

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

1100 Patricia Blvd. | Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 3V9 | www.princegeorge.ca

DATE: August 14, 2023

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Deanna Wasnik, Director, Planning and Development

SUBJECT: Union of BC Municipalities Community Resiliency Investment Grant Application for Prince George Wildfire Mitigation Actions 2023

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

1. APPROVES that Administration complete the application process for a grant under the Community Resiliency Investment Program – 2023 FireSmart Community Funding & Supports, which is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities, to complete wildfire fuel removal activities;
2. AUTHORIZES the City's Financial Officer and Director of Planning and Development to sign grant application documents and any contract documents should grant approval be received; and
3. APPROVES expenditures of \$53,050 from the City's EVP Crown Land Forest account to fund the remainder of the wildfire fuel removal expenses 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 – 2023 FireSmart Community Funding & Supports. The grant will fund implementation of the next steps in wildfire mitigation, specifically wildfire fuel treatment activities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Wildfire mitigation aligns with myPG Communities Goals and Priorities, Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and the Climate Forward Implementation Strategy:

- **myPG Community Goal:** Adapting to Climate Change
- **Strategic Plan:** Social Health and Well-Being Priorities & Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action Priorities
- **Climate Forward Implementation Strategy:** Apply wildfire prescriptions to at risk areas to remove wildfire fuel.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Prince George has a history of proactively managing wildfire risk through policy and operations. The City first developed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in 2005 and worked to complete CWPP recommendations for the next 7 years.

An updated CWPP was completed in 2018, to account for an increase in developed area and a change in environmental conditions (Pine Beetle, Douglas Fir Beetle, warmer temperatures, drier summers, etc). The updated CWPP provided a number of recommendations to mitigate wildfire risk throughout the City. These recommendations were prioritized based on their relative impact for reducing wildfire risk and the speed at which they could be implemented. Wildfire fuel treatments were the second highest ranked recommendation.

The CWPP also identified areas of high risk for wildfire within the City. As part of a previous grant from the Community Resiliency Investment Program in 2019, fuel management prescriptions were developed for four of these areas. Two areas (Foothills and Pidherny) were provincial crown land within City Limits and were passed on to the Provincial Government. The other two prescriptions (Malaspina and Broddy) were for municipally owned land and were left with the City for project execution. A single application for fuel treatments at Malaspina and Broddy was submitted under the 2020 Community Resiliency Investment Program intake and was successful. However, due to several project constraints Broddy was dropped from the application and Malaspina was completed separately. Field work at Malaspina was completed in early August 2023 and final reporting will be submitted in mid-September 2023.

DISCUSSION:

Upon completion of final reporting for fuel management activities at Malaspina, the City will be able to submit an application for funding under the 2023 Community Resiliency Investment Program. If the application is successful, it will provide funding for the completion of the fuel management prescription at Broddy. The application deadline is September 30, 2023.

Administration continues to consider further wildfire fuel treatment areas within the city boundary and will explore future grant funding options respecting wildfire fuel mitigation works.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The Community Resiliency Investment grant program will fund up to 100% of eligible costs for approved projects on municipal lands in high risk communities to a maximum of \$200,000 per year per community.

Total project cost will be \$253,050, of which \$200,000 will be covered by Community Resiliency Investment grant funding. The balance of costs will be funded from an internal reserve dedicated for urban forestry management on City lands.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Administration requests Council's approval to complete the grant application process under the UBCM Community Resiliency Investment Program – 2023 FireSmart Communities Funding & Supports. If successful, the grant would cover wildfire fuel removal activities at Broddy, which has been identified as posing wildfire risk and is the highest priority for fuel removal.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Deanna Wasnik, Director, Planning and Development

PREPARED BY: Jesse Labatiuk, Environmental Specialist

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2023/09/11