



In the draft 2021 Five Year Financial Plan, Council will consider approximately \$400,000 in annual funding for FireSmart programming in Whistler. To assist with funding these investments, the RMOW is applying for \$100,000 from the UBCM 2021 CRI Program in order to support the FireSmart Program. The RMOW will also apply for \$50,000 to supplement wildfire fuel management as part of the RMOW Wildfire Program 2019 – 2027. This latter portion is focused on treating the Wildland Urban Interface areas developed by B.A. Blackwell & Associates Ltd. as presented to Council at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on September 17, 2019. Total grant application amount is \$150,000.

The Whistler FireSmart Program engages the community to educate, motivate, guide and support FireSmart activities intended to reduce the potential impact of wildfire in the municipality. Building a strong understanding and appreciation of local wildfire threat and advocating FireSmart solutions are cornerstone to these efforts. Program activities include FireSmart outreach and presentations, conducting FireSmart assessments, organizing and leading FireSmart work days with homeowners, organizing and leading volunteer groups in the Adopt-a-Trail campaign (treating forest around the valley trail system), as well as deploying FireSmart crews to deliver regular community chipper service and reducing fuel load in dense juvenile municipal forest. Collectively, these activities are the key components designed to progressively move the community toward greater wildfire resilience.

The potential grant funds assigned to the forest thinning wildfire fuel management will assist with treating approximately 30 hectares of wildland urban interface area as per the RMOW Wildfire Program 2019-2027.

If supported by Council, the grant application will be submitted prior to October 9, 2020.

## **OTHER POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

FireSmart fuel management on private lands will continue to complement the ongoing work and Municipal wildfire protection expenditures on Provincial Crown lands within the Municipality. These actions are consistent with the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Community Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP), and the updated Official Community Plan.

## **BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS**

If successful, the UBCM CRI program will provide the funds to support the continued work program of the FireSmart Supervisor and crew. This team provides a well-coordinated, high quality FireSmart program in Whistler designed to help homeowners enhance wildfire safety within their neighbourhoods and become an important part of the overall wildfire preparedness of the RMOW.

If successful, the UBCM CRI program will also provide funds to support the municipally-led treatment of approximately 30 hectares in the wildland urban interface area as part of the RMOW Wildfire Program 2019-2027 developed by B.A. Blackwell & Associates Ltd. and to update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

Ongoing community engagement is led by the FireSmart Supervisor. The FireSmart Supervisor will continue to work closely with homeowners through program delivery and will provide information to Whistler residents on how to FireSmart their property, assist them with understanding options, prioritizing work, fuel removal, engaging arborists, and connecting with Parks or other land managers, as needed.

The forest thinning fuel management treatments on crown land, overseen by the Environmental Stewardship Manager, will be communicated to the public through information such as newspapers, and through social media.

## **SUMMARY**

FireSmart and wildfire fuel management investments are key components of wildfire risk reduction for the community. Supporting ongoing programs of fuel reduction in strategic locations located on both Provincial Crown and private lands is important and should continue. As such, the purpose of this report is to obtain Council's endorsement for the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) Program grant application.

Respectfully submitted,

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