Funding, Applications and Donations for Community Gardens and Active Transportation Initiatives**

#### 1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that:

1. The following capital projects, related over-expenditures and funding sources **BE APPROVED OR AFFIRMED** as outlined in the report from the Director of Community and Protective Services dated June 8, 2021:
  - a. Eighteen(18) Planter Boxes (10 GREEN CIRCLE Accessible boxes and 8 wooden boxes) for Community Gardens at 320 Richmond at a cost not to exceed \$22,000 including net HST, to be funded by a grant of \$12,000 from Amherstburg Community Foundation and a Federal Enabling Accessibility Fund - Youth Innovation Grant of up to \$10,000;
  - b. Bike Repair Stations (2) and Bike Racks with Concrete Pads (4) at a cost not to exceed \$33,000 including net HST, to be funded by grants from the County of Essex (CWATS Municipal Partnership Program) of up to \$16,500 and a Transfer from Reserve – New Capital of up to \$16,500; and,
  - c. Outdoor Furniture and Fixtures (3 picnic tables, 5 picnic tables with benches, 10 planter stands and 50 bollards) at a cost not to exceed \$20,000 including net HST, to be funded by a grant from the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation - Tourism Adaptation Fund of up to \$20,000.

## 2. **BACKGROUND:**

The Town of Amherstburg has developed a 'Community Hub' located at 320 Richmond Street that houses or will house tenants including: the Essex County Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic, Amherstburg Community Services, Fighting Island Boxing Club, and The House Youth Group. All of these building tenants support senior living, persons with disabilities, youth programming and physical wellness and health within the community. The synergies created between tenants is unique as it supports youth, seniors and persons with disabilities engaging in all manners of community support and inclusiveness.

Administration working collectively with the Amherstburg Community Foundation (ACF) and local youth through the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC) developed plans for a community garden located at 320 Richmond. The proposed community garden project was envisioned to be a catalyst project for seniors supporting youth and youth supporting seniors, potentially to the benefit of providing meals to those in need and as an educational experience. In addition, this vision is supported by the Parks Master Plan under the following recommendations:

**Recommendation #10** – Maintain a commitment to universal accessibility, safety and comfort within the Town's parks system through compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) –including consultation with the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee – and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

**Recommendation #17** – Continue to support expanded park use and programming by local volunteers through community development activities and special event coordination. Seek opportunities to integrate themes of healthy living and arts/ culture/ heritage into park designs, activities and events.

**Recommendation # 26** - Establish programs that support environmentally-friendly practices in parks, such as recycling and liter-free park sites.

In order to move forward with the project ACF agreed to donate funding in the amount of \$12,000 to help with the initiative; at the same time Administration and local youth were working on an application for the Enabling Accessibility Fund Grant.

Further to the grant funding sought for community garden initiatives, funding for the Municipal Partnership Program (MPP) was obtained by Administration in order to support active transportation initiatives in Amherstburg. The MPP is intended to support outreach and local initiatives recommended in CWATS that align with the objectives and recommendations of the CWATS Master plan. The funding applications) submitted by Administration are for up to 50% matching funds from MPP that demonstrates support for an eligible program recommendation as identified in the CWATS Master Plan.

In August 2020, CWATS reached out to the region's municipalities to open the funding application process for bike repair stations with a 50/50 funding model. The Town's MPP application was approved by the CWATS committee in September of 2020. When the bike repair stations were actually received it was winter and weather conditions were not conducive to the installation of concrete pads thereby delaying their installation to spring of 2021. In January 2021, the annual MPP application opened up for another round of submissions for active transportation at which point a second submission was submitted

and approved by the CWATS Committee in March of 2021. These new assets will help support the biking community promoting active transportation and healthy living within the Town. These initiatives are also supported in the PMP under the following recommendations:

**Recommendation #59** – Foster Stakeholder partnerships to enhance the long-term stewardship of trails and greenways.

**Recommendation # 61** – Include adequate and safe infrastructure for bicyclist and pedestrians (i.e., on-road bike lanes, pedestrian sidewalks, and crosswalks at signalized intersections) through road construction and improvements, where appropriate and feasible.

Lastly, the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation - Tourism Adaptation Fund applied for by Administration in order to support efficient and effective recovery efforts in the tourism form the negative impacts caused by COVID-19. The funding application has been approved.

### 3. **DISCUSSION:**

This report seeks Council approval or affirmation for expenditures and funding sources for various initiatives not included in the approved budget and to advise Council that purchases were made for items not in the approved budget. Although funding was received to fund the purchase from other sources authority to incur the expenditure needs to be approved by Council.

