

**Date:** 13/08/2020

**To:** Chair and Directors, Committee of the Whole

**And To:** John MacLean, Chief Administrative Officer

**From:** Darron Campbell, Manager of Community Services

**Date of Meeting:** Committee of the Whole\_Aug20\_2020

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## **Short Summary:**

Potential Regional District Applications to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP)

## **Background:**

On June 25, 2020, the federal and provincial governments announced a second intake for their joint capital infrastructure grant programs including three funding streams: Community, Culture and Recreation (CCR), Rural and Northern Communities (RNC), and a newly-announced COVID-19 Resiliency envelope.

Guidelines and details can be found online at the following site:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/funding-engagement-permits/funding-grants/investing-in-canada-infrastructure-program>

The first intake for the ICIP program occurred in January 2019 and the Regional District submitted three applications, one to the CCR program and two to the RNC program.

The CCR submission was a request for a \$9 million grant towards a \$17.5 million aquatics renovation at the Quesnel and District Arts and Recreation Centre.

The RNC submissions were for a \$3.7 million grant towards a \$4.1 million project to construct an access road and make parking improvements at the Esler Sports Complex and \$5.2 million grant towards a \$6.3 million runway rehabilitation project at the South Cariboo Regional Airport at 108 Mile.

Unfortunately, none of the applications were approved and Regional District staff met with the grant program administrators to discuss options to improve the submissions. They advised that the projects and descriptions were generally fine; however, the amounts requested were not feasible based on the limited funding available in the program.

The second intake information provides clear guidance that the average approval in the first round was \$2.5 million for CCR and \$2.07 million for RNC and large requests are unlikely to be approved.

The addition of the COVID-19 Resiliency stream may help increase short-term opportunities; however, that program is not based on new funding and also includes schools and healthcare facilities, which were previously not eligible.

In this context and background, staff propose a shift in focus for the next round of applications. The runway at the SCR Airport continues to deteriorate and based on the asphalt coring samples taken by the project design engineers, there is potential for a major failure in some sections of the runway due to the lack of adequate base material and depth of the current pavement.

It is proposed that this runway rehabilitation project be the Regional District submission for the RNC program. An updated financing plan for the project will be discussed at the South Cariboo Airport Commission meeting planned for September 1, 2020.

For the CCR and the new COVID-19 Resiliency stream, it is proposed that the Regional District submission be for wheelchair accessible wilderness trail projects at three locations including Pioneer Park on Dragon Lake, the Esler Sports Complex and the 108 Greenbelt. Numerous trail projects were approved in the first round of the ICIP program and appear well-positioned to meet the priority objectives for the grants.

These three proposed trail projects would be significantly larger in scope than previous projects completed by the Regional District with the same low-mobility concept. The combined projects will provide about 7 km of trail works, along with ancillary improvements for parking, signage and potentially wheelchair-friendly fishing platforms. It is estimated that the infrastructure grant submission will be \$400-\$450,000 total, allocating about \$120-\$150,000 for each trail.

Support for trail projects is included in the business plans for the North Cariboo Recreation and Parks, Central Cariboo Recreation and 108 Greenbelt functions so the application is consistent with identified corporate goals.

Matching funding is required by the CCR grant program and the maximum grant approval can be up to 73% of eligible costs for local governments, leaving 27% to the applicant or other sources. If necessary, the matching requirement can be allocated to each function budget and trail support funding is identified in each financial plan.

However; an application will also be made to Northern Development for the matching funding and it is expected new policies and funding programs at the Trust will make the proposed trails an eligible project.

The grant funding formula for the RNC program is up to 90%. The COVID-19 Resiliency stream can have up to 80% as the federal share so it is expected to be similar to the RNC program.

**Attachments:**

Maps of the proposed properties for wheelchair accessible trail development.