

Subject: Community Environmental Projects Grant Program Expansion

File Number: ACS2026-SI-CCR-0001

Report to Environment and Climate Change Committee on 17 February 2026

and Council 25 February 2026

Submitted on February 5, 2026 by Nichole Hoover-Bienasz, Director, Climate

Change and Resiliency Services, Strategic Initiatives Departments

613-580-2424 ext. 25145, Nichole.bienasz@ottawa.ca

Contact Person: Tara Redpath, Planner III (Acting), Natural Systems

613-580-2424 x16822, Tara.Redpath@ottawa.ca

Ward: Citywide

**Objet : Expansion du Programme de subventions aux projets
communautaires liés à l'environnement**

Numéro de dossier : ACS2026-SI-CCR-0001

**Rapport présenté au Comité de l'environnement du changement climatique le 17
février 2026**

et au Conseil le 25 février 2026

**Soumis le 5 février 2026 par Nichole Hoover-Bienasz, directrice, Services des
changements climatiques et de la résilience, Direction générale des initiatives
stratégiques**

Personne ressource : Tara Redpath, Urbaniste III (par Intérim), Systèmes naturels

613-580-2424 poste 16822, Tara.Redpath@ottawa.ca

Quartier : À l'échelle de la ville

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That Environment and Climate Change Committee recommend Council approve a dedicated funding stream for waste avoidance, reduction, and reuse initiatives within the Community Environmental Projects Grant Program, effective for the 2026 application period, as outlined in this report.

RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité de l'environnement et du changement climatique recommande au Conseil d'approuver une voie de financement pour les initiatives dédiées à l'évitement, à la réduction et à la réutilisation des déchets au sein du Programme de subventions aux projets communautaires liés à l'environnement, en vigueur pour les demandes de 2026, comme le précise le présent rapport.

BACKGROUND

The [Community Environmental Projects Grant Program \(CEPGP\)](#) has been providing funding to non-profit organizations interested in undertaking small-scale, community-based initiatives that support an environmentally sustainable Ottawa since 1995. Funding through the CEPGP is available to support a wide variety of community projects, including greening initiatives, environmental restoration, community workshops, education and awareness campaigns and waste reduction initiatives.

The Council-approved [Solid Waste Master Plan](#) (June 2024) includes a recommendation to provide financial incentives, such as subsidies, rebates and grants, to community organizations to support ideas and programs that avoid, reduce or reuse waste. Staff with Solid Waste Services (SWS) have proposed integrating a dedicated waste avoidance, reduction, and reuse initiatives stream into the existing CEPGP framework. This dedicated stream would be funded through the operational budget identified in SWS' [Long Range Financial Plan \(LRFP\) 2025-2053](#).

Under the City's Grants and Contributions (G&C) Policy, on-going G&C programs need to be re-affirmed once per Term of Council. A full review and refresh of the CEPGP was last approved by Council on [April 27, 2016](#), and the program has since been re-affirmed on two separate occasions. Council approved an increase to the CEPGP budget from \$50,000 to \$52,000 on December 9, 2020 (for 2021) and a further increase to \$102,000 on March 1, 2023 (for 2023).

The G&C policy establishes that any substantive changes to existing G&C programs must be reviewed and approved by City Council. The proposal to integrate a separately

funded waste avoidance, reduction, and reuse initiatives stream into the existing CEPGP framework represents a substantive change to the program and requires Council approval to proceed.

This report does not represent a full review of the CEPGP and does not reflect all applications submitted to the CEPGP since the last review in 2016. A comprehensive review of the CEPGP covering the period between 2016-2025 will be brought to Committee and Council for consideration in 2027 and will include recommendations to improve this grant program.

DISCUSSION

The Community Environmental Projects Grant Program (CEPGP) is a long-standing, successful City program that is generally well-known and well-regarded by local community and environmental organizations. Non-profit organizations undertaking community-based waste avoidance, reduction and reuse initiatives are currently eligible for financial support through the CEPGP. In an average year, requests for CEPGP funding are typically more than double the available funds. The additional funding for the implementation of Action Suite 1 in the Solid Waste Master Plan now available as part of Solid Waste Services' (SWS) Long Range Financial Plan (LRFP) represents an opportunity to enhance the existing CEPGP funding framework.

