

**DATE:** November 18, 2022

**TO:** MAYOR AND COUNCIL

**NAME AND TITLE:** Walter Babicz, City Manager

**SUBJECT:** 2022- 2023 Strengthening Communities' Program Grant Approval

**ATTACHMENT(S):** None

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated November 18, 2022 from the City Manager, titled "2022-2023 Strengthening Communities' Program Grant Approval".

**PURPOSE:**

In April of this year, Council approved Administration's request to apply to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for 2022/23 Strengthening Communities' Services Program funding. Council also authorized the City Manager to enter into any associated funding agreements. The City has been informed that funding has been approved in the amount of \$624,980. This report provides information about the purpose of the grant and the initiatives comprising the City's application.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Government of Canada and the Province of BC provided \$540 million in shared funding to local governments under the Safe Restart Agreement to manage the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Within the Safe Restart funding, \$100 million was allocated for the Strengthening Communities' Services Program, which aims to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts. The initial intake, launched in 2021, delivered approximately \$80 million to local governments. The City of Prince George received \$1.9 million and has been implementing and monitoring funded initiatives for the past year.

The 2022 intake guidelines capped the amount of funding available to communities based on the size of their populations. The City of Prince George was eligible to apply for a maximum of \$625,000. As such the application consisted of initiatives recommended by City leadership, and informed by consultation with allied organizations, totaling \$624,980. Fully funded initiatives include:

- Providing secure and monitored access to the new downtown pool.
- Installing modern needle drop boxes in targeted locations.
- Reducing community concerns in neighbourhoods where unsheltered homeless populations are seeking temporary shelter with the addition of security.
- Enhancing the capacity of the City to work with urban Indigenous service providers and leadership.

- Training for City Bylaw and Outreach staff related to crisis de-escalation and trauma informed practices.
- Shifting the perception of downtown safety and cleanliness through communication and engagement.
- Continuing the employment of two City of Prince George Outreach Coordinators to coordinate enforcement activities with client service for the unsheltered homeless.

Administration has begun planning for implementation of these funded initiatives and is required to submit a final report to UBCM by December 31, 2023.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

One of the key strategies identified in Council's 2022-2024 Strategic Plan is "provide a community where people feel safe and included". The 2022-2023 Corporate Work Plan includes activities designed to enhance community safety and the perception of community safety. The initiatives comprising the City's successful 2022/23 Strengthening Communities' Services Program grant align with both the Strategic and Corporate Work Plans.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:**

With Council approval, the City of Prince George applied to the 2022/23 UBCM administered Strengthening Communities' Services Program. The City was successful in obtaining approval for funding in the amount of \$624,980, which was the maximum amount available. Work is underway to implement a suite of activities aligned with identified Council priorities and grant criteria.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

Walter Babicz, City Manager

**PREPARED BY:** Chris Bone, Sr. Manager –Civic Initiatives & Partnerships

Meeting Date: 2022/11/28