



REPORT

REPORT TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

REPORT FROM: Damian Szybalski, Manager of Sustainability

DATE: June 27, 2014

REPORT NO.: PDS-2014-0051

RE: Community Sustainability Investment Fund
Recommended Funding Applications
File No.: D27-IN

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PDS-2014-0051, dated June 27, 2014, regarding requests for funding from the Community Sustainability Investment Fund be received;

AND FURTHER THAT, subject to receiving any outstanding information from the applicant(s), Council authorize the level of support requested by each applicant, as modified and recommended by the Town Sustainability Implementation Committee, and as reviewed by Town staff;

AND FURTHER THAT the funding of the application by St. John Ambulance be deferred until the applicant can demonstrate that the submitted proposal will not duplicate existing initiatives;

AND FURTHER THAT Town staff be authorized to make minor refinements to the Community Sustainability Investment Fund, as outlined in this report.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council's approval to fund applications received through the Community Sustainability Investment Fund. It is also to recommend minor refinements to the Fund.

BACKGROUND:

In approving the recommendations of Report No. PDS-2013-0076 (dated December 10, 2013), Council approved the Application Guide and the subsequent implementation of a new Community Sustainability Investment Fund.

The purpose of the Community Sustainability Investment Fund is to enable local community groups and organizations to take on local community-based actions that directly contribute to the implementation of the Community Sustainability Strategy. The Fund provides seed funding. It is designed to help applicants leverage funding from other sources, and to establish partnerships between the Town and the community. The Fund supports the Town's Strategic Plan which has identified sustainability as one of Council's priorities.

The application submission deadline for 2014 was April 30, 2014.

A total of seven applications were received. Collectively, the applications recommended for funding should make a meaningful contribution to Halton Hills' cultural, economic, environmental and social well-being, and quality of life.

Up to a maximum of \$2000 per project, per Applicant, per intake period may be funded. In total, a maximum of \$10,000 may be funded per intake period.

For 2014, the total funding requested from the Community Sustainability Investment Fund was \$11,060. The amount requested leverages significant total projects value.

COMMENTS:

1. Applications Received and Funding Recommendation

Funding applications were first reviewed by Town staff. They were then reviewed by the Sustainability Implementation Committee. Subsequently, an additional staff review was completed. Now, applications recommended for funding are being presented to Council for final decision.

At its June 11, 2014 meeting, the Sustainability Implementation Committee discussed and ranked all funding applications.

The following tables provide a brief summary of each of the funding requests, as well as the recommendation of the Sustainability Implementation Committee, and Town staff comments.

It is important to note that, considering that this was the first application intake period for the Community Sustainability Investment Fund, flexibility was applied to the application review by Town staff in terms of such matters as the eligibility and evaluation criteria.

In addition to eligibility and ineligibility criteria, the Fund's evaluation criteria include consideration of whether a proposal:

- Directly supports the implementation of one or more goals of the Community Sustainability Strategy, and/or its pillars, vision(s) and focus areas.
- Has broad community benefits.
- Demonstrates collaboration and widespread community engagement.
- Promotes volunteerism, participation, leadership development, and maximizes community involvement, engagement and awareness.
- Offers a new service or complements an existing service, without duplication.
- Takes place within the Town of Halton Hills and benefits Halton Hills residents.
- The proposed initiative is realistic and likely to be implemented.
- Leverages other sources of funding, including matching funds and in-kind contributions.
- Promotes efficient/effective use of municipal resources.
- Facilitates self-sufficiency over the long-term.
- Demonstrates ability to achieve measurable and long-lasting results and report these to the Town.
- Is accessible, inclusive and diverse.
- Applicant's track record.

