



COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: January 27, 2026

From: Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

Subject: **Letter of Support – Fire Danger Rating Signs**

Prepared by: Jason Brolund, General Manager of Protective Services and Fire Chief

Reviewed by: Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council authorize the Mayor, on behalf of the City of West Kelowna, to issue a Letter of Support for the Ashes to Advocacy Committee's community funded initiative to install two Electronic Fire Danger Rating (EFDR) signs within the city for the purpose of assisting the group's fundraising and grant seeking efforts.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Strengthen Our Community – We will provide opportunities for the residents of West Kelowna to build connections, celebrate successes, embrace the community's strengths and diversity, address shared needs, and contribute to shaping the community's future.

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

Notifying the public of changing conditions and increasing fire danger is an important component of our wildfire mitigation and preparation program. When the public is kept up to date, they are more likely to prepare and respond effectively before and during an emergency.

West Kelowna Fire Rescue maintains an inventory of 10 static Wildfire Danger signs across the fire response area. These signs provide vital information to the public about the current fire danger risk. They are updated manually by fire department staff when the fire danger rating changes.



Example of current static Fire Danger Rating sign.

The Ashes to Advocacy Committee—comprised of West Kelowna residents John Martin, Heather Larratt, and Olivia Lawson—has launched a community fundraising campaign to raise \$40,000 to support the purchase and install of Electronic Fire Danger Rating (EFDR) LED signs in high- traffic and wildfire- interface locations identified in coordination with West Kelowna Fire Rescue. This initiative is consistent with recommendations in our 2025 Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP), especially the recommendation to develop and implement new and innovative prevention technologies.



Example of electronic Fire Danger Rating sign.

DISCUSSION

The initiative follows the significant impacts of the 2023 McDougall Creek Wildfire, which burned thousands of hectares, destroyed homes, and left lasting environmental and community effects. The group’s proposal aims to enhance public safety by providing real- time fire danger ratings and emergency messaging via a digital sign. The EFDR signs are capable of minute- by- minute updates, which organizers emphasize as a tool for improving public awareness and decision- making during wildfire season.

West Kelowna Fire Rescue has confirmed its support for the project and will identify appropriate sign locations where automated wildfire risk communication would provide operational value.

The Ashes to Advocacy group intends to intensify their fundraising and grant seeking efforts in 2026. They appeared as a delegation before Council on November 25, 2025 requesting a letter of support from the City for these purposes. Council requested further information from staff.

In the process of preparing this report, updated costing was requested from the international supplier of the signs. That costing had increased substantially since the project was conceived. Subsequently a Canadian supplier of the signs was identified with a lower cost product. This Canadian product has now been incorporated in the planning and costing for this initiative.

The overall success of the signs will be evaluated for a 5-year period. Eventually, based on the success of the initial installation, further electronic fire danger signs could be deployed across the community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial impacts to the City associated with issuing the Letter of Support.

The fundraising campaign intends to fully cover the estimated \$40,000 cost of purchasing, shipping and installing the signs. Ongoing maintenance and software licensing for the next 5 years will also be included as a part of the fundraising.

Fire Danger Rating Signs – Cost Estimate		
	Each	3 signs
Solar powered, 4' x 8' LED Fire Danger Sign (5 rating levels and 1 line scrolling message), City supplied posts and footings with 5-year subscription to remote update capability based on design supplied by the City.	\$8,035	\$24,105
Projected Installation Cost (time/materials)	\$2,500	\$7,500
Contingency		\$7,500
Total		\$39,105

Note: If contingency remains unused an additional sign may be considered.

If the fundraising initiative is unsuccessful, it will be up to the coordinating group to determine next steps regarding funds raised. (*ie: reducing the number of signs*)

If the program is successful, funding for further years (beyond the initial 5 year period) will have to be identified as a part of the program evaluation and future business case.

COUNCIL REPORT / RESOLUTION HISTORY

Date	Report Topic / Resolution	Resolution No.
November 25, 2025	THAT staff prepare a report regarding the request for a letter of support from the Ashes to Advocacy Committee regarding fundraising to purchase Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signs for the West Kelowna community.	C274/25
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY		

CONCLUSION

The Ashes to Advocacy initiative provides a community- driven enhancement to wildfire preparedness. The proposed EFDR signs support both public education and operational efficiency and align with the city’s broader wildfire- resilience objectives within the 2025 Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan. A Letter of Support from the Mayor will assist the group in advancing their fundraising for this project.

PowerPoint: Yes No

Attachments:

DRAFT Letter of Support from Mayor Milsom to Ashes to Advocacy