

## City to pursue a grant to help address daycare shortage

(Penticton, BC – November 1, 2019) – A grant from the *Childcare BC New Spaces Fund* could help alleviate Penticton’s childcare shortage and provide a solution for a few of the City’s aging buildings. At the Council meeting on November 5, staff will introduce a plan to work with a partner and apply for funding to replace the Edmonton Avenue Centre building in Kiwanis Park with a new, expanded childcare facility.

“There are waitlists for most daycares in Penticton and this lack of childcare is often cited as a deterrent to families looking to relocate to the city,” says Ben Johnson, Acting Director of Development Services. “If successful, this grant could provide up to \$3 million towards a new childcare facility with space for more children.”

One of the key requirements of the proposal is to identify a partner to work with on the grant application and to design, construct, lease and operate the new daycare facility. The City is preparing to issue an Expression of Interest to identify qualified partners following the Council meeting. “The City does not provide daycare services, but we can certainly support efforts to meet this important need,” says Johnson. “By having a partner, we can leverage their knowledge of the childcare needs in the community and their expertise to design and operate the service.”

Another requirement to move the proposal forward is a zoning amendment. Although Kiwanis Park has been home to childcare facilities for more than 30 years, ‘daycare’ is not currently listed as a permitted use in a Community Park (P2). Council supported applying for the grant to build a new childcare facility on the Edmonton Avenue Centre site at Kiwanis Park in a closed meeting. Staff will follow the procedure outlined in the Park Land Protection and Use Policy to involve the community before a decision is made about the proposal and zoning amendment.

“Recognizing the time sensitivity of the grant application, the application for a zoning amendment and the Expression of Interest to identify a partner will proceed in parallel,” says Johnson. “This will put the City in the best position to obtain a grant while still allowing for a proper public process for the community to consider the proposal and zoning amendment should the grant application be successful.”

In addition to the Edmonton Avenue Centre building, which houses the One Sky Community Resources Before and After School Care program, Kiwanis Park is also home to the Little Triumphs Daycare building and a storage building used by the Safety Village. All three buildings are City-owned

and were rated in poor condition in the 2013 Facilities Master Plan. The City intends to work closely with all of the groups currently providing services in Kiwanis Park to develop a proposal that addresses their interests and the condition of the buildings.

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