	Applicant	Supported Sustainability Pillars	Amount Requested	Amount Eligible
1	Community Development Halton (CDH)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Vibrancy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic Prosperity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Health <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Well-being	\$1500	\$1500
<p>Proposal Description (“Seed, Sow and Grow Project”): Building on the success of the Acton Community Cooperative Garden, Community Development Halton proposes the “Seed, Sow and Grow” project.</p> <p>Started in 2011, the Acton Community Garden has been established for the purpose of growing and sharing food. The garden also includes a children’s garden and will include an accessible raised bed.</p> <p>The Seeds, Sow and Grow project is a collaborative project that speaks to all the Sustainability Pillars. The Acton Cooperative Community Garden has developed a partnership with three Acton elementary schools and the Acton Library to engage children in seed starting and growing food. Children will learn about gardening as an accessible recreation activity, organic gardening and local food production. The children will be engaged as volunteer gardeners in Rotary Park. The children’s gardening efforts will contribute to the harvest of fresh and healthy local food for 180 local people per week, living in low-income households. Reusable seed starting units will be used so that the funding requested will help ensure the initiative is sustainable for years to come.</p> <p>The project will generate opportunities for children to be engaged as community volunteers, developing a sense of belonging for a community for which they can take ownership. The project will provide a learning opportunity about growing food and native plants using organic practices. In addition, gardening will be introduced as a life-long recreational activity.</p> <p>This is a unique partnership between both school boards, the Library and a grass roots group and will be an example of collaboration for collective impact for social, economic, environmental and cultural health in Halton Hills, increasing local capacity for future sustainability. This project will involve over 100 children in Acton.</p> <p>Funding is requested for seed starting units materials (e.g. plant grow lights, reflector, timers, etc) to be used on a yearly basis by all three Elementary Schools in Acton and the Acton Library, and for seeds and tools.</p>				
<p>Town Staff Comments: The Acton Community Garden is a successful existing project. The current proposal builds on the success of the existing garden. Town staff note that the applicant revised their original \$2000 request to \$1500.</p>				
<p>Recommendation: The Sustainability Implementation Committee recommends that this proposal be funded in the amount requested - \$1500.</p>				

	Applicant	Supported Sustainability Pillars	Amount Requested	Amount Eligible
2	Credit Valley Heritage Society (CVHS)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Vibrancy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Health <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Well-being	\$2000	\$2000
<p>Proposal Description (“Greening School Grounds”): The Credit Valley Heritage Society is a not-for-profit organization formed in 2008 under the Ontario Historical Society Act. It works with a variety of stakeholders, including government agencies, community-based organizations, businesses and NGOS, in supporting, preserving and celebrating the natural and cultural heritage of the Credit River watershed. CVHS’s Mission is: “The Credit Valley Heritage Society is a community-based organization working towards the betterment of the Credit River watershed. We promote, foster respect, and support planning for an ecologically healthy watershed.”</p> <p>This proposal is to prepare a landscape plan by a landscape architect to create an eco-garden naturalization plan for school grounds at L’Ecole Sacre Coeur in Georgetown. The proposal will also involve the implementation of the first phase of the project. The project will create ‘outdoor classrooms’ where children will have a learning opportunity.</p> <p>Anticipated outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of children towards the natural environment; • Promotion of environmental leadership and life-long learning opportunities; • Encouragement of a sense of community by sharing and enhancing the state of natural resources; • Expanded tree canopy; and • Promotion of biodiversity <p>Funding is requested to prepare a landscape plan and the first phase of implementation, including preliminary tree and shrub planting.</p>				
<p>Town Staff Comments: Town staff note that this is a multi-year project, and that it is proposed to be completed between 2014 and 2019. The Fund requires projects to be completed within 12 months of receiving funding. The applicant has confirmed that the funding requested from the Town will be used within 12 months, with subsequent phases of the project to follow using other sources of funding.</p> <p>It is also noted that this Application was originally submitted by the school’s Environmental Committee. Since applications from government and government agencies, such as schools, are not eligible, the application was resubmitted with the Credit Valley Heritage Society as the applicant. At the time of writing this report, an additional reference letter was outstanding. The project will be implemented on school grounds.</p>				
<p>Recommendation: The Sustainability Implementation Committee recommends that this proposal be funded in the amount requested - \$2000.</p>				

	Applicant	Supported Sustainability Pillars	Amount Requested	Amount Eligible
3	Georgetown Musictown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Vibrancy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic Prosperity	\$2000	\$1950
<p>Proposal Description (“GeorgetownMusictown.com”): Formed in 2013, the purpose of Georgetown Musictown is to grow the quality and quantity of live music in Halton Hills. The objective is to serve music audiences, venues, organizers and musicians both directly and indirectly by helping to develop the viability of the local music scene. It is also to increase citizen participation in and enjoyment of live music, quantity and quality of performing artists, and increase associated tourism revenue.</p> <p>The proposal aims to increase audience access to information by creating an extensive online (Internet) presence to improve the dissemination of meaningful information to audiences. This will be achieved by developing an up-to-date and easily accessible centralized place that highlights information on local live music offerings.</p> <p>Anticipated outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active citizen participation in and enjoyment of live music; • Improved quality and quantity of performing artists within the community; • Increased revenue for local venues; • Increased exposure and economic benefits to musicians; • Increased information sharing between venues; • Increased tourism to local music sites due to online information accessibility; and • Increased partnerships between cultural and business sectors. <p>This proposal supports the Community Sustainability Strategy as well as the Cultural Master Plan.</p> <p>Funding is requested for website creation, online seminar, weekly subscription program, graphic design, brochures, flyers, stationary, business cards, logo creation, mileage and incidentals.</p>				
<p>Town Staff Comments: Travel expenses (mileage), estimated at \$50 by the applicant, is not eligible. It is also important to note that this application appears to be from an individual rather than a formalized community organization/group. Letters of support for this proposal were received from the Halton Hills Cultural Roundtable, the Downtown Georgetown Business Improvement Area, and the Silver Creek Espresso and Wine Bar.</p>				
<p>Recommendation: The Sustainability Implementation Committee recommended that this proposal be funded in the amount requested - \$2000. Considering that travel expenses are not eligible, Town staff recommended that \$1950 be granted.</p>				

