

DATE: October 6, 2017

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Dave Dyer, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works

SUBJECT: Union of BC Municipalities Strategic Wildfire Protection Initiative Grant Application for updating the Community Wildfire Protection Plan

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. City of Prince George Wildland/Urban Interface Wildfire Management Strategy – 2005
2. Staff Report to Council Re: Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Management – June 13, 2016

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

1. APPROVE that Administration complete the application process for a grant under the *Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative – Community Wildfire Protection Plans & Updates*, which is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities, to update the City of Prince George Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
2. AUTHORIZE the City's Financial Officer and General Manager of Engineering and Public Works to sign grant application documents and any contract documents should grant approval be received.

PURPOSE:

This report is presented to request Council's support for the application made by City Staff under the *UBCM Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative – Community Wildfire Protection Plans & Updates*, to provide funding for an update to the City's Community Wildfire Prevention Plan (CWPP). This project provides a review and update of the outdated Wildland/Urban Interface Wildfire Management Strategy (2005) to meet current reporting and mapping requirements and recent best practices and to provide an action plan to move forward with wildfire protection.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The update of the City's community wildfire protection plan falls under one of the Goals of the 2016-2018 Corporate Plan to provide a safe environment, and under the Key Corporate Strategies to implement best practices related to health and safety and to facilitate and support initiatives to ensure a safe community.

BACKGROUND:

In June of 2016, Administration provided a report to Council outlining the recent history of wildfire management in the City (see attached). In this report, a commitment was made to update the CWPP and to investigate grant opportunities.

With the recent major forest fires in Slave Lake and Fort McMurray, AB along with the 2017 record wildland fire season in BC and improvements in future climate modeling, the City plans to update its CWPP. The City has also experienced the effects of the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) and more recently the Douglas Fir Beetle (DFB). A recent report to City Council highlighted the potential impacts of the DFB and that the infestation in the Prince George Timber Service Area has grown by over 600% (1,300ha to 8,100ha) from 2015 to 2016.

DISCUSSION:

The application deadline for this intake was October 6, 2017; City staff have submitted an application but it can only be 'Approved in Principle' until Council's support is provided. Applications will be evaluated and an announcement of the successful projects will follow in late 2017. Successful applicants will have one year from the time of approval to complete the project.

Engineering Services is currently preparing terms of reference for a Request for Proposal (RFP) to engage a consultant to complete the project. It is desired to proceed to procurement as soon as the grant application is approved.

Following the completion of the CWPP update it is possible that new action items will result in additional work requirements for the City including: completing fuel treatment prescriptions (detailed planning) and operational fuel treatments (fire fuel removal). Currently both UBCM and the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) provide grant funding to complete this type of work. FireSmart planning and education may also be an action item resulting from the CWPP that is eligible for further grant funding.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The CWPP grant program will fund up to 75% of eligible costs for the approved projects to a maximum of \$22,500. The total cost for this project is estimated at \$90,000. The City's portion of the project will be funded from an internal reserve whose dedicated use of funds is for urban forestry management.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

As a city in the forest, Prince George is susceptible to the impacts of wildfires. By having a plan in place to support future action on wildfire prevention the City will help to provide a safe environment for its citizens and to promote safe infrastructure for both municipal and private assets in the wildland/urban interface and beyond.

Administration requests Council's approval to complete the grant application process under the *UBCM Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative – Community Wildfire Protection Plans & Updates* for the update to the City's Community Wildfire Protection Plan. If approved, the grant could fund up to \$22,500 toward the project.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:



Dave Dyer, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works

Report prepared by: Joshua Kelly, Supervisor Energy, Environment and Sustainability

APPROVED:



Kathleen Soltis, City Manager
Meeting date: October 16, 2017