



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Mandy Keller, Senior Manager of Community Development

DATE: June 19, 2023

REPORT NO.: RP-2023-008

SUBJECT: Community Partnership Program (CPP) Review and Guideline Update

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. RP-2023-008 dated June 19, 2023, regarding Community Partnership Program (CPP) Review and Guideline Update, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the proposed Community Partnership Program (CPP) policy and guideline updates, attached as Appendix A and as outlined in this Report No. RP-2023-008, be approved;

AND FURTHER THAT Council repeal the previous Community Partnership Program (CPP) policy, PLCY-REC-2021-0002 in its entirety;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve an exemption to the fundraising ineligibility for the four events specified in this Report No. RP-2023-008. However, any future additions or changes in the scope of these events would need to comply with the updated guidelines.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The Community Partnership Program (CPP) approved in May 2021 for the allocation of municipal funds and resources to eligible community groups and organizations remains a valued resource after two years of implementation.
- Staff efforts for continuous improvement of the CPP have resulted in recommended guideline updates to be implemented for the 2024 program.

- Recommended guideline updates include; name change to the Community Grant Program (CGP), simplified guidelines and application process, strengthened ineligibility criteria (specifically the exclusion of fundraising), and added mechanism for self-sufficiency.
- There are four fundraising-based events that would not meet the eligibility of the updated guidelines. It is recommended that these events be exempt from the ineligibility of fundraisers due to their long-standing history of approval (more than five years). However, any future additions or changes in the scope of these events would need to comply with the updated guidelines.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

Through Report RP-2021-0013, dated May 25, 2021, council approved the Community Partnership Program (CPP) for the allocation of municipal funds and resources to eligible community groups and organizations for community-based activities, events, and initiatives in place of the Municipal Assistance Policy (MAP).

Previous to Council's approval of the Community Partnership Program (CPP) the Municipal Assistance Policy (MAP) had been in practice since 2008. The transition from the MAP to CPP occurred after extensive research of best practices for grant administration, stakeholder engagement, council workshops and once clear objectives for the alternative program were established.

The Community Partnership Program (CPP) is one component of the community development model that is used by the Town to support the various community groups in delivering recreation, initiating projects, and increasing community engagement. The Town's annual funding of \$77,900 produces a high level of return on investment in many ways including resultant tourism, meeting the community's expectations for assistance, the encouragement of volunteerism and greater use of Town facilities.

Throughout the first two years of implementing the CPP, staff have put forth efforts for continuous improvement of the program, including the following:

- Staff have consulted with potential applicants and recipients to help identify barriers to the program. This has led to administrative changes in the guidelines such as application process improvements and improved clarity of the program documents.
- Staff have invested time consulting with applicants whose proposals were not recommended for funding; this provided an opportunity to offer feedback to the applicants and hear applicants' challenges and concerns.
- Staff have noted areas that require further attention and discussion based on cross-departmental coordination and challenges faced during the application review process.

- Staff have conducted a review of many municipal grant programs and other best practices that have been improved or introduced since the development and adoption of the CPP by the Town.

Based on the above and overall review, Staff have identified opportunities to be implemented for the program, starting in 2024, that will ensure the CPP continues to address the needs of local community groups and remains in line with other municipal granting best practices.

As per policy Staff can make minor administrative changes to the Community Partnership Program (CPP); however, it is practice to seek Council approval when substantive changes are being recommended. As such, the purpose of this report is to seek council’s approval to adopt the recommended updates (summarized in the table below). The complete updated CPP policy and guideline package can be found in Appendix A of this report (note recommended name change).

Recommended Update	Impact of Update	Rationale
Program name change from Community Partnership Program (CPP) to Community Grant Program (CGP)	Administrative in nature, to provide clarity as to the exact intent of this program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town partners in many ways with the community, however the expectation for this program is exclusively grants to community groups. The word “partnership” with regards to this program has caused confusion. • This program provides grants both through direct payment to groups or by applying the grant amount to pay for required municipal fees and resources. • The Town has expected cost recoveries associated with amenity permitting, borrowing of equipment and staff labor that are directly offset by the grant amount. Although a group may not receive the grant directly the value of their grant is internally transferred from the community grant program budget allocation to the appropriate operational cost centre.
Simplified guidelines and application	<p>Reduced grant opportunities to 3 areas; Community projects, Neighbourhood projects and Special events.</p> <p>Key criteria highlighted for greater clarity as to how activities, events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In acknowledgment that groups/organizations are volunteer based it is thought that the simplification and clarity presented through the updates allows for ease in application and minimized paperwork • The simplified process includes reduction of application questions that are now solely targeted to demonstrating the key criteria for evaluation.

