



VICTORIA  
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## 2020 Pilot Staffing Grant Request

### Submitted by:

North Park Neighbourhood Association  
Victoria Downtown Residents' Association

### Summary Recommendation

Request for a one-time (pilot) base operating staff grants of \$150,000 with \$75,000 to be allocated to each of the North Park Neighbourhood Association (NPNA) and Downtown Residents Association (DRA). This pilot will test the allocation of neighbourhood staff grants on the basis of community capacity development needs due to:

- the rapid growth and densification of these neighbourhoods;
- the increasing needs and burdens of the residents and businesses in these neighbourhood;
- the lack of resources for community connectivity (green space, community centre); and
- the disproportionately high land use development activity in these areas of town;

all of which are commanding time and expertise that neighbourhood association board volunteers do not possess and shouldn't be relied upon to provide.

### Context

Neighbourhoods **without** community centres are suffering from a fundamental lack of investment in social infrastructure (capacity building, community activation, citizen engagement and empowerment). This pilot seeks to address this inequity by granting \$75,000 for staffing to each of the NPNA and DRA in the 2020/2021 budget – the same base staffing (aka operations) amount granted to neighbourhoods **with** community centres. Currently neighbourhoods without community centres receive only a per-capita grant of \$0.75 per resident, which amounts to \$2,680 for the North Park neighbourhood for example.

The focus on North Park and Downtown/Harris Green recognizes that these neighbourhoods are overburdened with crisis-level issues of poverty, mental health and addiction; disconnections that result from vertical and high-density living; and the absence of vital services such as daycare and free recreational programming. These conditions will intensify as these neighbourhoods absorb much of the City's growth in the coming years. More information here:

<http://npna.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final-and-Full-Equity-Maps-and-Analysis-1.pdf>

This pilot will include workplans from each neighbourhoods co-designed with the City's Neighbourhoods group, and followed-up with rigorous metrics/measurable outcomes to be evaluated against the City's key initiatives including the Equity and Affordability Framework, the Local Area Plan update process, Crystal Pool/Wellness Centre re-engagement and re-design process, and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation (building neighbourhood-level resilience).



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The two neighbourhood associations propose to use the funding as follows, and anticipate the following activities and outcomes:

### **North Park Pilot Grant Proposal**

The pilot grant in North Park will be used to hire a full-time Community Development Coordinator and a part-time Admin Assistant who will implement much-needed and impactful outreach and capacity building initiatives, focusing on the significant issues and strategic directions mentioned above. This position will perform a wide range of duties including: forge partnership with key community organizations such as United Way and Partners for Places, apply for a wide range of funding grants include from organizations that prioritize low equity inner city neighbourhoods, investigate and trial different engagement and community development approaches and models used to build social connection and resilience, activate the community in City planning processes and ensure more equitable and inclusive engagement and outcomes for underserved communities and harder to reach households.

### **Downtown-Harris Green Pilot Grant Proposal**

As in North Park, the grant will be primarily used to contract for support staff. Specifically, the role of a full-time Community Operations and Outreach Coordinator who will be responsible for community programing, capacity building in the form of organizational support, public outreach and volunteer coordination and recruitment.

In much the same way as the staff of a community center provides support for the board and engages in programing for the neighborhood, this combined position will work to empower the residents and volunteers of Downtown-Harris Green to connect with each other in order to program for prosocial initiatives with a focus on addressing the impacts from rapid densification, health and housing issues and the unique aspects of living in a high traffic area of the CRD. As identified previously, significant gaps in opportunity for the enjoyment of community amenities are currently experienced by Downtown-Harris Green residents and the increase in density is only likely to exacerbate these challenges. Filling the need for a community organization that is able to provide services equivalent to those in other neighborhoods that have physical infrastructure and staff, especially given current challenges, requires time commitments well beyond the capacity of local volunteers absent additional support.

The Community Operations and Outreach Coordinator will perform a wide range of duties to address this issue by taking on responsibilities extending to both neighbourhood programing and administrative support including inter alia: Monitoring ongoing programs and issues impacting the residents of Downtown-Harris, promoting consistent engagement with key community stakeholders and accessing partnership and funding opportunities, implementing engagement and community development projects in order to build social connection and resilience via placemaking and outreach and by developing volunteer recruitment and training strategies. In addition the Community Operations and Outreach Coordinator will provide administrative support to the board and subcommittees by managing correspondence, budgeting, keeping



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statutorily mandated organizational records, attending meetings, keeping minutes, managing the storage and use of any organizational property, and by sourcing and booking spaces for programming in the context of the unique challenges of operating to provide some of the traditional amenities of a community hub while operating in decentralized model.

