



INFORMATION ONLY COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: October 22, 2024

From: Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

Subject: **Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan Update**

Report Prepared by: Jason Brolund, Fire Chief

INFORMATION SUMMARY

Community Wildfire Resilience Plans (CWRP) are the primary wildfire risk reduction planning mechanism for British Columbia communities. The 2024 West Kelowna CWRP is ready for public consultation and will be finalized and presented to Council on December 10, 2024.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Foster Safety and Well-Being – We will pursue through direct action, advocacy, and collaboration with local and regional service providers, investments in community health, needs-based housing, emergency preparedness, policing, and other services that foster safety and well-being in West Kelowna.

BACKGROUND

This report provides a “heads-up” to Council regarding our forthcoming CWRP. West Kelowna Fire Rescue (WKFR) has led development of a new CWRP for our community, commencing in early 2024. The work has been supported by outside experts at Cabin Forestry. The City of West Kelowna’s 2024 CWRP builds on the recommendations of 2018 Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan (CWPP), plus our considerable experience in wildfire mitigation and operations, including lessons learned from significant events in our community.

The CWRP provides an assessment of our communities needs and wildfire risk. Importantly, it allows us to access funding for wildfire risk reduction, as the CWRP is a pre-requisite for funding under the UBCM CRI grant program. The CWRP must be reviewed and updated every 5 years, our current plan (CWPP) is now 6 years old. The plan follows a standard provincial template; however, it has been customized to the needs of West Kelowna.

The primary objective of the plan is to develop achievable and strategic action items. The plan includes considerations for the 7 key FireSmart disciplines:

1. Education
2. Legislation and Planning
3. Development Considerations
4. Interagency Cooperation
5. Cross-Training
6. Emergency Planning
7. Vegetation Management

The plan contains 2 core components, in the form of recommendations and treatment units. Recommendations will include:

- Improving existing community education and engagement programs
- Identifying opportunities for new training, collaboration, and engagement
- Improving wildland fire suppression planning, tools, equipment, and resources
- Increasing collaboration with First Nations, Community Forest, and the Regional District to strategically complete fuel treatments
- Identifying and prioritizing areas within the community jurisdiction plus adjacent crown lands (new for 2024) that require fuel treatment (treatment units)

In addition to the recommendations and prioritized treatment units, the plan contains a series of maps that visually illustrates the burn history surrounding our community, the proposed fuel treatment areas and how they are interrelated.

NEXT STEPS

Public Consultation Process

As part of our 2025 CRI Grant application, the CWRP must be adopted by Council prior to the end of 2024. A core part of the plan will be public consultation, where we will look to the public to help validate recommended treatment units. We will also be seeking input from the public on ways we can incentivize FireSmart activities.

Our community will have an opportunity to provide input on our updated CWRP scheduled from October 23 to November 4, 2024. During the consultation period, an Open House will be held on October 30 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at West Kelowna City Hall (3731 Old Okanagan Highway, main floor). City staff together with WKFR and Cabin Forestry will be available at the Open House to explain the plan and receive feedback from the public. Staff will also be available to discuss FireSmart activities.

We will notify stakeholders and our community about the public engagement opportunities using various print and electronic community relations methods, which include:

- Visiting **[OurWK.ca/wildfireplan](https://www.ourwk.ca/wildfireplan)**
- Signing up for e-News updates at **[westkelownacity.ca/subscribe](https://www.westkelownacity.ca/subscribe)**

- City of West Kelowna website
- Newspaper ad
- Static information display at West Kelowna City Hall (main floor)
- Attending the Community Open House on October 30

Digital versions of the survey, display boards, maps and postcard will be available online at **OurWK.ca/wildfireplan** and paper copies of all the engagement materials will be part of a static display in the foyer of West Kelowna City Hall and be available at the Community Open House.

The finalized draft plan, including a What We Heard Report on the public engagement, will be presented to Council at the December 10, 2024 Regular Council meeting.

Recommendations for action in the plan will then be undertaken over the next 5 years, including as a part of our annual FireSmart program. Prioritized Fuel Treatment units will help guide the budget requirements and workplan for prescriptions and mitigation projects (small and large scale as well as work by our Fuel Modification Summer Students).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of developing the plan will not exceed \$32,000, the maximum available under the grant. This amount was fully funded under our approved 2024 CRI grant. Significant staff time has also been invested into supporting the project.

Budget needs for recommendations under the plan will be brought forward as a part of the normal budgetary process and/or addressed via grant funding to the extent it is available.

REVIEWED BY

Mark Roberts, Parks Manager

Sandy Webster, Director of Corporate Initiatives

Warren Everton, Director of Finance/CFO

Trevor Seibel, Deputy CAO/Deputy Corporate Officer

APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY

Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

Powerpoint: Yes No

Attachments:

1. CWRP Engagement Draft Postcard