	Applicant	Supported Sustainability Pillars	Amount Requested	Amount Eligible
4	Halton Environmental Network (HEN)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Vibrancy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Health <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Well-being	\$900	\$900
<p>Proposal Description (“Outdoor Family Movie Night”): Halton Environmental Network (HEN) is a network of non-profit environmental groups and organizations operating in Halton Region. Of HEN's 45 member groups, seven are based in Halton Hills, specifically Halton North Peel Naturalist Club, Halton Peel BioDiversity Network, Norval Pit-STOP, P.O.W.E.R., Save Our Ravines, Wastewise and the Willow Park Ecology Centre.</p> <p>HEN, in partnership with Credit Valley Conservation, proposes to offer one family outdoor movie night in the summer of 2014 at the Terra Cotta Conservation Area. The movie would be followed by a hike. An environmentally-themed animated feature length film will be shown after dusk on a Friday or Saturday evening at the new amphitheater.</p> <p>This proposal supports several Focus Areas of the Community Sustainability Strategy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Health: The hike and environmental movie will educate and inspire participants to be more environmentally conscious. • Cultural Vibrancy: Addresses both recreation and arts components. • Social Well-being: This project will engage citizens of all ages and backgrounds, and provide a unique opportunity for people to enjoy the conservation area. <p>Anticipated outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater appreciation of the environment and community; • Showcasing the Terra Cotta Conservation Area’s new amphitheater while attracting new families (and potentially new membership) to the park; • Strengthening ties with member groups, primarily Credit Valley Conservation; and • Additional opportunities to work more closely with environmental organizations in Halton Hills. <p>Funding is requested for movie rights, promotional materials, signage, posters, advertising and graphic design.</p>				
<p>Town Staff Comments: This event will charge an admission fee. It will be \$10 per car or free with a park pass. The applicant has indicated that the admission fee and/or any profits will be directed to the Friends of the Terra Cotta.</p>				
<p>Recommendation: The Sustainability Implementation Committee recommends that this proposal be funded in the amount requested - \$900.</p>				

	Applicant	Supported Sustainability Pillars	Amount Requested	Amount Eligible
5	North Halton Celtic Historical Society (NHCHS)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Vibrancy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic Prosperity	\$1660	\$1660
<p>Proposal Description (“Signage for Fallbrook Farm”): The North Halton Celtic Historical Society (NHCHS) was established in 2010 as an incorporated heritage group to develop the following for Fallbrook Farm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Plan to re-service the property; • Architectural plan for the preservation of the Fallbrook House; • Historical record of the site through interpretive signage; and • Short and long-term plans for the site. <p>The proposal is to create professional signage on the site of Fallbrook Farm that is accessible to walkers, hikers and visitors to the conservation trails near Silvercreek. The signage will include a representative map of the area indicating the location of significant historical areas (e.g. bridge, house, saw mill, etc). Signage will ensure awareness of this location’s historical significance and promote Halton Hills’ contribution to preserving a unique architectural part of Canadian history.</p> <p>Funding is requested for the creation of a historical map on a permanent sign at Fallbrook Farm. Associated expenses include material, construction, printing, professional graphic design and shipping costs.</p>				
<p>Town Staff Comments: N/A</p>				
<p>Recommendation: The Sustainability Implementation Committee recommends that this proposal be funded in the amount requested - \$1660.</p>				

