

**REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREAS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 08, 2021**

SUBJECT Community Resiliency Initiative Grant: FireSmart Community Funding & Supports

ISSUE SUMMARY

The Capital Regional District (CRD) assists Electoral Area (EA) communities with wildfire risk reduction through public education, hazard assessment, emergency planning, and cross-agency training. The CRD is applying to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) for funding to increase EA community wildfire resiliency activities. UBCM requires that all grant applications be accompanied by a motion of support from the local government.

BACKGROUND

UBCM provides funding for a range of community based projects, including wildfire preparedness. A 2022 grant opportunity is available to support local governments as they build local capacity. The FireSmart Community Funding & Supports program supports activities that reduce community risk from wildfire. As part of the application process, UBCM requires a motion of support to receive and manage grant funding.

Protective Services staff launched a series of engagements with EA fire departments, emergency programs, and FireSmart committees to inform a grant application. Effective wildfire preparedness programs include 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:

- a FireSmart public education campaign,
- a wood chipping program to provide 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.

If approved by UBCM, most grant funds would be directed to local volunteers, residents, and businesses. A grant request breakdown is below:

FireSmart Activity	Funding Proposal
Public Education	\$ 38,726
Chipping Program	\$ 37,336
Home Assessments	\$ 73,200
Resident Rebates	\$ 63,100
First Responder Training	\$ 39,256
Development Planning	\$ 8,623
Community Committees	\$ 20,949
Total	\$281,190

ALTERNATIVES*Alternative 1*

The Electoral Areas Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the Capital Regional District Board support an application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Resiliency Initiative Fund for the FireSmart Community Funding & Supports program and direct staff to provide overall grant management.

Alternative 2

That staff be directed to withdraw the grant application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Resiliency Initiative FireSmart Community Funding & Supports program.

IMPLICATIONS*Financial Implications*

The grant provides an opportunity for one-time projects that increase community resilience to wildfire, such as homeowner education and wood chipping events and will not impact Fire Department or Emergency Program budgets.

CONCLUSION

The CRD supports community wildfire preparedness in its EAs. The UBCM FireSmart Economic Recovery funding stream is an important opportunity to increase 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 the Board support an application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Resiliency Initiative Fund for the FireSmart Community Funding & Supports program and direct staff to provide overall grant management.

Submitted by:	Shawn Carby, CD, BHSc, MAL, Senior Manager, Protective Services
Concurrence:	Kevin Lorette, P. Eng., MBA, General Manager, Planning & Protective Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: UBCM FireSmart Community Funding & Supports Application