

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Shane Bourke, City Manager	DATE: April 29, 2025
FROM: Danielle Whiteway, Chief Financial Officer	MEETING: Investment & Strategy Committee
REPORT WRITER: Rory Tarant, Interim Director, Economic Development	
SUBJECT: Barrier Free Grant Extension	

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Investment & Strategy Committee recommend Council approve Policy 356, as amended to extend the Barrier Free Grant application deadline to December 31, 2025.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL / COMMITTEE DIRECTIONS

On August 10, 2020, Council adopted Policy 318 - Economic Recovery Fund.

On February 23, 2021, Council adopted Policy 356 - Barrier-Free Grant.

On December 5, 2023, the Invest GP Committee directed Administration to:

“Bring back potential amendments to Policy 356 to be up to \$20,000 matching.”

On December 11, 2023, Council adopted the following motion:

“Council re-capitalize the Barrier Free Grant (Policy 356) with \$80K from the general Economic Recovery Fund.”

On March 25, 2024, Council amended Policy 356 to have the grant expire on March 31, 2025.

BACKGROUND

The Barrier-Free Grant is designed to promote a business environment that is accessible to all residents, visitors and employees, through financial incentives for commercial property and business owners to invest in Accessibility Improvement Projects.

In December of 2023, Council recapitalized the Barrier Free Grant with \$80K from the general Economic Recovery Fund.

In March of 2024, Council amended Policy 356 with the decision to have the Barrier-Free grant application intake close when the total funding in the Barrier-Free Economic stream was fully allocated or on March 31, 2025, whichever came first.

ANALYSIS

From 2021-2024, a total of 16 Barrier-Free grants were awarded, with a funding total of \$128,245 granted to local businesses and organizations. Private investments totalled \$261,562. Every \$1 in grant funding provided resulted in \$2 in private investment into accessibility projects.

Industry	Grant Amount	Business Investment	Total Project Costs
Professional Services	\$24,209	\$29,966	\$54,175
Eating/Drinking Establishments	\$16,277	\$16,995	\$33,272
Healthcare/Support	\$32,037	\$81,053	\$113,090
Multi Office/Commercial Space Facilities	\$14,391	\$85,130	\$99,521
Non-Profits	\$39,205	\$46,079	\$85,284
Retail Spaces	\$2,126	\$2,339	\$4,465
Total (16)	\$128,245	\$261,562	\$389,807

Relationship to City Council's Areas of Focus / Strategic Priorities

The Barrier Free grant aligns with the following City Council Strategic Objectives; Innovative Efficiencies and Economic Readiness by providing support to local businesses to continue growing diverse and innovative economic opportunities and ensuring a strong and resilient local economy.

Environmental Impact

No Impact

Economic Impact

Incentives expedite the ability of businesses to install or make upgrades to their buildings to enhance accessibility. Extending the program would allow a greater number of projects to proceed, supporting local businesses and tradespeople.

Social Impact

Extending the program would allow for more businesses and organizations to make accessibility investments in their buildings making our community more accessible.

Relevant Statutes / Master Plans / City Documents

There are no relevant documents.

Risk

There are no risks identified.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

No specific stakeholder engagement was done related to this request.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is \$76,751 remaining in the Barrier-Free Grant fund. If the application date is extended, grants would continue to be provided until either the application deadline or funds are expended, whichever comes first.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Due to the benefit of the Barrier Free Grant for our community and its residents, it is recommended that the application deadline of this grant be extended until December 31, 2025.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachments: Policy 356 – Barrier Free Grant