



COUNCIL REPORT

To: Paul Gipps, CAO

Date: October 6, 2020

From: Jason Brolund, Fire Chief
Stacey Harding, Parks and Fleet Manager

Subject: **Community Resiliency Investment Program Grant Application and Wildfire Mitigation Update**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to apply to the Community Resiliency Investment Program requesting the maximum grant contribution of \$150,000 to support community FireSmart activities and conduct wildfire mitigation prescriptions/treatments in 2021;

THAT Council authorize the Mayor and the CAO to execute the agreement;

THAT Council direct staff to allocate funding based on priorities recommended in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan Update – October 2018 and as generally outlined in this report; and,

THAT Council authorize staff to include \$150,000 in the 2021 Operating Budget for FireSmart activities, prescriptions and treatments, subject to funding from the Community Resiliency Investment Program.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Foster Safety and Well-being – Wildfire Mitigation Measures

BACKGROUND

This report continues the series of annual updates Council is provided on activities and progress to reduce the impacts of wildfire in the City of West Kelowna and seeks approval to apply for grant funding under 2021 Community Resiliency Investment Program.

Mitigation through forest fire fuel reduction is an important annual activity involving City staff, contractors and the general public. Mitigation activities are driven by scientific direction outlined in the 2018 West Kelowna Community Wildfire Protection Plan Update, which Council adopted in December 2018. The plan can be viewed at:

westkelownacity.ca/en/city-hall/resources/Documents/CWPPUpdate-26OCT2018.pdf

Since 2019, funding has been provided by Provincial 'Community Resiliency Investment' (CRI) and 'FireSmart' grants and budgeted City funds.

DISCUSSION

CRI 2019

In 2019 the City of West Kelowna was awarded a \$100,000 grant and in combination with City funds completed the 'prescriptions' or working documents to clean up the fuel loading in four different areas of the City.

1. East side of Mount Boucherie, Eain Lamont Park (completed fall 2019)
2. Perimeter of the Powers Creek Treatment Plant (completed spring 2020)
3. North Rosewood slope (completed spring 2020)
4. Davidson Creek Park, north of Shannon Woods (completed spring 2020)

Contracted crews felled trees and removed needles and limbs on the forest floor in these locations. The debris was either piled and burned through special permits issued by Chief Brolund or was finely chipped and evenly spread for decomposition. All works were completed well within the timelines of the grant.

CRI 2020

FireSmart Initiatives

In 2020, despite COVID, WKFR continued seeking innovative, out-of-the-box solutions to encourage private property owners to improve the survivability of their homes in a wildfire. The program resulted in the following:

- 43 FireSmart Grants awarded to CWK residents in the amount of \$14,000
- 5 FireSmart Grants awarded to WFN residents in the amount of \$1,450
- 6 dumpster/chipper rentals
- Numerous vouchers for tipping fee waivers at the Westside Transfer Station

Operational Fuel Treatments

In January 2020 the City received a \$64,500 CRI grant to complete two forest fuel cleanup projects.

1. An area encompassing the intake chlorination structure for the Rose Valley Dam.
2. An area extending from the lower east side of Mount Boucherie around to the lower north side above Boucherie High School and City Hall.

Detailed prescriptions or work plans have been completed and are with the Province for approval. Works will be tendered this fall and completed over winter 2020/2021 as conditions permit.

CRI 2021

An internal committee has been formalized to coordinate Wildfire Mitigation work in CWK. The group's work will be based on the success of CWK's Flood Operations Committee and include staff from Parks, Planning, WKFR and Communications and external experts in the field. The committee will coordinate future grant applications and Wildfire Mitigation initiatives within CWK and WFN (on behalf of WKFR).

In 2021, the focus of our grant-funding request will be broader and encompass:

FireSmart (Private Land):

Local governments have limited statutory authority to enforce fuel mitigation and fire prevention activities on private land. Consequently, public education and awareness of "FireSmart" principles have been the primary focuses of wildfire prevention and mitigation. Work will also concentrate on emergency preparedness and wildfire response readiness.

Due to provincial health restrictions on public gatherings, the 6th annual 2020 FireSmart Family Day was postponed. This flagship FireSmart event will be hosted once the COVID pandemic has abated. If that is not possible in 2021, a different community engagement activity will occur (such as a series of local FireSmart videos for example).

Wildfire Mitigation (Public Land):

2021 Operational Treatments:

Our 2021 application will be submitted to meet the provincial deadline of Oct. 9, 2020. The following treatment areas have been identified as part of the application:

Priority Area	Geographical Details	Treatment Area (ha)
14	Jonagold Park	1.2
21	Talus Ridge Green Way	1.2
30	Shannon Way park	2.8
37	Black Canyon Park	0.2
39	Mt. Boucherie Crown Land	3.3
43	Rose Meadows park	0.7
48	Casa Palmero park	6.3
Total Area		15.7

Note: Priorities 14 and 39 fall under the 'Critical Infrastructure Protection' category as they are adjacent to elementary schools.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

While subject to change, staff anticipates allocating the 2021 grant funding as follows:

CRI Grant Component	CWK Implementation	Requested Grant Amount
Education (mandatory)	FireSmart Family Day Open House -OR- FireSmart Video Series	\$5,000
FireSmart residential	Grants/rebates to the public	\$50,000
	Debris disposal (bins, chipping, fees)	\$5,000
	FireSmart plans and recognition	\$5,000
Fuel management activities (public lands/critical infrastructure projects)		\$50,000
Staffing and admin costs		\$10,000
Emergency planning	WKFR wildland interface pre-Plans to improve emergency response	\$25,000
Total grant request		\$150,000
Staff/in-Kind contributions		\$50,000
CWK Operating funds will be used for additional prescriptions, field work and operational treatments as per the CWPP.		\$50,000

WFN will fund their portion of grants given to WFN properties under the program.

Grant funding is represented in the Annual Financial plan as both revenue and expense.

REVIEWED BY

Warren Everton, Director of Finance/CFO

Allen Fillion, Director of Engineering & Public Works

APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY

Paul Gipps, CAO

Powerpoint: Yes No