	Applicant	Supported Sustainability Pillars	Amount Requested	Amount Eligible
6	St. John Ambulance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Well-being	\$2000	\$2000
<p>Proposal Description (“Paws 4 Stories”): This proposal is to implement a ‘Paws 4 Stories’ pilot project in Halton Hills. Paws 4 Stories is a program developed by St. John Ambulance for use in school and library settings. The program features individual children reading to therapy dogs. Reading to therapy dogs allows a child to read confidently, with no judgment and promotes a fun way to engage in reading. This program helps children improve their reading and speech abilities. According to the applicant, there is a growing body of literature on the positive benefits of incorporating therapy dog programs into classroom, school and therapeutic settings. The program is not intended to generate revenue.</p> <p>The Paws 4 Stories program is already active throughout Ontario. Anticipated outcomes of introducing the program in Halton Hills, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased reading level of children identified by teachers/parents as having reading challenges; • Increased confidence; • Improved mental development; and • More reading and participation in the classroom. <p>St. John Ambulance’s mission is to enable Canadians to improve their health, safety and quality of life by providing training and community service.</p> <p>Funding is requested for program materials (e.g. uniforms for volunteers and canines) and training and evaluations.</p> <p>Town Staff Comments: Originally, the applicant requested \$10,000. Due to the conditions of the Community Sustainability Investment Fund, this was then revised to \$2,000 (the maximum permitted). This project will be on-going following a pilot phase. In addition, since submitting the original application, via e-mail, the applicant has modified the items for which funding is requested. This is now limited to program materials (e.g. uniforms for volunteers and canines) and training and evaluations.</p> <p>Recommendation: Given the quality of applications and in order to remain within the \$10,000 annual maximum funding per intake period while funding as many eligible applications as possible, the Sustainability Implementation Committee recommended that this proposal be funded in the amount of \$1440, \$560 less than the \$2000 requested. However, since that time, in light of the \$50 that is not eligible for funding under one of the other successful applications as well as the \$500 made available via the revision to Community Development Halton’s application, \$1990 may be granted for this proposal. However, in light of possible duplication with existing initiatives (e.g. a similar service is currently operating at the Town’s libraries) and in order to provide additional time for the applicant to demonstrate that duplication will be avoided, it is recommended that funding of this application be deferred until it is confirmed that duplication will be avoided.</p>				

	Applicant	Supported Sustainability Pillars	Amount Requested	Amount Eligible
7	Georgetown Soccer Club	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Vibrancy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Well-being	\$1000	Requires further review
<p>Proposal Description (“Opening Day Soccer”): Established in 1968, the Georgetown Soccer Club has grown to include a recreational program, a competitive program, skills development programs, summer camps, indoor programs and a parent and tot soccer skills program. The Club now serves over 2800 participants with its summer programs and an additional 5000 in the winter. Opening Day engages over 6000 residents and 200 local businesses that sponsor the teams. Opening Day is a community event and for many new residents it is their first introduction to Halton Hills.</p> <p>The goal is to provide a fun day of soccer so that players and their families feel connected with the Soccer Club. Additionally, among other things, it is to allow players to learn more about soccer and improve their soccer skills, and help children develop a sense of teamwork and belonging to a community.</p> <p>Funding is requested to bring more picnic tables and garbage bins to Trafalgar Sports Park to accommodate participating community members.</p> <p>Town Staff Comments: Should Council wish to fund this proposal in place of all or part of the other application(s) recommended for funding, the amounts recommended for funding will need to be adjusted. Additional information may also be required from the applicant.</p> <p>Recommendation: The Sustainability Implementation Committee recommends that this proposal not be funded as part of this application intake period.</p>				

In summary, based on review by the Sustainability Implementation Committee and additional review by Town staff, it is recommended that the following applications be funded as follows:

- Community Development Halton: \$1500
- Credit Valley Heritage Society: \$2000
- Georgetown Musictown: \$1950
- Halton Environmental Network: \$900
- North Halton Celtic Historical Society: \$1660
- St. John Ambulance: \$1990* (provided that it is confirmed that duplication with existing efforts will be avoided)

Approval of the above recommendations would result in a total of \$10,000 being funded.

All grant recipients will be required to submit a one-page report on the project’s results within 14 months of receiving funding. This report will include information on the results achieved, how any profits were reinvested into Halton Hills to support the implementation of the Community Sustainability Strategy, level of community engagement, lessons learned, final budget, next steps and measures to ensure that the project will be sustained without additional Town assistance.

2. Fund Refinements

The Community Sustainability Investment Fund is a new fund established by the Town. April 30, 2014 was the deadline for the very first application intake period. As such, based on lessons learned following the first round of applications, the following relatively minor refinements are recommended by Town staff:

2.1 Application Intake Period

Through Report No. PDS-2013-0076 (dated December 10, 2013), in order for projects to start being implemented in 2014, Council approved April 30, 2014 as being the deadline for the 2014 application intake period. Starting in 2015, applications were to be received by October 31st.

It is recommended that the Fund be modified to receive applications by April 30, 2015 and every April 30th thereafter, rather than delaying the second funding window to October 2015.