### Outcomes

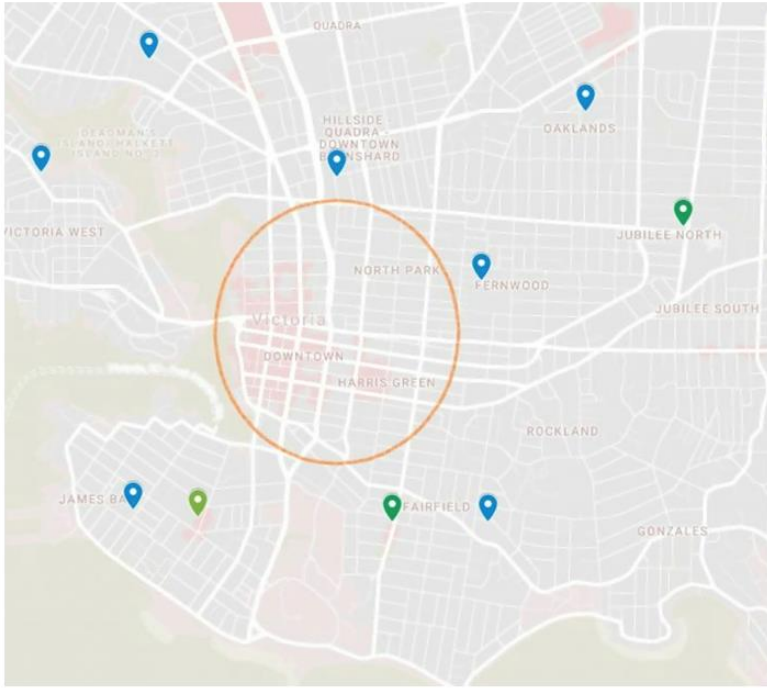
These neighbourhood associations are ready and able to take on this pilot, and the pilot itself will create a valuable workplan and reporting model that can inform the next budget cycle (2021/22), including integration with the new equity framework.

At its conclusion, the pilot will be useful in informing the application of the equity framework, and answer questions such as:

- 1) Can an investment in social infrastructure (i.e. in a neighbourhood **without** a physical building/community hub) achieve similar community development and empowerment outcomes? Is this a cost-effective way to achieve the city's strategic objectives until such time as community centres are built in these neighbourhoods? (Note: The City's Strategic Plan proposes the development of a community centre for the North Park neighbourhood in 2022, but this timeline is a rough estimate, as a community centre for North Park is tied to the redevelopment of the Crystal Pool Wellness Centres and/or the Royal Athletic Park parking lot.)
- 2) Should a base staffing grant of \$75,000 be allocated to all neighbourhoods, regardless of whether they have a community centre or not? Or, applying an equity approach, should some neighbourhoods receive more support than others because they are serving neighbourhoods with greater needs and barriers, and experiencing more change/growth and land use development activity?

**A Community Hub Desert where it's needed most**

**(Map of City-funded Community Centres and Seniors Activity Centres)**



**Victoria Community and Seniors Centres**

The City of Victoria owns, maintains, and/or pays the operating costs of 7 community centres and 3 seniors centres.

North Park, Downtown and Harris Green are the only densely populated neighbourhoods in Victoria without either a community centre or seniors centre.

These three neighbourhoods have the greatest population density (residents/m2) and highest population growth.

**Community and Seniors Centres**

- Fernwood Community Centre
- Quadra Village Community Centre
- Burnside Gorge Community Centre
- Fairfield Community Centre - Garry Oaks R...
- James Bay Community Centre
- Oaklands Community Centre & Association
- Victoria West Community Centre
- Cook Street Village Activity Centre
- JAMES BAY NEW HORIZONS SOCIETY
- Silver Threads Service

**Background**

The City operates 11 community and seniors centres – all of which receive a base operating (staffing) grant of \$75,000.

