

**REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREAS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2024**

SUBJECT **Community Resiliency Initiative Grant - 2024 FireSmart Community Funding & Supports**

ISSUE SUMMARY

The Capital Regional District (CRD) assists Electoral Area (EA) communities in reducing their wildfire risk through first responder coordination, public education, emergency planning, and agency cross-training. The CRD was successful in its application, receiving grant funding from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM).

BACKGROUND

UBCM provides funding for a range of community-based projects, including wildfire preparedness. The FireSmart Community Funding & Supports program supports activities that reduce community risk from wildfire. The CRD's application for the 2024 intake was fully accepted, securing the maximum funding of \$350,000 per year for two years, to a cumulative total of \$700,000, beginning in July 2024 and continuing through June 2026.

The CRD proposes to use grant funding to improve wildfire resiliency in rural EA communities through:

- a FireSmart public education campaign,
- an expanded wood chipping program that provides accessible alternatives to burning,
- a home FireSmart assessment program conducted by local qualified assessors,
- a FireSmart rebate program for residents, and
- dedicated wildfire training for first responders.
- continued support for volunteers and CRD FireSmart Coordinator

The CRD was eligible for a base funding of \$200,000/year, with each EA seeing an additional \$50,000/year. Funding will be apportioned based on the activities outlined in the application, ensuring satisfaction with the terms and conditions of the agreement.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

Emergency planning and training activity funded by this grant enhances the CRD's ability to prepare for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from an environmental or climate related disaster.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

Capacity generated by this grant is aligned with existing emergency preparedness and strategies.

Financial Implications

The grant does not negatively impact the CRD fire department or emergency program service budgets but provides an opportunity for additional projects that increase community resilience to wildfire, such as homeowner education and wood chipping events.

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Intergovernmental Implications

Identified as an eligible component of the grant application is support of the Island Trust's effort to establish a Development Permit Area. The Islands Trust, a federated body, is responsible for protecting the unique nature and amenities of 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands and the surrounding water in the southern Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound. They regulate local land use and manage a trust fund of land. The development permit area identifies locations which need special treatment for certain purposes including the protection of development hazards. This cross-jurisdiction collaboration supports intergovernmental alignment and coordination.

Service Delivery Implications

Additional capacity funded through this grant enhances service support capability to the CRD during an emergency or disaster.

CONCLUSION

The CRD was successful in its grant application to the Community Resiliency Initiative Grant - 2024 FireSmart Community Funding and Supports, provided through UBCM. The funding will be used to build wildfire resilience in the capital region.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

Submitted by:	Corey Anderson, Manager Emergency Services
Concurrence:	Don Elliott, BA, MUP, Acting General Manager, Planning & Protective Services
Concurrence:	Alicia Fraser, P. Eng., Acting Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Approval Letter