It should be noted that a policy is required to establish community funding partnerships with a formal process and procedures in order to secure funding and initiatives that arise. This appears to be occurring more frequently as the senior levels of government and local groups are providing funding opportunities outside of the budget process. This was a recommendation contained within the PMP as recommendation # 32 which states the following:

**Recommendation #32** – Prepare a community funding policy to define the role of public involvement (e.g., municipal grants) and fundraising in the ongoing management of the Town's parks system Going forward, Administration will work to seek such approvals either within budget recommendations or through in-year reports to Council in advance of committing to or expending funds, and will ensure procurement is in compliance with the approved Policy.

In some circumstances, timelines for funding applications are such that Administration is not able to seek Council approval to make a funding application in advance of the application deadline. Where such an application is made in advance of seeking Council approval to do so, Administration will ensure that such applications are limited to seeking funding for existing service levels or new service levels within the approved budget.

**Wooden Planter Boxes (8) for Community Gardens at 320 Richmond Street and Amherstburg Community Foundation Grant Funding**

The Amherstburg Community Foundation (ACF) has awarded the Town grant funding of \$12,000 for the implementation of community gardens to be located at 320 Richmond Street in Amherstburg. Administration in collaboration with MYAC and the Horticultural Society of Amherstburg have been working collectively to secure funding to build the gardens at this location. The project includes construction of 8 wooden planter boxes for \$12,000 including net HST, which will be capital assets of the Town. ACS will provide the garden program as part of their operations, with no operating costs or obligations of the Town. The estimated useful life of the wooden planter boxes is 5 to 8 years and the assets would not be renewed unless a new funding source was available in future. Administration recommends that Council support this initiative by accepting grant funding in the amount of \$12,000 from ACF and that the funds be used for wooden planter boxes to be used by ACS for a community garden program at 320 Richmond Street.

### **Mobile Plastic Planter Boxes (10) for Community Gardens at 320 Richmond and Application for Funding – Federal Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) - Youth Innovation Grant**

To further aid the community garden initiative, Administration in collaboration with MYAC sought funding from the Federal Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) Youth Innovation Grant which is a grant that is sponsored by Employment and Social Development of Canada. The objective of the EAF grant is to support community based projects across Canada that improve accessibility, remove barriers, and enable Canadians with disabilities to participate in and contribute to their community. Funding for this grant specifically stated that it must be applied for by youth within the community. A member of MYAC led writing of the grant application as the youth accessibility leader, in collaboration with Administration. The vision for the project is an accessible community garden located at 320 Richmond through the purchase of ten (10) GREEN CIRCLE garden wheelchair accessible planters. The planters offer unrivaled wheelchair access, growing potential and comfort while seated or standing up. In addition, the GREEN CIRCLE garden planters use hydroponics to grow bigger, healthier plants. The innovative gardening stations offer one size-fits-all design that optimizes space to create a comfortable high yielding garden system.

The project includes the purchase of ten (10) accessible plastic, mobile planter boxes at a cost of \$10,000 including net HST, to be funded by the EAF grant. ACS has agreed to help plant and tend to the gardens as part of their operations, with no operating costs or obligations of the Town. The estimated useful life of the plastic planter boxes is 10 years and the assets would not be renewed unless a new funding source was available in future.

### **Bike Repair Stations (2) and Bike Racks with Concrete Pads (4) and application for grant funding under the CWATS Municipal Partnership Program (MPP)**

As noted above, Administration applied for funding under the MPP in 2020 and again in 2021 to support a project to install 2 bike repair stations with concrete pads at a cost not to exceed \$11,000 including net HST (2020 application) and a project to install 4 bike racks with concrete pads at a cost not to exceed \$22,000 including net HST (2021 application); all to be funded 50% by MPP and 50% by the Town.

Though the capital purchase was not approved in the 2020 Budget, the two bike repair stations with concrete pads were purchased in 2020 at a cost of approximately \$11,000;

Administration will follow up with the County of Essex to obtain the related 2020 MPP grant funding. The plan is to install one bike repair station with concrete pad on the waterfront lands (former Duffy's property) and one at Toddy Jones Park.

The purchase and installation of the 4 bike racks with concrete pads is planned for 2021, to be funded 50% by the MPP grant and 50% by the Town.

These items are/will be new Tangible Capital Assets of the Town and will provide a benefit to users at a reduced cost. However going forward the Town will be responsible for both operating and capital renewal costs.

### **Outdoor Furniture and Fixtures (picnic tables, planter stands and bollards) and application for Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation - Tourism Adaptation Fund – Grant (SOTC-TAF)**

Administration applied for funding under the SOTC-TAF toward the purchase of outdoor furniture and fixtures to accommodate social distancing and to facilitate events and gatherings, such as Open Air weekends, during in compliance with pandemic safety guidance and for the future.

The project includes the purchase of eight (8) ADA wheelchair accessible picnic tables and 5 picnic tables and benches for the Kings Navy Yard Park Parkette (fountain area) which will increase current accessible and safe distanced seating in a public gathering location. It also includes the purchase of ten (10) steel support planter bases for under the stone planters that will increase labour efficiency when needing to move the planters that are used during public events and regular operations. Finally, the project includes the purchase of 50 flex post bollards to be used for street closures for downtown special events and gatherings.

