



# REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: CS-BRD-253

From: Sean Cairns, Protective Services Manager

Date: October 26, 2023

**Subject: 2024-2025 FireSmart Program**

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## **RECOMMENDATION #1: [Corporate Unweighted]**

That the Regional Board authorize the submission of a request to the UBCM Community Resiliency Investment Program for allocation-based funding, of \$400,000 per year, for the PRRD's FireSmart Program for 2024 and 2025.

## **RECOMMENDATION #2: [Corporate Weighted]**

That the Regional Board provide pre-budget approval to engage a consultant to act as the FireSmart Coordinator for the PRRD's 2024 FireSmart Program in the amount of \$10,000 with the cost payable from requisition in Function 300 – Emergency Services.

## **BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:**

The PRRD has participated in a yearly FireSmart Campaign since 2021 which is funded by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Resiliency Investment Program. UBCM has announced that starting in 2024, eligible local governments will be allowed to apply for allocation-based funding rather than the previous application-based funding. The PRRD is eligible for an allocation of \$400,000 per year for 2024 and 2025.

To be eligible for either funding streams, the PRRD must have:

- an updated Community Wildfire Resistance Plan (CWRP);
- a Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee (CFRC); and
- a dedicated FireSmart position such as a Local Fire Smart Representative or FireSmart Coordinator.

The PRRD's 2023 FireSmart Program included CWRPs for each electoral area and the establishment of a regional CFRC committee; both projects are expected to be completed by the end of this year. The PRRD does not have a dedicated FireSmart position and must establish one before the funding allocation request is submitted to UBCM. The UBCM requires the FireSmart position to dedicate 80% or more of its time to the FireSmart program and as a result, this requirement cannot be met through internal staff. If pre-budget approval is provided by the Regional Board, staff will engage a third-party consultant through a competitive procurement process to act as the PRRD's Local Fire Smart Representative. This position would be responsible for coordinating the PRRD's CFRC and administering the FireSmart Program on behalf of the PRRD under the guidance of PRRD staff. The \$10,000 funding allocation would be used to cover the period of time between the planning phase of the 2024 program and the receipt of the 2024 allocation. Once a funding allocation has been made from UBCM, the cost of this position is an eligible expense moving forward and would be fully funded from the grant.

The 2024-2025 FireSmart Program would be similar to past years with the majority of the work being carried out by a contractor, and would include the following elements:

- Public Education programs such as home assessments and community events;
- the FireSmart Neighborhood Recognition Program;
- assessment and mitigation of PRRD critical infrastructure sites such as fire radio repeater towers, water stations and fire halls;
- on-going maintenance of the CFRC and the electoral area CWRPs;
- purchasing of sprinkler protection unit equipment; and
- training and education programs for fire department and emergency management staff.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

1. That the Regional Board decline to proceed with the FireSmart Program in 2024.
2. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:**

- Not Applicable to Strategic Plan

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):**

The cost of the 2024-2025 PRRD FireSmart Program would be included in Function 300 – Emergency Services and would be fully funded by the UBCM grant allocation, less the proposed \$10,000 for a contractor to perform the FireSmart Coordinator role prior to the approval and receipt of the provincial funding allocation. This \$10,000 would be funded by requisition in Function 300 – Emergency Services and would be included in the 2024 financial plan. The \$10,000 budget for the FireSmart Coordinator role is based on an estimated 100 hours of work preparing the 2024 grant allocation application and developing the work plan for the 2024 FireSmart program.

### **COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):**

The contractor's scope of work would include developing an annual report on the PRRD's FireSmart Program.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):**

Although the PRRD is eligible for a funding allocation, the funds can only be used for eligible activities as set out in the UBCM 2024 FireSmart Community Funding and Supports Program Guide.