

**RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER**

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STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

PRESENTED: September 21, 2021
FROM: Corporate and Community Services
SUBJECT: BC HYDRO BEAUTIFICATION GRANT – ALTA VISTA NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICE UNDERGROUNDING PETITION REPORT

REPORT: 21-107
FILE: 132

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

That the recommendation of the General Manager of Corporate and Community Services be endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the RMOW's application for the BC Hydro Beautification Grant; and

That Council offer a formal expression of support to cover the remaining two-thirds of estimated BC Hydro costs by establishing a local service area, and related local area service tax payable, for the Alta Vista neighbourhood.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To secure Council endorsement for advancing the submission requirements of the BC Hydro Beautification Grant funding application.

☐ Information Report ☒ Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

DISCUSSION

Background

In August 2020, Council received, and referred to staff, a [letter from Mr. Crosland Doak](#) expressing the interest of a collection of Alta Vista residents sufficient to initiate a formal petition process consistent with *Community Charter* Section 212 for the undergrounding of overhead utility services. This correspondence further requested that municipal staff apply to the BC Hydro Beautification Grant program to support the funding of the potential undergrounding project.

While the RMOW is not required to provide works and services related to the undergrounding of overhead utility services, staff realize we have the ability to assist residents with this project. The RMOW's decision to apply for the BC Hydro grant and undertake the formal petition process to create a local service area are distinct and separate. If the application for the BC Hydro Beautification Grant is unsuccessful, the RMOW may still proceed with the undergrounding project and funding will be through the creation of a local service area, pending a successful petition process.

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In September 2020, staff presented to Council [BC Hydro Beautification Grant – Alta Vista Neighbourhood Service Undergrounding Petition](#), Report 20-091. Council endorsed the recommendation to proceed with the grant application, and to approve funding for the RMOW portion of the undergrounding project costs not covered by the BC Hydro Beautification Grant. The spending funded by the RMOW would be recovered through a Local Area Service tax payable over time, by all parcels located within the identified Service Area.

On February 18, 2021, a letter was received from BC Hydro stating the RMOW would not be receiving grant funding for the Alta Vista beautification project. The reason given was that funding for this program had been exhausted. The letter went on to say the RMOW could either proceed without BC Hydro funding or defer the project and reapply to the Beautification Program next year.

On September 03, 2021, a follow-up letter from Mr. Crosland Doak was received and attached as Appendix A to this report, reaffirming the support of Alta Vista residents as detailed in his 2020 correspondence. In addition, the letter respectfully requests the RMOW to submit a new application to the BC Hydro Beautification Grant program.

Analysis

BC Hydro Beautification Fund

BC Hydro's Beautification Fund provides financial assistance to municipal governments for conversion of overhead lines and poles to underground facilities in order to enhance and improve the use of public spaces. Successful applicants receive funding equal to one-third of BC Hydro's estimated project cost, with the remaining two-thirds to be arranged by the municipality. Cost sharing is based on the original project scope, and does not include any costs for work on private property or work to relocate other utility attachments such as telecom cables.

The BC Hydro Beautification Grant application requires a formal expression of Council's support to cover the remaining two-thirds of estimated BC Hydro costs. In support of the petition process initiated by Alta Vista residents, staff are looking for Council to endorse the RMOW's application for funding under the BC Hydro Beautification Fund for the proposed project prior to the application deadline of September 30, 2021. Direction is being sought to endorse this new application.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions

The above recommendation is consistent with *Community Charter* Section 212, "Petition for Local Service Area", and aligns with Council's previous decision in response to [BC Hydro Beautification Grant – Alta Vista Neighbourhood Service Undergrounding Petition](#), Report 20-091, September 15, 2020.

Corporate Plan

The RMOW Corporate Plan is updated annually and articulates strategic direction for the organization. This section identifies how this report links to the plan.

Council Focus Areas

☒ Community Balance

*Effectively **balance resort and community needs** through deliberate planning, partnerships and investment*

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☐ Climate Action

*Provide leadership to **accelerate climate action and environmental performance** across the community*

☐ Housing

*Advance strategic and innovative initiatives to enable and **deliver additional employee housing***

☐ Not Applicable**Community Vision and Official Community Plan**

The Official Community Plan (OCP) is the RMOW's most important guiding document that sets the community vision and long-term community direction. This report supports the RMOW create a place where our community thrives, nature is protected and guests are inspired. The RMOW values our relationships and strive to work together as partners and community members.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The RMOW will incur some costs to prepare the grant application.

LIL'WAT NATION & SQUAMISH NATION CONSIDERATIONS

The RMOW is committed to working with the Lil'wat People, known in their language as *L'il'wat7úl* and the Squamish People, known in their language as the *Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* to: create an enduring relationship; establish collaborative processes for Crown land planning; achieve mutual objectives; and enable participation in Whistler's resort economy.

This report impacts the residents of the Alta Vista neighbourhood, and the Lil'wat People and Squamish People to the extent that they live in that neighbourhood.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

☐ Inform ☐ Consult ☐ Involve ☒ Collaborate ☐ Empower

Comment(s):

Once the outcome of the BC Hydro Beautification Grant application is known, RMOW staff will collaborate with Alta Vista residents located within the proposed local area service to commence a petition development process for future submission to Council. That process will require further approvals from Council when the time is appropriate.

REFERENCES

Appendix A – September 3, 2021 Letter to Mayor and Council from Mr. Crosland Doak on behalf of interested Alta Vista residents

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SUMMARY

This report seeks to secure Council endorsement to apply for the BC Hydro Beautification Grant funding, a requirement of the application process. The grant application is being made on behalf of residents petitioning for a Local Area Service and would, if successful, fund a portion of the undergrounding works. The undergrounding work is the service proposed by petitioners and is believed to align with the Beautification grant objectives.

SIGN-OFFS

Written by:

Ashley Palmer, Manager of Financial Services

Reviewed by:

Carlee Price, Director of Finance

Ted Battiston, General Manager of Corporate
and Community Services

Ginny Cullen,
Chief Administrative Officer