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REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREAS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2025

SUBJECT **Community Resiliency Initiative Grant: 2026 FireSmart Community Funding and 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 is applying to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) for funding to increase EA community wildfire resiliency activities (see Appendix A for application guide). UBCM requires that all grant applications be accompanied by a motion of support from the local government.

BACKGROUND

Over several years, UBCM has provided funding for a range of community-based projects, including wildfire preparedness through the FireSmart Grant, of which the CRD has been the successful recipient. Looking to continue this success, the Protective Service Division has expressed interest in the 2026 FireSmart grant and is seeking approval to submit a full application. It is important to note that FireSmart activities are not an established service in the region and are wholly supported through grant funding.

The FireSmart Community Funding and Supports program supports activities that reduce community risk from wildfire. The CRD's FireSmart program is focused on the seven FireSmart disciplines: education, vegetation management, legislation and planning, development considerations, interagency cooperation, cross-training and emergency planning.

The CRD has applied for this grant to improve wildfire resiliency in rural EA communities through these eligible actions:

- a FireSmart public education campaign, with in-person and digital components
- continuation of the wood-chipping program that provides accessible alternatives to burning
- access to either:
 - a Home FireSmart assessment conducted by local qualified assessors; or
 - a Wildfire Mitigation Program assessment conducted by local qualified assessors for the purposes of obtaining a mitigation certificate that can also be shared with local insurance providers to showcase mitigation activities and potentially increase a homeowner's ability to maintain insurance coverage
- farm property assessments
- neighbourhood assessments
- a FireSmart rebate program for residents and farms; and
- continued dedicated wildfire training for first responders

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ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Electoral Areas Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That an application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Resiliency Initiative Fund for the FireSmart Community Funding and Supports program be supported and that staff be instructed to apply for, negotiate, and if successful, enter into an agreement, and do all such things necessary for accepting grant funds and overseeing grant management for the proposed project.

Alternative 2

That staff be directed to not submit the grant application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Resiliency Initiative FireSmart Community Funding and Supports program.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

- 3c Increase resilience, community and adaptation planning to address climate related risks and disasters
- 9a-2 Develop plans and implement actions consistent with regulatory requirements for local government and regional emergency management, including the new *Emergency Management Act* requirements
- 16g-1 Continue to implement wildfire resiliency activities
- 16g-3 Review and modernize fire and emergency programs

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

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

Financial Implications

The grant will not alter 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. With an approved proposal, the funding would be apportioned in alignment with the grant terms and administered through the eligible actions above to the electoral areas. The design of UBCM's grant program offers a maximum of \$200,000 to the Regional District and \$50,000 per each electoral area, per year. It is the intention to apply for the maximum in each category, for an approximate total of \$350,000.

Intergovernmental Implications

A portion of this grant application is earmarked to support the Island Trust's effort to establish a Development Permit Area. This cross-jurisdictional collaboration supports intergovernmental alignment and coordination.

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Service Delivery Implications

The capacity created through administration of this grant enhances service support capability to the EAs, and to the CRD, during an emergency or disaster. Without this funding, FireSmart activities would cease.

CONCLUSION

The CRD supports community wildfire preparedness in its EAs through grants. The UBCM FireSmart Community Funding and Supports funding stream is an important resource to build wildfire resilience in the capital region. If supported by the CRD Board, UBCM will consider the CRD's grant application.

RECOMMENDATION

The Electoral Areas Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That an application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Resiliency Initiative Fund for the FireSmart Community Funding and Supports program be supported and that staff be instructed to apply for, negotiate, and if successful, enter into an agreement, and do all such things necessary for accepting grant funds and overseeing grant management for the proposed project.

Submitted by:	Shawn Carby, C.D., BHSc., MAL, Senior Manager, Protective Services
Concurrence:	Kevin Lorette, P. Eng., MBA, General Manager, Housing, Planning and Protective Services
Concurrence:	Nelson Chan, MBA, FCPA, FCMA, Chief Financial Officer & General Manager, Finance & Technology
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Community Resiliency Investment Program: 2026 FireSmart Community Funding and Supports – Allocation-based Funding for FireSmart Activities, Program and Application Guide