

DATE: November 30, 2018

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

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

SUBJECT: Union of BC Municipalities Community Resiliency Investment Grant Application for Prince George Wildfire Mitigation Actions 2019

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Staff Report to Council Re: Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Management – Jun 13, 2016
2. Staff Report to Council Re: Union of BC Municipalities Strategic Wildfire Protection Initiative Grant Application for updating the Community Wildfire Protection Plan – Oct 16, 2017

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

1. APPROVE that Administration complete the application process for a grant under the *Community Resiliency Investment Program – 2019 FireSmart Communities Funding & Supports*, which is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities, to complete wildfire mitigation and community FireSmart.
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 City Council's authorization for completing an application under the *Community Resiliency Investment Program – 2019 FireSmart Communities Funding & Supports*. The grant will fund implementation of the next steps in wildfire mitigation, including community education, and, planning for, and initiating wildfire fuel treatment activities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

These wildfire mitigation and community education actions address 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. Community sessions will also provide opportunities for enhancing public information and gaining feedback.

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 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and to investigate grant opportunities.

In October of 2017, Administration provided a report to Council requesting Council's approval to complete a grant application under the *Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative – Community Wildfire Protection Plans & Updates* (see attached). This request was approved, grant funding was secured and the CWPP update is now in the final draft stages. Completion of the CWPP is expected in the first quarter of 2019.

The grant funding now available under the *Community Resiliency Investment Program* will fund community education activities, detailed planning for mitigation through partnerships with other communities and organizations (i.e. the Regional District of Fraser Fort-George (RDFFG) and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC)) and to support additional wildfire mitigation activities in and around Prince George.

DISCUSSION:

Applications will be evaluated and an announcement of the successful projects will follow in early 2019. Successful applicants will have one year from the time of approval to complete their projects.

The City and the RDFFG are planning a joint application administered by City staff to jointly complete education, emergency preparedness and training in and around the city. To achieve efficiency and reduce duplication FireSmart public awareness will be completed together. Additionally, funding for staff training and emergency planning exercises related to wildfires will be made available to both groups.

Fuel management activities identified in the CWPP within the city boundary are located on Provincial lands and will help to reduce risk to residents in the wildland-urban interface. Fuel management activities also are proposed on UNBC lands, which qualify under the program, to manage fuels and reduce wildfire risk to the university and the western part of the city.

Engineering Services will prepare a terms-of-reference for consulting services to complete the fuel management planning. It is desired to proceed to procurement as soon as the grant application is approved.

Further mitigation and education actions are expected to continue into 2020 and beyond. There appears to be strong support at the Provincial Government level to maintain the *Community Resiliency Investment Program* into the future.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The *Community Resiliency Investment* grant program will fund up to 100% of eligible costs for approved projects in high risk communities to a maximum of \$100,000 per year per community. Additional funding is available for fuel management on Provincial Crown land. The following summarizes the project costs:

Agency	Funding Request
City (education, emergency preparedness and training)	\$85,000
City (fuel management – crown land)	\$78,000
RDFFG (education, emergency preparedness and training)	\$52,000
UNBC (fuel management)	\$77,000
TOTAL	\$292,000

The total cost for this project is estimated at \$292,000 in partnership with the RDFFG and UNBC. For this joint application each local government partner is eligible for up to \$100,000 for a total of \$200,000. Additional funding, \$92,000, will be requested from the grant program to complete fuel management activities on UNBC lands and locations within the city. The total funding request will be \$292,000.

If the City's portion of this project is not fully funded by the grant, the balance of costs will be funded from an internal reserve whose dedicated use of funds is for urban forestry management. The City will act as the grant administrator and provide reporting to UBCM on activity progress.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Administration requests Council's approval to complete the grant application process under the *UBCM Community Resiliency Investment Program - 2019 FireSmart Communities Funding & Supports*. The application will be completed in partnership with Regional District of Fraser Fort George and the University of Northern British Columbia to engage in community education and detailed planning for wildfire mitigation, and to initiate wildfire fuel management activities within the City.

If approved, the grant could fund up to 100% of the cost of the project for a total of \$292,000.

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: December 10, 2018