

Report to Council



Date: February 13, 2023
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) Grant Application
Department: Parks Services

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Parks Services dated February 13, 2023, with regards to the Community Resiliency Investment(CRI) Grant Application;

AND THAT Council provide a resolution in support of the annual CRI program grant application to support wildfire mitigation initiatives;

AND THAT Council supports staff to execute all actions necessary to complete the grant, if successful;

AND FURTHER THAT upon confirmation of the grant award, the 2023 Financial Plan be amended to include the receipt of up to \$200,000 from the Community Resiliency Investment Program.

Purpose:

To seek Council approval towards an application for funding through the Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) Program.

Background:

The City of Kelowna has an established Community Wildfire Mitigation Program. Program priorities are determined by our current *Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP)*, which was updated in 2022.

The CWRP is a document that defines the risk from wildfires in an identified area, identifies measures necessary to mitigate those risks and outlines a plan of action to be implemented. The City has historically prioritized public interface areas for forest fuel treatment in order to reduce risk of wildfire entering municipal boundaries from surrounding forest. This was necessary to create defensible perimeters around the city, and along large, forested tracts. Over time, new priorities have emerged, including improving public education, addressing outstanding recommendations from the 2016 Community Wildfire Protection Plan, protecting critical infrastructure, increasing interagency collaboration, and maintaining the forest fuel management program.

Several prioritized recommendations of the current CWRP have been, or are being, addressed through operational and external funding. Our primary source of external funding is that of the Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) Program; a provincial initiative intended to reduce the risk and impact of wildfire to communities in BC through community funding, supports, and priority fuel management activities within municipal boundaries. From 2019 through 2022 the City of Kelowna has received approximately \$500,000 to complete activities related to CWRP recommendations.

Completed activities:

- Completion of wildfire fuel mitigation across the eastern portion of Knox Mountain Park (2019) and a parcel at 4295 Field Road (2020) to support a landscape level fuel break on our southern municipal boundary;
- Development of strategic policy and guideline documents to support improved wildfire development permit processes;
- Development of a new Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan to assess current risk and receive recommendation on priority wildfire mitigation activities through 2026;
- Completion of a FireSmart® webpage on the City of Kelowna website to support public education on the FireSmart program and actions homeowners can take to reduce risk; and
- Completion of the inaugural year of a residential debris chipping program to remove hazardous landscaping material from private properties.

Discussion:

On January 20, 2023 staff submitted an application for 2023 CRI Program funding of \$180,411. Allocation of these funds are proposed to be used for four main activities:

- Support an existing term position within Parks Services to provide FireSmart program activities, including the completion of FireSmart hazard assessments for all critical infrastructure throughout the municipality.
- Participate in regional FireSmart outreach activities, including educational video development and purchase of a FireSmart mascot uniform for event attendance.
- Continue facilitation of the residential debris chipping program to provide curbside removal of vegetation from FireSmart priority zones around homes throughout the municipality.
- Complete a fuel modification project within McKinley Mountain Park.

Each of the proposed activities directly addresses prioritized recommendations within the 2022 CWRP.

Internal Circulation:

Communications Advisor
Financial Services Supervisor
Fire Chief
Grants & Special Projects Manager
Infrastructure Operations Department Manager
Parks Services Manager
Water Supply & Pumpstations Supervisor

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Communications Comments:

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Submitted by: T. Bergeson, Urban Forestry Supervisor

Approved for inclusion: M. Logan, General Manager, Infrastructure

Attachment 1 - Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) Program Funding

cc: Acting Divisional Director, Financial Services
Divisional Director, Corporate Strategic Services
Divisional Director, Partnership & Investments