
MEETING TYPE: Regular Council Meeting
MEETING DATE: October 04, 2022
AUTHOR: Darren Lee, Fire Chief; #164; #Kynan O'Rourke, Deputy Fire Chief
DEPARTMENT: Protective Services
ITEM TITLE: CRI – Structure Protection Unit
DESCRIPTION: Request for Council Approval for Updated Funding Application to UBCM

QUESTION

How does Council wish to address the opportunity to apply to the UBCM Community Resiliency Investment Program for up to \$45,000 to assist the Lake Country Fire Department in procuring a Structure Protection Unit for the District, when 2023 grant applications open October 1st, 2022?

OPTIONS

- A. THAT Staff be directed to make application to the 2022 UBCM Community Resiliency Investment Program for up to \$45,000 to assist the LCFD in procuring a Structure Protection Unit for the District, when 2023 applications open October 1st, 2022 AND THAT, if successful, staff purchase the equipment specified under the program.
- B. THAT Staff maintain Status Quo for remainder of 2022 and revise this proposal during the 2023 budget process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Regular Council Meeting on September 20th, 2022, Council directed Staff to apply to the UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) Composite and Volunteer Fire Department Equipment and Training Fund for up to \$45,000 to assist the LCFD in procuring a Structure Protection Unit (SPU) for the District.

See Council resolution 2022-09-165 attached to this report.

District Staff made the application to the UBCM on October 22nd, 2022. The next day UBCM Staff contacted the District and advised that only one of the three CEPF - Composite and Volunteer Fire Department Equipment and Training Fund applications could be approved in the 2022 intake. During these staff-level discussion, the UBCM advised that the \$45,000 SPU application would be eligible under the revised rules of the UBCM Community Resiliency Investment Program (CRI) in the 2023 intake. The eligibility for SPU's is a new to the CRI in 2023. This is detailed on Page 27 of the CRI Application Guide, Appendix 3: Funding Requirements for FireSmart Structure Protection.

[UBCM – Community Resiliency Investment Program 2023 FireSmart Community Supports](#)

With this Request for Council Decision, Staff are seeking permission to shift the SPU grant application from the CEPF to the CRI. The timing of this Request for a Council Decision is based upon the opening of applications to the fund on October 1st, 2022. UBCM Staff have indicated that the CRI applications take approximately 90 days to process. Staff have prepared a draft application for the CRI and will submit the application if Council's selects Option A.

KEY INFORMATION

The history of SPU's in British Columbia dates back to 2003 Firestorm. They have been owned and operated by various levels of government within British Columbia over the past fifteen years. The British Columbia - Structure Protection Program and the Interagency Working Agreement establish the rules of engagement and financial terms for provincial mutual-aid.

[British Columbia Structure Protection Program](#)
[2021 British Columbia Interagency Working Agreement](#)

As was the case with the CEPF, SPU's purchased with the support of the CRI are not eligible for provincial deployment. If a First Nation or Local Government accesses these funds, the SPU and associated equipment is to be used for local firefighting operations. Staff see this as a positive as the firefighting capability will be readily available for the District and its Regional Partners in the event they are needed locally.

DESIRED BENEFIT

Based on their own experience and, the experience of their colleagues in the industry, Staff are aware of the benefits of having local access to a local operated SPU. The type of equipment carried on an SPU is ideal for protecting values at risk during a WUI incident.

Staff have contacted the British Columbia Wildfire Service - Structure Protection Coordination Office (SPCO) and learned that the funding program specific to SPU's should run for multiple years. Based on this information, interested communities need to plan on a four-year timeframe to build up their SPU. As a result, this Request for Council Decision to access funding from the CRI is likely the first of four that Council will see in advance of the District's annual budget cycles.

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

Securing funding for and then creating an SPU Program for the District is aligned with all five of Councils 2022 Strategic Priorities.

- Infrastructure – An SPU program can provide specific equipment to help defend critical infrastructure such as wastewater facilities, drinking water facilities and other assets by enhancing defensible space in and around these facilities.
- Economy - An SPU program can help make the local economy be more resilient by enhancing structure protection efforts around homes and businesses so that they are better prepared to withstand to the impacts of an advancing wildfire.
- Governance – An SPU program will create opportunities to work with regional partners, provincial partners and may also create future opportunities to support local First Nations in the event of a local or regional wildfire.
- Environment – An SPU program can help enhance the protection of FireSmart residences and businesses within the District and, help them to become more resilient to current and future wildfire potential.
- Social – An SPU program may allow the District Staff and FireSmart Staff to better connect with individuals, groups, and associations within the community.

As was mentioned above, SPCO personnel have indicated that funding should be available over the next four years to incrementally increase locally directed SPU Programs throughout the province.

REQUISITES

The opening for submission to the CRI is October 1st, 2022. A Certified Council Resolution is required to apply to the CRI.

