

Civic Partner Operating Grant Program

PURPOSE

This report presents Terms of Reference for a new Civic Partner Operating Grant Program for Council approval as requested in Notice of Motion EC2022-1378: Developing a New Civic Partnership Program, and recommends timing for implementation.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

This report is being brought forward to respond to direction provided in 2022 December through Notice of Motion EC2022-1378: Developing a New Civic Partnership Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Community Development Committee recommend that Council:

1. Approve the Terms of Reference for a new Civic Partner Operating Grant Program, and
2. Direct Administration to develop and implement the Civic Partner Operating Grant Program, returning to Council through the 2024 November Adjustments to the Service Plans and Budgets process with recommended adjustments to Civic Partner funding for the remainder of the cycle.

CITY MANAGER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

GM Black and GM Male concur with this report.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The City makes significant operating grant investments in Civic Partner organizations, including over \$135 million in 2023, to achieve results for Calgarians through the delivery of targeted programs and services, advancement of City strategies, and operation and management of City-owned assets.
- Approving the proposed Terms of Reference for a new Civic Partner Operating Grant Program (the Program) supports the development of a structured, transparent, fair, and consistent decision-making process based on leading practices for grantmaking.
- The grant program will include the unique processes required to make recommendations for priority investments in organizations external to The City including a grant application and a grant review committee structure that embeds meaningful two-way communication with Civic Partners.
- This work supports continuous improvement; responds to concerns, challenges and opportunities identified by Civic Partners, Council, and Administration; and supports effective stewardship of public funds.
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1

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DISCUSSION

This report presents proposed Terms of Reference for a new Civic Partner Operating Grant Program (the Program) for approval (Attachment 2). A review of similar City grant program structures determined that it was most effective to present a single Terms of Reference for approval, rather than two documents, Terms of Reference and Funding Framework, as suggested in the original Notice of Motion.

Each year, The City makes significant investments of operating grant funding in Civic Partners, a category of partner defined in the *Investing in Partnerships Policy* (CP2017-01) (the Policy). Civic Partner operating grants approved in the 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets are included in Attachment 3. The definition of “Civic Partner” under the Policy and a list of current Civic Partners are included in Attachment 4.

To support development of the proposed Terms of Reference, Administration secured a third-party consultant to undertake research into leading practices by other funders across Canada, engage Civic Partners through interviews and an online survey, and engage members of Council and Administration through interviews. Based on the information gathered, the consultant made a series of recommendations for the Program’s Terms of Reference, guidelines and implementation. Attachment 5 includes the consultant’s summary of the key themes that emerged during Civic Partner engagement. Overall, the common themes that emerged during the engagement of all parties included a need for:

- increased transparency, communication, and consistency,
- a structured framework for grant making,
- refined accountability processes and approaches,
- equitable approaches that acknowledge the uniqueness of partner operations, and
- ongoing improvements to partnering and relationship management.

Based on the consultant’s recommendations and leading practices both in the larger grant making sector, in other municipal jurisdictions, and within The City, the proposed Terms of Reference outline a formal grant program structure that will be used to develop recommendations for The City’s investment of operating funding in Civic Partner organizations.

The Terms of Reference outline the Program details including the purpose of the Program, the foundational approaches, and Program eligibility, outcomes, priorities, streams, and key processes. The draft Terms of Reference, developed in consultation and collaboration with several subject matter experts across Administration, were shared with Civic Partners in September through an engagement session and other communication and their feedback and questions helped refine the final version.

If the recommendations in this report are approved, Administration will develop the full Program guidelines and launch the Program with the intention of returning to Council during the 2024 November adjustments to the 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets with adjusted Civic Partner operating grant funding recommendations for Council consideration and approval. Program rollout will align with the corporate budget cycle and recognize the time required to onboard Civic Partners to a new grant program structure.

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EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

Under the guidance of Administration, an external consultant engaged all Civic Partners with operating funding in 2023 through interviews and an online survey and interviewed members of Administration. The consultant invited all members of Council to participate in interviews and seven participated.

A follow up engagement session was held with Civic Partners in 2023 September to share a summary of what we heard during Civic Partner engagement, introduce the key elements of the draft Terms of Reference and to gather feedback to further refine the Terms of Reference.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Through operating grant investments in Civic Partner organizations, The City supports Civic Partners to contribute to implementation of a broad range of City-led strategies that support a high quality of life for Calgarians. Civic Partners operate cultural attractions; offer programs, services and facilities focused on arts and culture, conservation, history and science, entrepreneurship, recreation, and sport; and gather business and community leaders to collaborate. They support low-income Calgarians through access to a variety of subsidy programs and affordable housing for seniors.

Environmental

Civic Partners support environmental stewardship and community sustainability strategies including public education and awareness related to conservation, public spaces, and natural resources. They continue to review their operational practices, including facility maintenance, to reduce consumption and overall environmental impact.

Economic

Civic Partners contribute to a high quality of life that is the foundation of a healthy and vibrant local economy and support stewardship and delivery of The City's Economic Development and Tourism line of service including stewardship and support for implementation of *Calgary in the New Economy: An economic strategy for Calgary*.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

RISK

Shifting from current processes for developing operating funding recommendations to a grant program structure is a significant change that may create reputational risk for The City and impact Civic Partner capacity, particularly the first time the program is offered. Administration is managing these risks through a variety of strategies including project planning and internal

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collaboration and coordination. The risk is also managed by engaging Civic Partners in both the development and refinement of the Terms of Reference, addressing their concerns and questions, and continuing to engage them moving forward as the full Program guidelines are developed and the Program is implemented.

Implementing a grant program structure reduces The City's exposure to risks related to investing and partnering with Civic Partner organizations by embedding best practices for grant making in the proposed Terms of Reference. Risks related to this change are also being managed through ongoing engagement with Civic Partners including during the development and refinement of the Terms of Reference and continued engagement as the Program is developed and implemented.

Returning to the 2024 November 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets adjustments process creates risk related to the time required to implement a new program and integrate the Program into the budget adjustments process, which is iterative and evolving. This risk is being managed through project management strategies, including managing timelines, internal collaboration and change management strategies including internal communication and engagement.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. Civic Partner Operating Grant Program Terms of Reference
3. Civic Partner Operating Grant Funding Budget 2023-2026
4. Schedule 3 – Partnership Categories
5. Civic Partner Engagement Results
6. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Katie Black, General Manager	Community Services	Approve
Carla Male, General Manager	Corporate Planning & Financial Services	Approve
Tim Doruch, Acting Director	Corporate Planning & Financial Services	Inform
Jill Floen, City Solicitor-General Counsel	City Solicitor – General Counsel	Consult

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