

### REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK AND ACCESSIBILITY COORDINATOR

Re: 2024-25 Inclusive Community Grants Program

#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council support the application to the Inclusive Community Grants Program for the amount of \$60,000 for the Westview Park Gazebo Project; and

That a contribution for the project come from the Accessibility Reserve Fund.

#### BACKGROUND

Inclusive communities create more accessible environments for people of all ages, abilities and background. The Inclusive Community Grant (ICG) Program increases awareness of age-friendly community planning principles including accessibility planning. ICG projects that follow age-friendly community planning principles help communities become more inclusive and have sustainable outcomes that address the needs of Ontarians throughout their lives. This year the ICG program will prioritize projects that address the following priorities:

Priority 1: Increase the accessibility of outdoor spaces through projects that make improvements to the built environment so seniors and people with disabilities can enjoy equitable access to community resources.

Priority 2: Promote accessible housing for seniors and people with disabilities through projects that result in tangible products.

Priority 3: Increase accessing housing, outdoor spaces and buildings, as well as meeting transportation needs through projects that will lead to practical, timely improvements.

After discussion amongst the Accessibility Advisory Committee it was determined that the best focus for the grant funds would be Westview Park as this is an outdoor gathering place for all ages and future plans for the park are to make it more accessible and inclusive.

#### ANALYSIS

Members from the Accessibility Advisory Committee and staff completed an audit at Westview Park on April 25<sup>th</sup>. After reviewing some options of what the grant funding could be used towards it was recommended that a new concrete pad and gazebo would benefit a good number of the population as the former gazebo structure was used by many for events, gatherings, picnics, or even just a place to sit

and take shelter from the sun or rain. The accessible components to this would be at least 20% of the picnic tables provided would be modified picnic tables, and the ground surface leading to and under the tables must be level, firm and stable. This is in accordance with section 80.17 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards under the *AODA, 2005*, allowing those in wheelchairs and walkers to sit at the tables comfortably and with ease. Lighting would eventually be added to the structure as well for safety purposes.

Staff are looking at prefabricated gazebo options that can handle the snow load for this geographical area and are awaiting pricing. Staff are also gathering estimates for a new concrete pad and footings.

This project may happen in phases due to the dependency on quotes and funding. However, if the City is successful with grant funding, this could improve the timing and development of this project.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Grant funding is 100% up to \$60,000. Some funds for the project would be taken from the Accessibility Reserve fund. Staff are actively seeking other funding sources that could be applied to this project as well. If this report is forwarded to Council for May 13<sup>th</sup> staff will have a better idea of a budget for the project to present.

## **LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

This project is linked to the City's Strategic Plan through Infrastructure and Capital Projects and the following action item:

21. The City is committed to making community spaces accessible, regardless of ability and encourages all to do the same. The Accessibility Advisory Committee will continue to be consulted in the design and planning of new facilities and the renovation of existing facilities.

This project is linked to the City's Age Friendly Action Plan through the following action items:

- Investigate and improve the accessibility of parks where required
- Continue to support accessibility of public spaces

This project is also linked to the City's Accessibility Plan through the following action items:

- Continue to improve accessibility at community parks in consultation with the AAC and key stakeholders, based on the availability of resources.
- Upgrade existing outdoor eating areas to become accessible, including accessible picnic tables, pathways, etc.

## **SUMMARY**

The deadline for the grant application is May 22, 2024. All applicants will receive a decision regarding their application during the summer of 2024. Projects may begin only after an agreement is in place, anticipated by August and project must be completed by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. If funding is received, the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be consulted during the planning process of the project. It is recommended that Council support the submission of the ICG Program application for the Westview Park Gazebo Project.