



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

Date: November 29, 2018

From: Elizabeth Ayers
Director, Recreation Services

File: 11-7000-01/2018-Vol 01

Re: Resilient Streets Outreach Program

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled "Resilient Streets Outreach Program" dated November 29, 2018, from the Director of Recreation Services, be received for information.

Elizabeth Ayers
Director, Recreation Services
(604-247-4669)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO	

Staff Report

Origin

This report provides Council with a review of the Resilient Streets project. The project was funded by a grant from the British Columbia Healthy Communities Society, with a focus on building social connectedness in communities.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #2 A Vibrant, Active and Connected City:

Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs, services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond's demographics, rich heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active, caring, and connected communities.

2.1. *Strong neighbourhoods.*

2.3. *Outstanding places, programs and services that support active living, wellness and a sense of belonging.*

This report supports the Community Wellness Strategy 2018-2023 Focus Area #2:

Enhance physical and social connectedness within and among neighbourhoods and communities.

Analysis

Project Initiation

The British Columbia Healthy Communities Society, through the PlanH Healthy Communities Capacity Building Fund, selected Richmond as one of four demonstration communities in British Columbia for the Resilient Streets project with a grant amount of \$16,000. Other participating pilot communities in 2018 included the Resort Municipality of Whistler, Sunshine Coast Regional District and the City of Powell River. Through this grant, the City hired a part-time coordinator to administer the project. SHIFT Collaborative, a Victoria based consulting company, provided support during implementation as part of the funders contribution to the project.

Objectives

The Resilient Streets model focuses on supporting social connections between immediate neighbours on a localized residential street or building level. The program is delivered through a combination of educational workshops/events, community resources and micro grants for neighbour-led community gatherings or projects.

Project objectives included:

- Enhancing social connectedness among neighbours at a residential street or building level;

- Increasing neighbour-to-neighbour collaboration and community building;
- Building greater local resiliency in times of emergency;
- Developing local capacity and leadership in neighbourhood-based planning;
- Facilitating intercultural dialogue and connections; and
- Increasing awareness of local programs and services.

Community Partnerships

A group of community partners (the “Collaborative Table”) was established with a broad reach in the community. The Collaborative Table met throughout the project to assist in the planning of the project scope, monitoring the progress, and promoting the concept and activities of the project. The partners also worked together to devise an approach that was most appropriate for Richmond.

The Collaborative Table included:

- East Richmond Community Association;
- Vancouver Coastal Health;
- Richmond Public Library;
- Richmond Fire Service;
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police – Richmond Detachment;
- City Centre Community Association;
- Richmond Emergency Social Services; and
- Richmond School District No. 38.

Additional project consultation was provided by:

- Richmond Cares Richmond Gives;
- Richmond Food Security Society; and
- Touchstone Family Association.

Selection of Neighbourhoods

The Collaborative Table reviewed the project objectives and determined the neighbourhoods that the project was to be delivered in. The East and West Cambie planning areas were selected for the project focus. These neighbourhoods were chosen as they presented opportunities for building resilience. West Cambie has a number of new developments, with residents new to Richmond, while East Cambie is experiencing a turnover in residents.

Project Activities

City Centre Community Centre and East Richmond Community Association staff organized project activities. The two components of the project were outreach events and grant distributions for residents’ activity plans with their immediate neighbours.

Project launch events were hosted at the Cambie Branch Library, East Richmond Community Hall and Tomsett Elementary. Cambie residents had the opportunity to access Resilient Streets materials and micro grant applications, along with other community building resources. The launch events engaged over 70 people and each included an evening of dinner, presentations, and group activities such as community mapping, crafts, and an active game. An important part of the launch events was engaging in dialogue – residents sharing their experiences and connecting directly with their neighbours.

Staff also attended other community events and engaged with 250 residents, informing them of the grant opportunities as well as providing suggestions on community building with neighbours.

Residents in the project areas had the opportunity to apply for micro grants of up to \$200 to be used for social gatherings or projects with their immediate neighbours. Residents were encouraged to think of something fun to do with their immediate neighbours such as having a party, sharing a meal, doing a craft or project together, or connecting through other creative ideas.

Location	Number of Grants Given	Grants Given to Residents of Multi-family Housing	Grants Given to Residents of Single-family Housing
East Cambie	2	7	2
West Cambie	7		

The grants provided opportunities for neighbours to hold events such as neighbourhood barbeques, pizza socials and art group activities.

Project Outcomes

Staff attended various community events and engaged with numerous residents, providing information on grant opportunities, community building and how to connect with fellow neighbours.

Grant recipients gave positive feedback about their experiences. One grant recipient said “we spent a wonderful time together. I told them of my experience traveling and taught my neighbours how to use WeChat.” Another said, “Since [the event], I’ve managed to form a WhatsApp group that connects about sixteen of the houses on our one block.”

Applicants expressed a strong desire to connect with their neighbours. When applying for a grant, one applicant stated “I would very much like to organize a spring or summer block party with a barbeque and little activities for kids to bring people in our complex together so that we can officially put names to faces. I know we all feel safe in our community, but I don't feel connected. And with connectedness comes attachment, and with attachment, comes care and support.”

Another community member attended a project launch event and was very interested in the project. Later, the person saw on a Facebook post that breaks-ins were happening on their own block. This motivated the community member to apply for a grant to enable neighbours to meet each other and discuss ways to support each other.

Project Findings

Residents in the project area have a strong desire to meet their neighbours, make new connections and collaborate to improve their community. At launch events, community gathering conversations often centered around isolation, community building and intercultural experiences. Residents in the area were empowered by the Resilient Streets initiative to take the first steps in getting to know their neighbours.

At the same time, residents in the area often perceive barriers and lack of personal capacity to build neighbourhood connections. Regardless of cultural backgrounds, residents spoke about their desire to connect with neighbours, but some were nervous about their language skills when communicating with their neighbours. Residents turned to project staff for not only technical assistance, but also encouragement to take the first step in building local community. For neighbourhoods that lack capacity, a facilitator is essential to developing community and initiating neighbourhood activities.

Future Opportunities

Although the grant funding ends at the end of 2018, there are opportunities for staff to review activities that will reinforce community resilience. These include:

- providing resource material at community events about how neighbours can support community initiatives in their own neighbourhood;
- researching the opportunity to test a “Get to Know your Neighbours” campaign in a selected neighbourhood;
- reviewing community building opportunities that Community Associations might promote and support in their service areas; and
- continuing to promote and support community building initiatives presented by the City and Richmond-based agencies such as Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives.

Financial Impact

None

Conclusion

Richmond residents appreciate the value of connected and resilient neighbourhoods. The Resilient Streets project assisted residents in building resilience through a variety of activities, and reinforced Council term goals and City Strategies (including the Youth, Seniors, Wellness, and Community Social Development Strategies) that promote inclusion and a sense of belonging. This project demonstrated that Richmond residents are motivated and eager to build community in their neighbourhoods.



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