

DATE: January 19, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Ian Wells, Acting Deputy City Manager

SUBJECT: Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) Grant Application for the Ferguson Lake Nature Reserve Rehabilitation Project

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

1. APPROVES the City of Prince George submitting a grant funding application for the Ferguson Lake Nature Reserve Rehabilitation project to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream;
2. AUTHORIZES the City of Prince George Financial Officer and Acting City Manager to sign grant funding application documents and any resulting contract documents should grant approval be received.

PURPOSE:

Administration requests Council's authorization to apply for grant funding from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) for the Ferguson Lake Nature Reserve Rehabilitation project.

BACKGROUND:

Ferguson Lake Nature Reserve is a 55.0 hectare natural park situated in the northwest area of Hart along the City boundary. The City operates and maintains the site through a long-term lease agreement with Nature Trust of BC which accommodates community use of the park while balancing the long-term preservation and protection of its natural ecosystems.

The nature reserve is a popular City-wide destination for both residents and visitors with a 2.6km trail network complete with marshland boardwalks, lakeside viewpoints, fishing dock, canoe launch, old homestead, picnic areas, interpretive signage, and other amenities. The lake is regularly stocked by Freshwater Fisheries Society and is one of only two fishing lakes within City limits.

Much of the Ferguson Lake Nature Reserve's active transportation network infrastructure requires rehabilitation to meet the growing demands for community use with an active aging population, limited access to indoor recreation due to COVID-19 regulations, and desire for year-round access. The existing boardwalk infrastructure design, age, and condition necessitate a complete reconstruction to accommodate use and adapt to the emerging climate change freeze/thaw cycles. Various segments of the trail system require resurfacing and the addition of low lying boardwalks to

provide continuous access particularly during wet conditions. Other infrastructure upgrades include new signage and site furnishings, as well as wheelchair accessible picnic tables and a trail route from the main picnic area to the fishing dock view point for wheeled users and their caregivers.

DISCUSSION:

The federal Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) - COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) has been made available with a focus on building infrastructure to help British Columbia communities deal with health and socio-economic challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CRVIS grant program identifies an application deadline of January 27, 2021 and requires a Resolution of Council shortly after the grant submission deadline. Administration has submitted the grant application identifying that it is contingent on Council approval.

A successful funding award for the Ferguson Lake Nature Reserve Rehabilitation project would accommodate the rehabilitation of boardwalks, trails, and signage, along with the addition of wheelchair accessible picnic tables and trail between the fishing dock viewpoint and main parking lot. These improvements would provide quality infrastructure that would significantly extend the life cycle of the assets and support a wider range of user groups.

The proposed project achieves the CVRIS grant program outcome for projects that support the “*development of active transportation networks*”. Eligible CVRIS projects must begin prior to fall 2021 with construction completion by December 31, 2021. The announcement of CVRIS grant funding is anticipated in late spring 2021 and a successful funding award for the City would be followed by design and construction starting in the summer of 2021.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The proposal supports the following Council Focus Areas:

- *“Support and promote initiatives that facilitate healthy and active lifestyles.”*
- *“Make Prince George accessible and enjoyable for everyone, regardless of their age or ability.”*

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The total estimated cost for the Ferguson Lake Nature Reserve Rehabilitation project grant submission is \$848,980. Under the ICIP CVRIS program, 100% of the project costs can be covered by federal (up to 80%) and provincial (up to 20%) contributions (\$848,980 grant request). Should a successful funding application be realized, a budget amendment would come forward to Council for the “Nature Park Improvements” capital budget #0382 in the 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan to identify the grant funding. If unsuccessful, only minor repairs could occur within the \$50,000 2021 #0382 capital budget and any further works described would need to be considered for potential funding through the City’s future budget cycles or third party funding sources.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The City is requesting Council’s authorization to apply for grant funding to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) for the Ferguson Lake Nature Reserve Rehabilitation project. A successful CVRIS funding application would see a 100% funding contribution in the amount of \$848,980 for the rehabilitation of the site’s active transportation system in 2021. These works would support the growing community demands for access to trails and nature park destinations by a wide user group including seniors, families, and people with limited mobility.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Ian Wells, Acting Deputy City Manager

PREPARED BY: Laurie-Ann Kosec, Strategic Planner

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

Meeting Date: 2021/02/08