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**Date:** February 25, 2021  
**To:** Mayor and Council  
**Author:** Karen Loney  
**RE:** Healthy Communities Initiative Grant  
**Report No.:** 2-2021

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## **AIM**

For Council to approve that the theme of "Kingsville Plays Outdoors" will be used in the Government of Canada Healthy Communities Initiative grant and approve administration to apply.

## **BACKGROUND**

COVID has impacted everyone. However, there has been a disproportionate impact for people working in small business, tourism, and the arts and cultural sectors. Isolation has changed almost everyone's lifestyles as people have stayed indoors to reduce the spread. Additionally, people living in poverty or challenged in accessing their basic needs have been significantly impacted more by COVID.<sup>1</sup>

The Government of Canada has created a grant program called the Healthy Communities Initiative which Community Foundations and partners administer. Municipalities can apply for funding. Applicants must submit their proposal by March 9, 2021, 5:00 P.M.; funding requests cannot exceed \$250,000, with expenses incurred between April 1, 2020, and June 30, 2022.

The purpose of the Healthy Communities initiative is to,

- respond to identified needs arising from impacts of COVID-19;

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<sup>1</sup> Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). COVID-19 in Ontario - a focus on material deprivation: January 15, 2020 to June 3, 2020 Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/epi/2020/06/covid-19-epi-material-deprivation.pdf?la=en>

- create and adapt public spaces, and programming and services for public spaces in the public interest;
- demonstrate consideration of and connections with the community;
- serve the general public or a community disproportionately impacted by COVID-19; and,
- fall within the three Healthy Communities Initiative theme areas of
  - Safe and vibrant public spaces,
  - Improved mobility options and,
  - Digital solutions.

Applicants for the grant need to demonstrate how projects will engage the community and embed equity in the project design and implementation. The following questions on the application showcase the philosophy of the initiative.

- Please describe relationships with your community (including equity-seeking groups and those with specific socioeconomic needs) and how community engagement is integrated into your work
- "Nothing about us, without us"; Are individuals representative of the population(s) you're seeking to serve involved in the decision making and delivery of your project?

## **DISCUSSION**

To support safe and vibrant public spaces, increase mobility options, programming, and services, an application called Kingsville Plays Outdoors has been created. The following three concepts have been identified as ways to support groups disproportionately impacted by COVID. These groups include the business, tourism and art sector, plus partnering with others to identify equity-seeking engagement opportunities to fully develop the activities, ensuring those impacts can shape the actions.

### **Kingsville Plays Outdoors**

#### **Safe and Open Streets**

On February 22, Council approved that the town will lead open Streets in 2021. Open Streets aligns with the grant criteria of safe and vibrant public spaces and improved mobility options. Opening streets to people creates opportunities for safe physical activity and social engagement and makes it easier to use mobility aids. When roads are open, it allows more generous space for people to maintain an appropriate distance from one another and businesses to expand their footprint while also allowing vendors from outside the downtown core to participate. Creating a creative space can be possible through engaging arts to perform, allowing a sector to generate much-needed revenue.

A grant funding request of \$70,000 is proposed to cover the following needs:

- To create places where artists can showcase art and music, a shade structure will be purchased and installed outside the Carnegie Arts and Cultural Centre (\$50,000).

- A part-time Open Streets Coordinator will be hired (\$20,000) to develop partnerships and implement the event,

### Safe Pop-up Play

Through Council's recent Strategic Mid-term planning process, the community identified a desire for increased recreation programs. COVID has limited children's access to recreation opportunities. A 'Safe Pop-up Play' is designed to align with the grant criteria of Safe and vibrant public spaces and improved mobility options.

The Safe Pop-up Play program is a free recreation program offered in public parks and spaces. It will encourage children to play safely outdoors by providing unique opportunities for unstructured free play. This program turns a park, waterfront area or community space into a fun and inviting space that promotes physical activity, spending time as a family, and developing essential physical literacy skills. Accessible equipment will be purchased to support children of all abilities to increase mobility. Also, infrastructure is requested to enhance parks and waterfronts to improve community access and recreational programming.

A grant funding request of \$119,000 is proposed to cover the following needs.

- Equipment: Summer recreation staff can implement the program, but play equipment is needed (\$15,000).
- Two mobility mats will be purchased and installed at the beach; this creates wheelchair, strollers and walkers accessibility (\$25,000).
- Metal picnic tables, which allow cleaning options, will be purchased for parks and open space (\$24,000).
- A shade structure will be purchased that supports sun safety and options for covered programming (\$30,000).
- Three bicycle repair stations will be installed to support active transportation, increased mobility and will be used for cycling programming (\$25,000).

### Safe Cultural Experiences

Safe Cultural Experiences will be developed in partnership with non-profit groups; these include the Arts Society of Kingsville, the Sun Parlor Folk Music Society, the South Essex Community Council, and the people they represent. The 'Safe Cultural Experiences' will be developed through engaging people and voices from those impacted by COVID, such as artists, musicians, seniors and people unemployed or accessing settlement services.

The 'Safe Cultural Experience' initiative aligns with all three of the grant criteria.

Proposed activities include the following but will be co-created with user groups,

- Art and music therapy classes,
- Pop-up art and music experiences,
- Seminars or classes on how creative arts support positive mental health,
- Creation of public art,
- Activities to engage people who are isolated or may not access outdoor spaces such as creative art kits or access to virtual programming will be created, and,

- Supports to reduce barriers in accessing programs such as transportation, food or childcare.

The Safe Cultural Experience activities will highlight the impact of COVID on people's mental health, support skill-building, increase programming, break down barriers and connect people. Completed work or artist performing will also be embedded within the Open Streets event, a potential Cultural Day event and over the Christmas/holiday season.

A grant funding request of \$61,000 is proposed to cover the following needs:

- Recognizing the art sector has been significantly impacted by COVID, artists will be employed and paid a fair wage for their performances, expertise to develop 'creative art' kits or activities, and any virtual or digital programming they are involved in,
- Supplies and materials,
- Resources to reduce barriers,
- Diversity and equity training, and,
- A part-time creative arts lead would be hired to oversee the 'Safe Cultural Experience' initiative.

## **LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Strive to make the Town of Kingsville a more accessible community.

Promote the betterment, self-image and attitude of the community.

To promote a safe community.

Improve recreational and cultural facilities and opportunities within the Town of Kingsville.

Support growth of the business community.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Should the Town of Kingsville successfully receive, the Healthy Communities grant, staff from Recreation Programming, Special Events, Tourism and staff from Municipal Facilities and Property will implement the activities within existing budgeted resources.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Art Society of Kingsville  
 Sun Parlor Folk Music Society  
 South Essex Community Council  
 Manager of Municipal Facilities and Property

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council directs administration to submit a Healthy Communities Initiative grant application of \$250,000 called "Kingsville Plays Outdoors."

*Karen Loney*

Karen Loney, MA

Manager of Recreation Programming and Special Events