



Staff Report to Council

DATE: Monday, June 16, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Fire Rescue

SUBJECT: FireSmart Community Funding & Supports

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Using the FireSmart Community Funding and Supports (FCFS) grant available through UBCM, the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) developed in 2020 has been updated to a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP). The CWRP is the next generation of plans that will serve as the primary wildfire risk reduction mechanism for Langford which incorporates FireSmart disciplines into the new plan. A CWRP is one of the requirements to be eligible for future FCFS funding for wildfire mitigation.

BACKGROUND:

The FireSmart Community Funding and Supports is intended to reduce the risk of wildfires and mitigate their impacts on BC Communities. Funding is provided by the Province of BC and is administered by Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). The UBCM FireSmart funding stream provides funding to local governments and First Nations to increase community resiliency by under-taking community based FireSmart planning and activities that reduce the community's risk from wildfires.

FireSmart is a nationally recognized program to support local governments and First Nations on strategies to reduce the threat of wildfires. The FireSmart program is backed by a vast amount of field, laboratory, and wildfire modelling research and FireSmart principals have been shown to be effective in reducing the risk to life and property in the most extreme wildfire conditions.

The Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA) conducted by Behr Integrated Solutions Inc. in 2020 for the City of Langford identifies wildfires as a significant risk for our community. The City of Langford's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), completed by Diamond Head Consulting in 2020 and the Provincial Wildland Urban Interface Risk Classification for Langford, both place Langford in the highest risk category, and both support the significance of developing wildland urban interface fire mitigation strategies using FireSmart principles.

In 2023, the City of Langford utilized UBCM funding to hire a FireSmart Coordinator to continue developing the FireSmart Program with a strong focus on community engagement and public education. Efforts encompassed a comprehensive approach to wildfire mitigation, incorporating education, community engagement, development considerations, interagency cooperation, emergency planning,

training, and specific projects targeting critical infrastructure and residential areas. This enhanced wildfire resilience and fostered a safer environment for at risk neighborhoods.

COMMENTARY:

Staff applied for and received approval from UBCM to use the FCFS funding to update the City's of Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP), aligning with the required five-year update cycle.

CWRP's are the next generation of CWPP's and serve as the primary wildfire risk reduction planning mechanism for British Columbia communities. It is a science-based approach towards wildfire risk reduction that reflects local priorities and Provincial goals for prevention and mitigation.

To better ensure that plans consistently take a comprehensive approach to wildfire risk reduction and resiliency measures, the BC Wildfire Service partnered with FireSmart BC to develop a new framework for community wildfire resiliency planning. The new plan incorporates the successful components of the CWPP while integrating new elements that more comprehensively align with the seven FireSmart disciplines. Also in 2024, to be eligible for additional funding, communities were required to have a CWRP in place, have a local FireSmart Coordinator and host in a Community FireSmart Resiliency Committee. By updating the City's CWPP to a CWRP, Langford will continue to meet the criteria for additional funding opportunities.

By approving the completed CWRP, Council can direct staff to prioritize and implement its recommendations to reduce the wildfire risk in Langford. Overall, the City's local FireSmart program aims to heighten community awareness and resilience against the threat of wildfires through ongoing wildfire mitigation education to residents. The CWRP has 33 recommendations which will provide the framework for future mitigation work to reduce the threat of wildfires in the community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The UBCM FireSmart Community Funding & Supports grant funding will cover wages as well as fund activities and initiatives to implement the recommendations of the CWRP. No additional funding will be required from the City of Langford at this time.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

OPTIONS:

Option 1

THAT Council approve the updated Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan and direct staff to prioritize the implementation of the recommendations within the plan.

OR Option 2

THAT Council take no action with respect to the Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan at this time.

SUBMITTED BY: Chris Aubrey, Fire Chief

Concurrence: Melisa Miles, Manager of Legislative Services

Concurrence: Donna Petrie, Senior Manager of Communications & Economic Development

Concurrence: Matthew Baldwin, RPP, MCIP, Director of Development Services

Concurrence: Leah Stohmann, RPP, MCIP, Director of Community Planning and Climate Change

Concurrence: Katelyn Balzer, P.Eng., Director of Engineering and Public Works

Concurrence: Michael Dillabaugh, CPA, CA, Director of Finance

Concurrence: Braden Hutchins, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Concurrence: Darren Kiedyk, Chief Administrative Officer