This will significantly reduce the lag time between the first and second funding window, maintain momentum, assist with the continued promotion of the Fund, and generate a broader range of projects.

2.2 Capital Costs

One of the costs that are not eligible for funding is capital costs. It is recommended that the Fund be refined to clarify that ineligible capital costs include “major” capital costs such as major appliances and vehicles, rather than “minor” costs such as the seed/light growing equipment requested by one of the current applicants.

2.3 Funding for Individuals

Currently, funding may be accessed by any Halton Hills individual, business, non-profit, social service organization, registered charity, service club and other groups. It is recommended that the Fund be amended to make “individuals” ineligible for funding.

This change will provide the Town with more information on the applicant by requiring the submission of the information specified in section 2.4, below.

2.4 Application Requirements

The current Fund Application Form asks applicants to indicate whether they are a Registered Community Organization/Group with the Town. However, registration is not a prerequisite for funding eligibility. Of the current applications, only the Georgetown Soccer Club is a Registered Community Group/Organization.

Among other documents, to become a Registered Community Organization/Group, applicants may be required to submit the following to the Town:

- Current copy of the organization's constitution and by-laws or statement of purpose.
- Organization's Year End Financial Statement, plus anticipated activity or event budget.
- A list of the organization's current board/executive including positions, names, addresses and home/business phone numbers, e-mails, etc.
- Directors/Executive liability insurance (if applicable).

Going forward, it is recommended that the Application Form be amended to require applicants to either be a Registered Community Organization/Group or to provide the aforementioned information as part of the application.

Although the existing Fund Application indicates that proposals from individuals, businesses and for-profit groups/organizations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis against the criteria used for Registered Community Group/Organizations (as appropriate), in light of this being the first round of applications and the fact that the Application Form did not require applicants to be a Registered Community Group/Organization, Town staff note that this requirement was not applied to the current set of applications. With the recommended amendment made, going forward, this information will be required.

2.5 Submission by Halton Hills applicants

The Eligibility criteria state that proposals shall be submitted by "...any Halton Hills individual, business, non-profit...". To clarify that the applicant does not have to be physically based/located within Halton Hills, but rather that the services provided must serve the Halton Hills community, it is recommended that the wording be amended to read:

"Be submitted by any non-profit, social service organization, registered charity, service club, business and other groups dedicated to advancing Halton Hills' cultural, economic, environmental and/or social well-being..."

The Fund already stipulates that eligible proposals must take "...place within the municipal boundaries of the Town of Halton Hills and benefit Halton Hills residents."

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Sustainability is at the core of the Town's Strategic Plan and is one of Council's top ten priorities. By supporting the implementation of the Community Sustainability Strategy, funding provided via the Community Sustainability Investment Fund will advance the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including the following items:

- A.6.(m) Continue to develop a "Town-led, community owned" Integrated Community Sustainability Plan.
- A.6.(n) Develop a Corporate Sustainability Strategy.
- B.2.(a) Maintain and support the Town Sustainability Advisory [Implementation] Committee.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The Fund relies on existing funding which has already been approved by Council.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT:

Upon authorization, Town staff will notify all applicants in writing with the outcome of Council's decision and assist applicants with the processing of their requests.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life. The relationship between this report and the Strategy is summarized below:

Do the report's recommendations advance the Strategy's implementation?

Yes No N/A

Which pillar(s) of sustainability does this report support?

Cultural Vibrancy Economic Prosperity N/A
 Environmental Health Social Well-Being

The Community Sustainability Investment Fund assists the community in leveraging funding to help implement our Community Sustainability Strategy. The resulting actions should advance cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity, environmental health and social well-being. Ultimately, quality of life will be raised. Cumulatively, the proposals recommended for funding support the objectives of all four pillars of sustainability.

In addition, support granted by the Town via the Community Sustainability Investment Fund is also anticipated to benefit other Town plans and initiatives.

Overall, the alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is:

Excellent Very Good Good Fair N/A

CONSULTATION:

As necessary, organizations requesting funding were provided with information and support from the Planning, Development and Sustainability Department.

CONCLUSION:

The Town appreciates and recognizes the value and benefits of working in collaboration with community stakeholders to advance the implementation of the Community Sustainability Strategy, focusing on raising quality of life by taking actions related to cultural, economic, environmental and social well-being. The Fund is an investment and supports the community's active participation in shaping the future of Halton Hills.

Council's approval is requested to grant funding to the proposals recommended for funding in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

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Manager of Sustainability

John Linhardt, M.PI., MCIP, RPP
Director of Planning, Development
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David Smith
Chief Administrative Officer