In addition to the \$75,000 base operations (staffing) grant, these 11 centres receive additional funds for building services/janitorial, building maintenance, utility bills, and capital expenditures included in the 2020 financial plan. See November 14, 2019 staff report: <https://pub-victoria.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=47155>

This staff report notes that these centres provide fundamentally important programming and services that support the City's 2015-2018 Strategic Plan objectives

- Objective 2 (*Engage and Empower the Community*)
- Objective 7 (*Facilitate Social Inclusion and Community Wellness*).

In addition, the programs, services and community development residents enjoy from the community centres, fit with the broad objectives of the Official Community Plan Section 9 (Parks and Recreation) and Section 15 (Community Well-Being).



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N'hood WITH community centre(s)	2018 GRANTS
Burnside Gorge Community Association	\$106,096
Fairfield Gonzales Community Association and Cook Street Village	
Activity Centre Society (New Horizons)	\$200,888
Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group and Fernwood	
Community Association	\$95,984
James Bay Community School Centre, James Bay New Horizons	
Society and James Bay Neighbourhood Association	\$164,021
Oaklands Community Association	\$91,406
Quadra Village Community Centre	\$95,083
Victoria West Community Association	\$108,368
Victoria Silver Threads Seniors Centre	\$205,000
Downtown Community Centre (operated by the Cool Aid Society)	\$75,000

The City's annual investment in these centres has been between 1.6M and \$1.9M over the past five years. In addition, there are other community development investments in some neighbourhoods that offer similar benefits, such as the \$239,000 in annual funding to the new James Bay library. The neighbourhoods with staffing have also been more successful in applying for other City grant programs like the Neighbourhood grants.

Council, through the 2019 financial plan, increased the base operating (staffing) grant to community centres from \$54,000 to \$75,000 – an increase of \$21,000 that was reconfirmed for the 2020 budget.

In October 2019, each of the centre operators submitted a report identifying how this additional \$21,000 for operating (staffing) funding was used by their organization, and how the community benefitted from that investment. The reports received from operators identified four common streams of investment for the supplementary funding:

1. Increases to wages of existing staff - narratives identified how compensation levels required updating, with a desire to align closer with B.C.'s Living Wage
2. Funding for new positions - introduced new roles to assist or support in the delivery of programs and services
3. Expanded hours of reception services - allowed centres to offer presence at their facilities into the evening to better serve the community
4. Expanded programming - expansion of existing programs or introduction of new program/event opportunities for the community



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Link to 2019 reporting on supplemental funding: <https://pub-victoria.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=47156>

In stark contrast, neighbourhoods **without** community centres did not even receive the amount of this increase (\$21,000) per the City’s 2018 financial statements.

N’hoods WITHOUT community centres	2018 BASE GRANTS (\$0.75/resident)	2018 PROJECT GRANTS (e.g. community garden)
Downtown Residents' Association	\$2055	\$16,532
North Jubilee Neighbourhood Association	\$2,668	
North Park Neighbourhood Association	\$2,680	\$14,948
Rockland Community Association	\$3,005	
South Jubilee Neighbourhood Association	\$1,984	

### 2020/21 Draft Financial Plan

The City’s draft budget for 2020/21 makes permanent the 2019 one-time increase of \$21,000 for each of these 11 community centres and seniors centres, for a total of \$75,000 to each centre. This budget increase for staff grants among the centres already receiving base operating grants totals \$234,300, an amount greater than it would be to provide initial base operating (staffing) grants of \$75,000 to each of Downtown/Harris Green and North Park and the increase of \$50,000 to the proposed base grant of Hillside Quadra (\$200,000 total proposed).

Moreover, the proposed increase to staff grants for these endowed neighbourhoods is recommended to be funded by new property tax revenues from new developments. The new development generating these corresponding revenues are largely from the new growth and density occurring in the northern neighbourhoods, most specifically Downtown/Harris Green, North Park and Hillside Quadra. Thus, the draft financial plan proposes to withhold from Downtown/Harris Green and North Park any benefit from these new property tax revenues despite housing the substantial land use development activity which is generating both the revenues and exacerbating the challenges to these neighbourhoods which are already disadvantaged in supporting residents because they lack community centres through which to reach them. Hillside Quadra is a proposed recipient of \$75,000 in staff grants for 2020, but this is wholly insufficient to address the increasing capacity burdens this new growth and development is bringing to the Quadra Village community centre staff and the increasing pressures being felt by the most marginalized residents in Victoria being impacted by these developments.



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## RECOMMENDATION

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