

DATE OF MEETING February 16, 2022

AUTHORED BY GEOFF WHITING, DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF – OPERATIONS

**SUBJECT COMMUNITY RESILIENCY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (FIRESMART  
COMMUNITY FUNDING AND SUPPORTS PROGRAM)**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To gain Council's support in applying for funding through UBCM for FireSmart activities in the City of Nanaimo for 2022. |

### **Recommendation**

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend Council support the City of Nanaimo's application to the Union of BC Municipalities for the Community Resiliency Investment Program (FireSmart Community Funding and Supports Program) and if successful the 2022-2026 Financial Plan be amended to include this grant.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City has risk for wildland fires in a number of areas particularly at the interface with urban development. The FireSmart program is a community based wildland fire prevention initiative where communities come together as a group and FireSmart their neighborhoods. This initiative is being promoted by the Province to reduce the risk of damage caused by wildfires and grants are available through UBCM. Staff is making application for a FireSmart Community Funding grant and require a Council resolution supporting this. |

## **DISCUSSION**

The current Community Wildfire Protection Plan rates the city as having a "Low with pockets of moderate" fire risk. In addition to this, the 2015 Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA) determined that the risk for wildland fires in the City is "Medium". While the forested areas in the City are decreasing as a result of development, areas of risk remain both within the City boundary and immediately outside the boundary with potential to affect City lands. In addition, there are a number of parks and Crown lands that interface with urban development contributing to interface fire potential.

Having the community involved in the application of FireSmart principles to their homes and property will build resiliency in the community and allow property and structures to better withstand a wildland fire event and limit damage. This in turn allows resources to concentrate on

controlling and extinguishing the spread of a fire. Community FireSmart events have been held in the Long Lake Heights, Cottle Hill, and Protection Island communities over the past several years.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This funding will support the continued efforts to FireSmart these higher risk areas and improve community safety by reducing the risk of damage resulting from a wildfire. In addition to continuing these projects, funding for 2022 will support broader community FireSmart education and training initiatives for Fire Department staff. Staff is requesting a contribution from UBCM for the amount of \$37,116.00 which is one hundred percent of total project costs.

## **OPTIONS**

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council support the City of Nanaimo's application to the Union of BC Municipalities for the Community Resiliency Investment Program (FireSmart Community Funding and Supports Program) and if successful the 2022-2026 Financial Plan be amended to include this grant.
  - The advantages of this option: The funding would assist in the further development of the FireSmart program and improve community safety and resiliency by reducing the risk of damage resulting from a wildfire in Nanaimo. Community involvement and environmental protection are also key advantages of accessing the funding grants.
  - The disadvantage of this option is that FireSmart activities are reliant on the successful application.
  - Financial Implications – The activities are not in the current operating budget and will only be undertaken if the grant application is successful.
2. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council deny support to apply to the Union of BC Municipalities for the Community Resiliency Investment Program (FireSmart Community Funding and Supports Program).
  - The advantages of this option: No change to current operations or resources.
  - The disadvantages of this option: The lack of funding would result in a severe reduction in the City's FireSmart program and would leave the City more susceptible to the threat of wildfire and at greater risk of property loss.
  - Financial Implications: If any FireSmart activities are required throughout the year, there will be limited funding available. ]

## **SUMMARY POINTS**

- The FireSmart program is a community based wildland fire prevention initiative where communities come together as a group and FireSmart their neighborhoods.
- This initiative is being promoted by the Province to reduce the risk of damage caused by wildfires and grants are available through UBCM.

- Staff is requesting a contribution from UBCM for the amount of \$37,116.00 which is one hundred percent of total project costs.

**Submitted by:**

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**Concurrence by:**

Tim Doyle  
Fire Chief |