



To: General Purposes Committee **Date:** August 25, 2006
From: Kate Sparrow **File:** 11-7000-00/Vol 01
 Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
Re: School Community Connections Funding

Staff Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the joint application by the Richmond School Board and the City of Richmond for \$40,000 to undertake step 2 of the School Community Connections program, targeting City Centre and Hamilton as priority areas for consideration.

K Sparrow

Kate Sparrow
 Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
 (4129)

Att.

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ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
Parks	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>KS</i>		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES	NO	REVIEWED BY CAO	YES	NO
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>DWS</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>KS</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

The School Community Connections Program was developed to encourage partnerships between schools and local governments to greater utilize school facilities for broader community purposes. It is designed to promote sustainable and innovative collaboration between school boards and local governments and take into account the needs of the community as a whole.

The BC School Trustees Association and the Union of BC Municipalities, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, jointly manage the School Community Connections Program.

Findings Of Fact

The School Community Connections Program is divided into three components.

Phase 1. Making the Connection

Up to \$5,000 per potential "Connections" Partnership to assist school boards and local governments to make initial contact, to identify and assess the viability of embarking on a joint initiative involving the use of school facilities for broader community use.

2. Developing the Connection

Up to \$40,000 per "Connections" Partnership to support the planning of a proposed use of a new or existing school asset for broader community use. The program will fund one initiative per school district and cover planning costs associated with program assessment, delivery models, and other planning activities associated with the project.

3. Completing the Connection

Up to \$125,000 per "Connections" Partnership to support the implementation of Connections projects, by providing highly leveraged funding for start-up costs, including minor capital costs. Funding is intended to provide up to 25% of implementation costs with the balance provided by local government, school boards or other stakeholders.

Analysis

The Richmond School Division applied for and received Phase 1 and worked collaboratively with city staff and a variety of other organizations to have some broad discussions related to the objectives of this program.

Since Council adopted the vision "for Richmond to be the best place in North America to raise children and youth" in 2005, the city has been working with a variety of major partners (Richmond School District, Richmond Health Services, Richmond RCMP, the Ministry for Children and Family Development) to advance the vision and the asset-based approach. When the School Community Connections program was announced, these partners felt it was a good opportunity to explore ways in which the already extensive use of school assets by the community might be expanded or existing use might be enhanced, and also to advance on a broader scale the vision and asset-development approach.

In Phase 1, a number of round table discussions were held to “make the connection” as outlined in the program. Through that process, discussions identified a number of key points that ranged well beyond joint use of facilities. These included:

- Communications and shared understanding of Asset Development – there is a need for an opportunity to link all organizations in helping to promote and adopt asset development in Richmond;
- Space and Facility issues – all agreed that there is potential for more extensive and/or more joint use of facilities such as school libraries, theatres, and art facilities; however the complexities of funding and the pressures on all agencies to maximize revenues was also discussed. There was a feeling that there is an opportunity for some “out of box solutions” related to space and facility needs. Through discussions, it was also identified that the two areas of the city that would significantly benefit from increased facility collaboration are City Centre and Hamilton.
- Programs – there was agreement that there is potential for more joint programming.
- Community Development and Children’s Participation – There was a sense that children are more disconnected from their community now than was the case in the past and there is an opportunity to reconnect children and community, which is important for building a sense of citizenship.

Phase 2

Phase 2 of the program is intended to support the planning costs associated with assessing the type of programs(s) to be delivered, the most efficient use of facilities and other planning costs associated with the project. This phase of the program also requires that a resolution from both the school board and local government council approving the application and accepting the terms and conditions of the program as set out in Schedule B (Attachment 1).

One of the concerns with the way the School Community Connections program is set up is that Phase 3, should a project move forward, provides 25% of capital and/or other costs up to \$125,000. The remaining 75% of the project funds must come from school boards, local governments or other stakeholders.

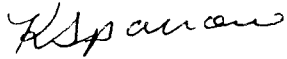
With this in mind, staff of both the City and School District feel that through the planning process in Phase 2, there is an opportunity to involve the community in a broader discussion about the Vision “to be the best place in North America to raise children and youth”; advance the asset-development approach in the community; and to look at strategies to expand or enhance programs that make joint use of facilities. The focus would be primarily on City Centre and Hamilton to see if there is a feasible project that could proceed to Phase 3. The Phase 2 planning process would also identify potential partners and funding opportunities for a phase 3 projects.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact for the City of Richmond at this time other than for staff to participate in the process.

Conclusion

The City of Richmond and Richmond School District have a long history of joint use of facilities for the benefit of the community as a whole. With budget restraints it has become increasingly challenging to meet community needs for space and facilities. A broad conversation in the community about the needs and opportunities for new ways of approaching joint use of facilities could result in some new solutions. The provincial government, through its School Community Connections Program is offering funding to facilitate this planning process.



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Attachment 1

SCHEDULE B

SCHOOL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM "Terms and Conditions"

In applying for the School Community Connections grant jointly managed by UBCM and the BCSTA, the following terms and conditions must be agreed to by the local government and school board, and will form part of the funding agreement.

1. That, as the applicants, school boards and local governments are jointly responsible for receipt of funds and application and reporting functions, even when other agencies have been delegated responsibility for undertaking the project(s).
2. That all projects funded under this program must support the program goals of expanding and/or enhancing the use of school facilities for broader community use.
3. That funding will not be used to duplicate or subsidize existing programs.
4. That, where a funded project is not completed within a 12 month time frame, a progress report including funds expended to date, will be provided to the Program Coordinator.
5. That a final report detailing what was achieved will be prepared and submitted to the Program Coordinator on project completion.
6. That any unused funds will be returned to the program coordinator on expiry of the program.
7. That cost overages are the responsibility of the school board and local government partner(s).