

Staff Report for Decision

DATE OF MEETING | JUNE 05, 2023 |

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SUBJECT **COMPLETE COMMUNITIES FUNDING PROGRAM (2023/24)**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To seek Council endorsement for an application to the Union of British Columbia (UBCM) Complete Communities 2023/24 funding program to support the development of an Area Plan for the Woodgrove Urban Centre. |

Recommendation

That Council direct Staff to submit an application to the Union of British Columbia Complete Communities funding program to support the development of an Area Plan for the Woodgrove Urban Centre in collaboration with the Regional District of Nanaimo, and that Council commits to City staff providing overall grant management.

BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Housing is providing \$10 million in funding to support the development of 'Complete Communities' through a grant program administered through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). The Complete Communities program supports undertaking assessments to inform land use decision-making, considering housing need, supply, and location; providing transportation options including increased walkability; and making connections to infrastructure investment and servicing decisions.

The Complete Communities program can contribute 100% of the costs of eligible activities to a maximum of \$150,000, with an additional \$50,000 offered for collaborative regional projects. Only new projects are eligible under this program, and the projects must be capable of completion by the applicant within one year from the date of grant approval. The grant application deadline is 2023-JUN-16. Funding announcements are expected by September 2023. This is the first intake for the Complete Communities fund, with a second intake scheduled for January 2024. |

DISCUSSION

City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined (2022) designates seven Urban Centres intended to be the focus of the majority of the City's future growth, with policy direction to develop each centre as "a complete community that includes housing, employment, and services and allows for daily needs to be met without requiring travel outside the Urban Centre". This grant opportunity aligns well with City Plan policy requiring "Area Plans for Urban Centres to provide more detailed land use and policy guidance for future development to remove constraints, coordinate infrastructure, and identify amenity needs".

The Woodgrove area is prioritized as one of the top Secondary Urban Centres for future City Investment (following the Downtown Primary Urban Centre). Based on this, scoping work to develop an Area Plan for the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre has been identified in the 2023 Community Development Business Plan. Given the alignment, it is proposed a Complete Community grant application be submitted to support the development of an Area Plan.

The Woodgrove Urban Centre is the City's northern gateway, serving a city-wide and regional function for commercial activity. It is also identified as a northern mobility hub where major regional and city-wide mobility networks connect. Safe and accessible walking, rolling, cycling, and transit connections are a priority in this centre. A future Area Plan would take into account the full extent of the Woodgrove Urban Centre area, as well as transitions to surrounding areas (as shown on the map in Attachment A).

The general approach for completing the Woodgrove Urban Centre Area Plan would involve three phases as outlined below. Staff are proposing that the Complete Communities funding be used to complete all three phases.

Phase 1 - Background research including:

- Market supply and demand study for housing, office, and employment
- Existing transportation capacity and servicing analysis
- Existing water, sewer, and stormwater capacity and servicing analysis
- Existing parks, recreational, culture, and wellness capacity and servicing analysis

Phase 2 - Developing the Woodgrove Urban Centre Area Plan utilizing the results of the background research, and including:

- Consultation with the public to confirm vision, principles and directions for the urban centre
- Land use concept, policies, and design guidelines
- Projected transportation infrastructure demands, costing, and financing options
- Projected water, sewer, and stormwater demands, costing, and financing options
- Projected parks, recreation and culture demands, costing, and financing options

Phase 3 - Completing the Woodgrove Urban Centre Area Plan. The final plan document will include:

- Growth projections (population, housing, employment)
- Land use concept plan and design guidelines
- Transportation servicing plan - including road, transit, cycling and pedestrian network
- Water, sewer, and stormwater system servicing plans
- Parks, recreation and culture plans

The Woodgrove Urban Centre is prioritized to develop as a complete community as well as a regional centre, with significant regional road, transit servicing and infrastructure implications to be considered. For this reason Staff are proposing that the City partner with the Regional District of Nanaimo in the Complete Communities Funding application, and in the creation of the Area Plan. This partnership will allow the Complete Communities funding request to be increased to \$200,000 as an extra \$50,000 is available for collaborative regional projects.]

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The project to develop a scope of work for an Area Plan for the Woodgrove Urban Centre is included in the 2023-2027 Financial Plan with a budget of \$50,000. If the Complete Communities funding application is successful, the 2023-2027 Financial Plan would be amended to increase the budget by \$200,000 funded by the UBCM Complete Communities Fund, to provide a total of \$250,000 to support completing the project. |

OPTIONS

1. That Council direct Staff to submit an application to the Union of British Columbia Complete Communities funding program to support the development of an Area Plan for the Woodgrove Urban Centre in collaboration with the Regional District of Nanaimo, and that Council commits to City staff providing overall grant management.

- The advantages of this option: If the funding application is successful, the project scope will be expanded to complete the Area Plan using the provincial Complete Communities funds.

Financial Implications: The 2023-2027 Financial Plan includes a budget of \$50,000 to develop a scope of work for an Area Plan for the Woodgrove Urban Centre. If the funding application to UBCM Complete Communities Fund is successful, the 2023-2027 Financial Plan would be amended to reflect the successful grant application.

2. That Council provide alternative direction. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The UBCM Complete Communities funding program allows for up to 100% funding to a maximum of \$150,000, with an additional \$50,000 available when partnering with another municipality or regional district.
- Staff are seeking Council support to submit a Complete Communities application to fund the Woodgrove Urban Centre Area Plan in partnership with the Regional District of Nanaimo, such that the overall project budget to complete the plan is \$250,000 (\$50,000 City of Nanaimo funds, and \$200,000 Complete Communities funds).
- The application submission deadline is 2023-JUN-16.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre Map

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