UNINTENDED OUTCOMES

If an application to the CRI is successful, the LCFD will have to provide storage for a specified twenty-foot cargo trailer starting in either 2023 or 2024. The LCFD can accommodate additional storage at Fire Station 71 in Winfield. Depending on short-term and long-term equipment and fleet requirements, space is also available at Station 81 in Carr's Landing and Station 91 in Oyama.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

When Staff made the application to the UBCM on October 22nd, 2022 they were advised that only one of three CEPF - Composite and Volunteer Fire Department Equipment and Training Fund applications could be approved for the 2022 intake. During this discussion, the UBCM advised that the \$45,000 SPU application would be eligible under the revised rules of the CRI. This shift will allow the District to apply for \$45,000 under the CRI and continue to pursue \$30,000 for Portable Radios under the CEPF.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

If Council supports Option-A, Staff will be able to use the official Council Resolution to make application to the CRI for up to \$45,000. Other than the investment of Staff time there is no financial risk to the District at the application phase. If the guidance provided by the SPCO holds true over the next four years, the District should be able to incrementally build an SPU Program with minimal financial impact on the Fire Facilities and Equipment Reserve. As Staff work through the multi-year process of building an SPU Program, they will be mindful of the potential for funding to end after each year. Every effort will be made to ensure that capability is built incrementally so that District has options after every year of the program.

APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

The CRI program was announced by the provincial government in 2018 and is intended to reduce the risk of wildfires and mitigate their impacts on BC communities. The support for an SPU would fall under Stream 1: FireSmart Community Funding and Supports (FCFS).

[Community Resiliency Investment | Union of BC Municipalities \(ubcm.ca\)](https://ubcm.ca/community-resiliency-investment-program)
[FireSmart Community Funding & Supports | Union of BC Municipalities \(ubcm.ca\)](https://ubcm.ca/fire-smart-community-funding-supports)

The FCFS program is administered by UBCM on behalf of the Ministry of Forests. The program provides funding to First Nations and Local Government in British Columbia to increase community resiliency by undertaking community based FireSmart planning and activities that reduce the community's risk from wildfire. The eligibility for SPU's is a new to the CRI in 2023. This is detailed on Page 27 of the CRI Application Guide, Appendix 3: Funding Requirements for FireSmart Structure Protection.

[UBCM – Community Resiliency Investment Program 2023 FireSmart Community Supports](https://ubcm.ca/ubcm-community-resiliency-investment-program-2023-fire-smart-community-supports)

With this Request for Council Decision, Staff are seeking permission to redirect the application to the CRI for up to \$45,000 to assist the LCFD in procuring a SPU for protecting the District from wildfire. The timing of this Request for Council Decision is based upon opening of 2023 applications to the CRI on October 1st, 2022. Staff have prepared a draft application and will submit the application if Council's selects Option A.

IMPACT ON INFRASTRUCTURE OR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

As was referenced earlier, the LCFD will have to provide storage for a twenty-foot cargo trailer starting in either 2023 or 2024. The LCFD can accommodate additional storage at Fire Station 71 in Winfield. Depending on short-term and long-term fleet requirements, space is also available at Station 81 in Carr's Landing and Station 91 in Oyama.

Staff are aware of the benefits of having local access to a SPU. The type of equipment carried on an SPU is ideal for protecting values at risk during a WUI incident. The obvious thought is to protect homes and businesses, but SPU's can be used to protect critical infrastructure such as water intakes and water treatment facilities. SPU's have been used to protect culturally sensitive sites with minimal impact. They can also be used to support extended attack on wildland incidents that could occur within fire protection district.

IMPACT ON STAFF CAPACITY AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

In terms of the impact on Staff Capacity, LCFD Staff have experience working with SPU's. While training grants may be available, the LCFD would be able to add SPU training sessions to its 2023 annual training plan without external supports. If external supports become available, Staff will ensure that LCFD attempts to access those resources. The procurement of specific equipment detailed in the application guide will take staff time, but this will be built into the LCFD 2023 work plans.

In terms of Financial Resources, Staff are seeking permission to apply to the CRI for up to \$45,000 to assist the LCFD in procuring a SPU for the District. If the CRI runs for three additional years, the District should be able to complete the SPU with minimal impact to the Fire Facilities and Equipment Reserve. While Staff work through the multi-year process, they will be mindful of the potential for funding to end each year. Every effort will be made to ensure that capability is built incrementally so that District has options.

COMMENTS FROM EXTERNAL AGENCIES, COMMITTEES AND STAKEHOLDERS

No official comment or correspondence pertinent to this report have been sent or received.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Staff have consulted with partners at the UBCM, British Columbia Wildfire Service, British Columbia Office of the Fire Commissioner, and various municipal fire service agencies. While Staff originally identified that the CEPF as the preferred funding source for a SPU this has now shifted to accessing funds from the CRI. There is a synergy between the CEI and the CEPF for the District fire protection needs and Staff are hopeful that both grant programs will continue to operate in the future.

ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Option A provides the District the opportunity to apply for to the CRI for up to \$45,000 to assist the LCFD in procuring a SPU for the District. This grant will allow the District to utilize external funding to positively impact safety while preserving the Fire Facilities and Equipment Reserve for upcoming apparatus replacements. As was mentioned above, SPCO personnel have indicated that CRI funding should be available over the next four years to incrementally increase locally directed SPU Programs throughout the province. In closing, Staff thank Council for their thoughtful consideration of this proposal. LCFD Staff would also like to acknowledge Staff from the across the District that provided thoughtful input and expert advice.

Respectfully Submitted,
Darren Lee, Fire Chief;#164;#Kynan O'Rourke, Deputy Fire Chief

Report Approval Details

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| Document Title: | Structure Protection Unit UBCM CRI Update.docx |
| Attachments: | - Certified Resolution Structure Protection Unit-2022-09-07.pdf |
| Final Approval Date: | Sep 28, 2022 |

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Trevor James, CFO, Director of Finance & Administration - Sep 27, 2022 - 12:49 PM

Tanya Garost, Chief Administrative Officer - Sep 27, 2022 - 5:08 PM