The total project cost for purchase and installation of these items is not to exceed \$20,000 including net HST, to be funded by the SOTC-TAF grant. Though the capital purchase was not approved in the 2021 Budget, these assets have been purchased. Further, these items are Tangible Capital Assets (TCA) of the Town for which the Town will incur both operating and capital renewal costs going forward.

#### **4. RISK ANALYSIS:**

There is risk to the Town financially if we do not seek financial funding opportunities to reduce the operating and capital costs to the Town. There is also risk associated with policy non-compliance presently as those projects identified in the report were unauthorized. Unauthorized spending occurs when Administration moves forward to seek grants without Council approval and undertakes the works associated with the grant application/approval from senior levels of government or other third parties. In the case of the projects presented above this issue of noncompliance was identified and is relevant. In identifying this issue Administration will work to educate and ensure that staff will not proceed forward with new initiatives going forward subject to Council approval or until a funding/expenditure policy is approved by Council to allow such endeavours to proceed.

Should Council support the community gardens initiative, approval of the recommendations associated with funding the community gardens is needed to avoid a missed opportunity to grow plants this season.

Not accepting the recommendations of this report could lead to political and financial risk with senior government levels that approved funding applications and with community partners and youth that have been instrumental in securing funds needed for the various initiatives.

## 5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The financial impact of the projects outlined in this report are estimated as follows, **excluding** any ongoing costs for operating and capital maintenance and asset renewal:

<b>Capital Project: Planter Boxes - Community Gardens 320 Richmond</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual (incl. net HST)</b>	<b>Variance (over)/ under</b>
<b>Project Cost:</b>			
Construction of 8 Wooden Planter Boxes	\$ -	\$12,000	(\$12,000)
Purchase of 10 Accessible GREEN CIRCLE Planter Boxes	-	10,000	( 10,000)
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$22,000</b>	<b>(\$22,000)</b>
<b>Project Funding:</b>			
Donation – ACF	\$ -	\$12,000	(\$12,000)
Federal Grant (EAF)	-	10,000	( 10,000)
<b>Total Project Funding</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$22,000</b>	<b>(\$22,000)</b>

<b>Capital Project: 2 Bike Repair Stations with Concrete Pads and 4 Bike Racks with Concrete Pads</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual (incl. net HST)</b>	<b>Variance (over)/ under</b>
<b>Project Cost:</b>			
Bike Repair Stations (2) with concrete pads	\$ -	\$ 11,000	(\$ 11,000)
Bike Racks (4) with anchors on concrete pads	-	22,000	( 22,000)
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$33,000</b>	<b>(\$33,000)</b>
<b>Project Funding:</b>			
Grant – County of Essex (CWATS)	\$ -	\$ 16,500	(\$ 16,500)
Transfer from Reserve – New Capital	-	16,500	( 16,500)
<b>Total Project Funding</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$33,000</b>	<b>(\$33,000)</b>

<b>Capital Project: Outdoor Furniture and Fixtures (picnic tables, planter stands and bollards)</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual (incl. net HST)</b>	<b>Variance (over)/ under</b>
<b>Project Cost:</b>			
Metal picnic tables (3 accessible)	\$ -	\$ 2,427	(\$ 2,427)
Metal picnic tables with benches (5)	-	4,145	( 4,145)
Metal planter stands (10)	-	4,853	( 4,853)
Flex Post and Bollards (50)	-	8,575	( 8,575)
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>(\$ 20,000)</b>
<b>Project Funding:</b>			
Grant (SOTC-TAF)	\$ -	\$20,000	(\$20,000)
<b>Total Project Funding</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>(\$20,000)</b>

Financial impacts to the Town for operating and capital maintenance and renewal costs will be reflected in the 2021 variance and projection reports and in future budget recommendations as applicable. The TCA will be included in the Town's TCA inventory and in future Asset Management Plans.

#### **6. CONSULTATIONS:**

Anne Rota – Manager of Tourism and Culture  
Justin Rousseau – Treasurer  
Cheryl Horrobin – Director of Corporate Services

#### **7. CONCLUSION:**

The grant funding initiatives and capital projects outlined in this report assist in addressing the ongoing need to find alternative social and economic improvement funding that contribute to healthy outcomes, a vibrant community and pandemic resilient strategies.




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Heidi Baillargeon  
**Director of Community and Protective Services**

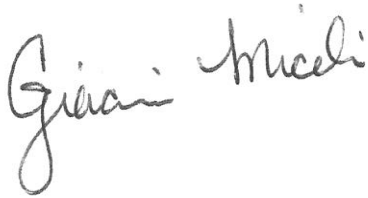
## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Approval for Grant Funding, Applications and Donations for Community Gardens and Active Transportation Initiatives .docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jun 11, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Cheryl Horrobin



John Miceli



Paula Parker