

DATE: March 31, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Ian Wells, Acting Deputy City Manager

SUBJECT: Strengthening Communities' Grant Application – UBCM Resolution Request

ATTACHMENT(S): PowerPoint Presentation
UBCM Strengthening Communities' Services Program & Application Guide

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

1. APPROVES that the City of Prince George submit an application under UBCM's 2021 Strengthening Communities' Services Program in the amount of \$2.5 million to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts; and
2. AUTHORIZES the Acting Deputy City Manager to enter into any associated funding agreements.

PURPOSE:

The Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia are providing \$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 is being delivered through the Strengthening Communities' Services Program, which aims to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts through an application-based program. The funding, administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) on behalf of the Province and the Government of Canada, can contribute up to 100% of the cost of eligible activities. The purpose of this report is to obtain Council's authorization to apply to the UBCM administered Strengthening Communities' Program for \$2.5 million, the maximum amount available to communities with a population of 75,000 – 200,000.

BACKGROUND:

At its January 11, 2021 meeting, Council approved the recommendations of the Select Committee on a Safe, Clean and Inclusive Community. The City's establishment of a Community Safety Hub to enhance and support multi-jurisdictional service coordination and integration was one of those recommendations. At the same meeting Council received, for information, a report titled "Downtown and Area Service Enhancement Package" that provided an assessment of the service enhancements implemented in 2020. Administration is continuing to monitor and evaluate the impact of these enhancements.

The Strengthening Communities' Services Program is meant to bridge the period between the COVID-19 outbreak and the post-COVID recovery period with respect to support for the unsheltered and homeless and related community impacts. For that reason, eligible costs can include those incurred from September 17, 2020 to the date of submission of the final report (approximately August 15, 2022). Proposed activities must not create ongoing long-term financial obligations that will not be supported by the applicant.

For this reason, the City's application focuses on costs associated with the establishment and operation of the Community Safety Hub, and incremental improvements to the current package of six interrelated downtown and area service enhancements. The application was informed by feedback received from City Directors, the RCMP, Northern Health, BC Housing, Downtown Prince George, and the Prince George Native Friendship Centre.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Council has identified the enhancement of safety and security throughout Prince George with an emphasis on downtown, as a focus area.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Administration is seeking Council approval to submit an application for \$2.5 million to the UBCM administered Strengthening Communities' Services Program. The City's application will focus on costs associated with the establishment and operation of the Community Safety Hub and incremental improvements to the current package of six interrelated downtown and area service enhancements. These focus areas align with the intent of the funding program which is to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts. City departments and partner agencies contributed feedback and information that helped to shape the submission. Council is also asked to authorize Administration to enter into any associated funding agreements.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Ian Wells, Acting Deputy City Manager

PREPARED BY: Chris Bone, Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives & Partnerships

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

Meeting Date: 2021/04/12