Waste Reduction Initiatives Funded by the CEPGP (2020-2025)

Between 2020-2025, 226 funding applications were submitted to the CEPGP of which 23 (or 10 per cent) were directly related to waste avoidance, reduction, and reuse initiatives. These waste-related applications proposed a variety of projects including:

- Public events, workshops and education campaigns covering household food waste reduction, food knowledge and preservation, zero-waste shopping, crafting with reclaimed materials and other similar initiatives
- Waste reduction initiatives including repair cafés, textile mending workshops, surplus food rescue programs and community composting
- Piloting alternatives to disposable products including a cloth diaper program and a reusable cup system for a local running event

Requests for CEPGP funding to support waste reduction initiatives totalled nearly \$140,000 between 2020-2025. These requests represented 30 per cent of available CEPGP funding over the six-year period (\$460,000). CEPGP funding in the amount of

\$53,656.71 was approved to support waste-related projects over this same period (11.7 per cent of total available funds).

Organizations eligible for CEPGP funding include community associations, community groups, youth groups, school councils/parent associations and industry and trade associations. Organizations must be based in Ottawa and adhere to non-profit principles.

Solid Waste Services LRF

Under SWS' LRF, funding is now available through the operational budget to support waste avoidance, reduction and reuse initiatives identified through Action Suite 1 in the Solid Waste Master Plan (SWMP). Action Suite 1 describes ways to increase waste avoidance, reduction, and reuse across the City through strategic partnerships with community and industry. One of the actions is to explore using subsidies, rebates or grants to local residents, resident groups or non-profit organizations for options, ideas or programs that avoid, reduce or reuse waste.

Dedicated Waste Avoidance, Reduction and Reuse Initiatives Stream for the CEPGP

The new funding identified in SWS' LRF for waste avoidance, reduction and reuse initiatives, coupled with the CEPGP's established goal of funding community-based initiatives that support an environmentally sustainable Ottawa, provides an opportunity for harmonization. Rather than create a separate grant program, it is recommended that a dedicated stream for projects aimed at waste avoidance, reduction and reuse be integrated into the existing CEPGP framework. Funding up to a maximum amount of \$102,000 for this new stream would be drawn from SWS' annual operating budget. These funds would be directed only to projects that meet the objectives of Action Suite 1 in the SWMP, while also adhering to existing CEPGP eligibility criteria.

Integrating a waste avoidance, reduction and reuse stream within an existing grant program will avoid duplication or creation of a new, stand-alone program. Funding available through SWS can be rolled into the current CEPGP administrative framework, and take advantage of an existing program webpage, online application form, review committee, contribution agreement and financial process. The new funding stream would also benefit from name recognition by integrating with a grant program already familiar to many community organizations.

Pending Council approval of a dedicated waste avoidance, reduction and reuse stream for the CEPGP, staff in Climate Change and Resiliency (CCR) will work closely with

staff in SWS to launch the new stream with the 2026 CEPGP call for applications. Updates will be required for the CEPGP webpage and online application form. Promotional and communications materials will need to be enhanced to highlight the additional, dedicated funding available under the CEPGP. Once the application period closes (typically on March 31), CCR staff will work collaboratively with SWS staff to review all waste reduction-related applications and provide funding recommendations to management for approval. Administration for approved applications in the new stream would be coordinated and shared with SWS staff. CEPGP funding is awarded annually, and no changes are being proposed for the grant period or established terms and conditions for this grant program.

Comprehensive Review of the CEPGP

Staff acknowledge the importance of undertaking a comprehensive review of the CEPGP covering the period from the last review to the present day (2016 to 2025). Staff intend to launch this review in 2026 with the goal of bringing a report to the Environment and Climate Change Committee and Council in 2027. The CEPGP review will examine administrative processes, program requirements, eligibility criteria, project types, promotion/communications, and integration with complementary City programs (e.g., Community-led Greening Initiatives and Gardening Program). The comprehensive review will also include a community engagement component to encourage feedback from non-profit community organizations with previous CEPGP experience.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the report recommendation.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments associated with Committee and Council's approval of the recommendations of this report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

This is a City-wide report.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

There were no advisory committee consultations undertaken in association with this report recommendation.

CONSULTATION

The recommendation for this report concerns the establishment of a dedicated waste avoidance, reduction, and reuse initiatives stream for the existing Community Environmental Projects Grant Program (CEPGP). The provision of subsidies, rebates, and grants to community organizations for waste reduction initiatives is part of Action Suite 1 under the Council-approved Solid Waste Master Plan (SWMP). Funding for this new stream would be directed from the Council-approved Solid Waste Services Long Range Financial Plan.

City staff heard through the SWMP engagement that residents support the use of grants for waste reduction and reuse. Residents expressed strong support for measures addressing the top of the waste management hierarchy and their willingness to participate in waste avoidance, reduction and reuse initiatives. It was also noted that the City should play a role in supporting residents and local groups in their avoidance, reduction and reuse efforts through the use of subsidies, rebates and grants.

This was further emphasized through a survey conducted by Solid Waste Services in 2025 to gather feedback on existing, missing and future Community Waste Reduction and Reuse Initiatives. Participants expressed a desire for more frequent events and an interest in the City enabling and/or empowering community-led waste reduction and reuse opportunities, including through grants. Partnerships with the community had already been identified during SWMP engagement as a key to successful Waste Plan implementation.

A comprehensive review of the CEPGP covering the period from 2016-2025 is anticipated to launch in 2026. This review will include public notification and consultation to encourage community engagement and feedback from community organizations and residents alike.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The Community Environmental Projects Grant Program follows all requirements in accordance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

The proposed changes and new initiatives meet all legislative requirements and are designed to reduce administrative barriers to community organizations, including those serving persons with disabilities and older adults. Application processes and guidelines are available in accessible formats and with communication supports, upon request.

Additionally, all online platforms and digital content will meet all requirements under the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), level 2.0 AA.

While, consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee was not required as the changes do not alter current service delivery, staff will consult with the Corporate Accessibility Office, as required, to ensure any new actions and initiatives as part of this program incorporate accessibility standards and best practices to the highest degree possible.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications associated with this report.

CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

The climate implications associated with this report are minor and do not meet the threshold to be considered significant for reporting purposes.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

Schedule “L” of By-law 2025-69 provides for the delegation of authority in the Strategic Initiatives department. Section 5 of Schedule “L” provides the authority in relation to agreements under the Community Environmental Projects Grant Program (CEPGP).

The General Manager, Strategic Initiatives and the Director, Climate Change and Resiliency, individually are delegated the authority to approve, conclude and execute agreements for acceptance of funds for the CEPGP, provided that such agreements:

- a) are in accordance with applicable Council-approved policies and by-laws
- b) are within approved budget limits and
- c) contain appropriate insurance, termination, workplace safety and indemnification provisions

The exercise of delegated authority associated with the CEPGP is reported to the appropriate Standing Committee at least once every calendar year.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

There are no economic implications associated with this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The Community Environmental Projects Grant Program (CEPGP) provides funding to

non-profit organizations interested in undertaking small-scale, community-based initiatives that support an environmentally sustainable Ottawa. Funding through the CEPGP is available to support a wide variety of community projects, including greening initiatives, environmental restoration, community workshops, education and awareness campaigns and waste reduction initiatives.

The Solid Waste Master Plan includes a recommendation to provide financial incentives, such as subsidies, rebates, and grants, to community organizations to support ideas and programs to increase waste avoidance, reduction, and reuse across the City. Integrating a dedicated waste reduction stream into the existing CEPGP framework will capitalize on a long-standing, successful funding program aimed at supporting local environmental initiatives.

INDIGENOUS, GENDER AND EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no Indigenous, gender, and equity implications associated with this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

The Community Environmental Projects Grant Program is a City-wide funding program. Non-profit organizations based in rural Ottawa are eligible to apply.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The proposal to include a dedicated waste avoidance, reduction and reuse initiatives stream for the Community Environmental Projects Grant Program supports the strategic priority for the 2023-2026 Term of Council of building “a city that is green and resilient”. This proposal also supports Strategic Objective 17 to “increase waste reduction and diversion”. Many repair and reuse initiatives benefit vulnerable residents from an affordability perspective and align with Strategic Objective 4 to “advance poverty reduction”.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

N/A

DISPOSITION

Climate Change and Resiliency staff will implement the changes for the 2026 Community Environmental Projects Grant Program cycle in collaboration with Solid Waste Services staff.