



COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: January 28, 2025

From: Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

Subject: **Intact Centre Municipal Climate Resiliency Grant Support**

Report Prepared by: Jason Brolund, Fire Chief

RECOMMENDATION to Consider and Resolve:

THAT Council support the University of British Columbia - Okanagan in an application to the Intact Centre Municipal Climate Resiliency Grant to examine wildfire coexistence and pursue specific solutions to help communities predict, plan for and prevent destructive wildfires, as outlined in this report;

AND THAT staff be directed to prepare a letter of support for signature by the Mayor.

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

Wildfire preparedness and early detection of wildfires plays a critical role in mitigating risks, lowering suppression costs, and safeguarding lives and property.

Intact is a leading provider of property and casualty insurance. Intact believes that equipping municipalities with solutions to address their risk - while also mobilizing residents in the process - is essential to build climate resilient communities.

UBC is a globally recognized, top-ranked university with an active research and innovation hub at the Okanagan Campus.

Since the 2023 McDougall Creek Fire, Dr. Mathieu Bourbonnais, an Assistant Professor, Principal's Research Chair, and Co-Director for the Centre for Wildfire Coexistence at UBC Okanagan (UBCO) has engaged with West Kelowna Fire Rescue staff to examine

wildfire coexistence. Dr. Bourbonnais is pursuing solutions to help communities predict, plan for and prevent destructive wildfires.

His low-cost, purpose-built wildfire sensors help pinpoint when forests are most susceptible to ignition. These sensors are easily installed in the wildland urban interface and provide real-time information on wildfire conditions and crucial data on wind, humidity, temperature and soil conditions. A provincial camera network, and a program to increase capacity for prescribed fire are also being developed.

DISCUSSION

The Intact Municipal Climate Resiliency Grants Program funds practical solutions to protect people from the effects of climate change and build more resilient communities. The program is investing \$2 million across Canada to support practical solutions that will help municipalities address extreme weather events, including floods and wildfires.

UBCO has proposed a project to deploy at least 2 high resolution cameras as well as several low-cost wildfire sensors in our community as well as the same in partnership with the City of Kelowna. These would function as an initial test for potential deployment across the province in the future.

The deadline to submit applications is January 31, 2025. Each project will be allocated a maximum of \$200,000. UBCO will manage the grant application and administration process and complete all requirements for the project.

UBCO requests a letter of support for this application.

These activities are consistent with recommendation #28 of our recently adopted 2025 Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan: *“Sharing West Kelowna’s experience, work with external organisations (including universities, regional, provincial and federal governments, and industry) to evaluate identify challenges, opportunities and develop new and innovative response and prevention technologies.”*

Updates will be provided to Council as a part of our ongoing FireSmart program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None beyond a small amount of staff time to participate in the project during 2025.

REVIEWED BY

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