	and initiatives will be evaluated.	
Added details regarding ineligibility including activities specific to teams and clubs, political and/or advocacy activity or anything that may be deemed discriminatory as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code.	Clarity provided with regards to ineligibility for potential applicants and the applicant review committee members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This change is consistent with similar grant programs in surrounding municipalities.
Strengthened position regarding ineligibility of fundraising-based activities, events, and initiatives where the primary intent is to raise funds.	Provides greater clarity for applicants and review committee members that Community Grant Program funds cannot be allocated to activities, events, and initiatives that are intended to fund the organization, to support a provincial or national organization/campaign or for redistribution of funds to a third-party (for example bursaries, scholarships and/or direct financial donations).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been found that in general municipalities do not directly contribute to charities, individuals, causes or programs because in doing so the Town would be using tax revenue for a purpose other than that for which it was primarily intended (the delivery of municipal services). • Previously guidelines stated that fundraising-based activities, events, and initiatives would be considered on a case-by-case basis which was difficult to administer impartially. This change allows for greater clarity. • Additionally, staff have identified inconsistencies in the community where most fundraising-based activities, events, and initiatives have not received municipal grants although a very small group have. This change will prevent this inequity with new events moving forward.
Added mechanism for self-sufficiency to ensure the activity, event, and/or initiative is sustainable and not solely dependent on municipal funding.	Applicants are now required to match any grant request with the equivalent value of volunteer time (minimum wage) and/or other in-kind donations or funds (50%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is common in other municipal grant programs is that there is a means to support granting to groups/organizations that can equally contribute. This change provides clarity around this expectation.

The recommended updates to the CPP policy and guidelines are intended to fulfill the objectives of the program and strengthen staff's ability to administer and defend grant allocations fairly.

There are four fundraising-based events that would not meet the eligibility of the updated guidelines. It is recommended that these events be exempt from the ineligibility of fundraisers due to their long-standing history of approval (more than five years). However, any future additions or changes in the scope of these events would need to comply with the updated guidelines. This is applicable to the following events:

- Cancer Assistance Services Halton Hills (CASHh) - “Tour the Hills” event (\$1900).
- Community Alliance for Reaching Everyone (CARE) - “Movie Under the Stars” event (\$700).
- Georgetown Kinsmen - Christmas tree sales (\$400).
- Head For the Hills - “Head for the Hills Beer Festival” event (\$4000).

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report aligns to the Town’s Strategic plan recognizing the value to provide responsive, effective municipal government and strong leadership in the effective and efficient delivery of municipal services.

This report also identifies fiscal and corporate management as one of the Town’s Strategic priorities.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Stakeholder meetings and consultations have been conducted throughout the last two granting cycles of the Community Partnership Program (CPP) as discussed above.

Additionally, communications were made, and discussions organized with 2023 CPP recipients regarding the recommended changes contained in this report (including the four fundraising based initiatives recommended for exemption). Key feedback from these consultations included:

- Encouragement that budgeted support for this grant program should be inline with other like municipalities to ensure that groups are being provided the greatest levels of support for their activities, events, and initiatives.
- Ineligibility of fundraising activities/events/initiatives presents a challenge for some provincial or national organization/campaigns whose formats do not allow for local groups to hold monies to be used toward event components such as permits (i.e., all monies must be directed to the overarching organization).

- Recognition is sought by groups that while fundraising is a component or the main reason for putting on an event, the event itself contributes to community vibrancy, revenue generation for local businesses and other.
- Recognition is sought by groups that while fundraising is a component of what they do as a group, their greater contributions are around volunteerism, community engagement, collaboration in addressing community issues and in one case, as a provider of health care.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Staff from Clerks, Business, Environment and Culture, and Finance all provided feedback for the review and update of the community partnership program (CPP) policy and guidelines.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report is administrative in nature and does not have any financial implications.

Reviewed and approved by,

Mandy Keller, Senior Manager of Community Development

Paul Damaso, Commissioner of Recreation & Parks

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer