



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF
VERNON
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City Explores Child Friendly Initiatives

The City of Vernon is exploring what it takes to be a *child and youth friendly city*. The City applied for funding through a PlanH program which is a partnership of BC Healthy Communities Society and the Province of BC, Ministry of Health. Although Vernon was initially unsuccessful in receiving the grant through the program, BC Healthy Communities representatives felt the proposed project was valuable and provided \$10,000 in funding.

The Child Friendly City project aims to evaluate how Vernon is doing supporting children and youth through working with community partners and examining topics relating to housing, transportation, health, parks and recreation. After the assessment is complete, gaps and improvements will be identified and recommended to Vernon Council and/or partner organizations. There will be community consultation throughout the process, including engagement designed and delivered by and for children and youth. UBCO students and the Institute of Community Engaged Research are also assisting and involved with the project.

“Vernon has been implementing child and youth friendly initiatives for quite some time”, explained Councilor Juliette Cunningham, “In May 2012, the City of Vernon adopted the Children’s Charter where Council declared that we would recognize them as equal citizens and engage them to actively participate in the decisions that affect them. The Child friendly project ensures their voices are heard, respected and valued by their local government.” In 2014, Vernon hosted the Cities Fit for Children Summit, bringing delegates from all over the province to hear internationally renowned speakers discuss how cities can support children, youth and families. Council’s Strategic Plan includes goals and objectives surrounding children, youth and families, and supportive policies exist in various City Plans; however, further work is required to strengthen these initiatives. A collaborative working group, made up of representatives from the City of Vernon, Interior Health, North Okanagan Early Years Council, Success by 6 and the United Way, meets regularly to explore ways in which Vernon can support children, youth and families. These endeavours aim to build a strong healthy future and support community economic development.

For more information on project, contact Cleo Corbett, Long Range Planner, ccorbett@vernon.ca or 250-550-7830.