



Date: 02/09/2020

To: Chair and Directors, Cariboo Regional District Board

And To: Choose an item.

From: John MacLean, Chief Administrative Officer

Date of Meeting: Cariboo Regional District Board_Sep11_2020

File: Regional Broadband

Short Summary:

Funding for Development of a Regional Broadband Strategy

Voting:

Corporate Vote - Weighted

Memorandum:

The Board has established the goal of preparing a Regional Broadband Strategy and has appointed Director LeBourdais as Committee Chair for this initiative. The excerpt from the Strategic Plan is as follows:

“Strategic Objective 3.3

Engage implementation partners and develop a regional broadband and cellular strategy.”

We have developed and issued a Request for Proposal in order to conduct this work. At the last meeting there was some discussion as to how the strategy would be paid for. We apologize for any confusion. It was always our intention that this project be paid for using Community Works Funds. Broadband projects are eligible for funding through Community Works Funds as per the following (excerpt from the UBCM site):

“Eligible Project Categories

CWF funding can be used towards eligible costs of the following eligible investment categories:

- *Local roads, bridges*
- *Short-sea shipping*
- *Short-line rail*
- *Regional and local airports*
- ***Broadband connectivity***
- *Public transit*
- *Drinking water*
- *Wastewater*
- *Solid waste*

- *Community energy systems*
- *Brownfield redevelopment*
- *Sport infrastructure*
- *Recreational infrastructure*
- *Cultural infrastructure*
- *Tourism infrastructure*
- *Disaster mitigation*
- *Capacity building”*

We have confirmed with UBCM that this would be an appropriate project:

“Yes, regional broadband strategies would be eligible use of CWF under either the Capacity Building – Integrated Community Sustainability Planning, or Capacity Building – Long Term Infrastructure Planning streams.”

We would also apply for the NDIT funding that is available (\$15,000).

We have been informed that there is a concern that use of community works funds might create funding concerns when looking at grant opportunities. It is true that many federal grants will look at the funding sources for a project and will place a limit on the total funding from federal sources. Community Works Funding may be considered a federal funding source. In this project we are not looking for federal funding. As we move forward in the strategy, and potentially start building things, we will have to be aware of the federal funding stacking rules and ensure that our funding streams are appropriate.

Attachments:

None

Financial Implications:

We have enough Community Works Funds available for this project. Our current balance of uncommitted funds is \$2.8 million. Our intention would be to flow the money through Rural Feasibility.

Policy Implications:

There are no policy considerations.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- Communication:** Facilitate communication strategies throughout the entire Cariboo Regional District that meet the needs of residents, community stakeholders, and other levels of government.
- Planning:** Intentionally plan services and activities of the CRD to prepare for future needs of residents and community stakeholders.
- Economic Sustainability:** Foster an environment to ensure the economic sustainability of CRD communities and the region.

- Governance:** Ensure that CRD governance policy and practices are intentional, transparent, and respectful.

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CAO Comments:

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Options:

1. Endorse recommendation
2. Receipt only
3. Defer

Recommendation:

That the agenda item summary from John M. MacLean, CAO, dated September 2, 2020, regarding funding for development of a Regional Broadband Strategy, be received. Further, that the Board approve use of Community Works Funds to a maximum of \$80,000 for the development of a Regional Broadband Strategy for the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Further, that staff prepare the necessary financial plan amendment reflecting this approval and bring it forward to the Board at a future meeting.