

COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

From: Administration

Date: December 28, 2023

Subject: Complete Communities Grant Application

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council supports the application to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for the Complete Communities Grant for up to \$150,000 towards a community sustainability review;

AND THAT Council authorizes the Chief Administrative Officer to execute the grant application and any related documentation.

BACKGROUND:

The intent of the Complete Communities program is to support local governments and modern Treaty First Nations to enhance their ability to make evidence-based land use planning decisions through assessments of their current community.

These actions will provide local governments and modern Treaty First Nations with information and processes to support local planning activities (such as the development or update of Official Community Plans and Zoning bylaws, etc.), however the update of these plans is not eligible for funding, only the supporting documentation/analysis work.

To be eligible for funding, applicants must select a minimum of three of the four lenses identified in the Ministry of Housing's Complete Communities Guide to assess their community completeness:

- Housing
- Transportation
- Infrastructure
- Daily Needs

The Complete Communities program can contribute a maximum of 100% of the cost of eligible activities to a maximum of \$150,000. Staff are looking to apply for the maximum grant amount.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

To complement the work that has been completed in the past 5 years and plan for future required updates of the Official Community Plan as per new Provincial legislation, staff are looking to develop a comprehensive community sustainability review. This review will focus on three lenses: Infrastructure, Housing, and Daily Needs.

Infrastructure

The District has recently accumulated a substantial amount of asset data, paving the way for effective decision-making.

2018-2023

- Water and Sewer Asset Mapping (2018)
- Pavement Assessment (2023)
- Rec Center & Municipal Office Buildings (2023)

Slated for 2024+

- Remaining Municipal Buildings
- Trails, Sidewalks, Parks
- Airport
- Natural Assets

However, the need for a lens to disseminate decisions from this data becomes evident. The project aims to gather infrastructure data and integrate it into an asset management strategy. This involves gathering data from the separate departments, standardizing by asset type to ensure consistency, for a seamless flow of data for quality reporting. Working with all departments to ensure data quality and collection through a user-friendly interface, are integral components of this project. The end result of this project would be a cross-departmental asset management strategy.

Housing

With the changes in Provincial housing legislation, the objective of this component of the project is to make informed decisions for sustainable and well-planned future development. Infrastructure and environmental analysis includes scrutinizing existing and planned developments, transportation networks, and environmental factors impacting potential housing locations. As supported by our Official Community Plan, the District is looking to plan for future residential as well as new rural residential areas. To support these plans an environmental and servicing lens will need to be applied. Contextual considerations like the physical environment and vacant/underutilized land become paramount, with topographic and environmental conditions shaping the assessment and the identification of parcels for redevelopment.

The end product of this project would be a ready-to-use report to guide future land decisions within the District of Mackenzie. An overview of the new housing legislation and timeline has been attached as Appendix A to this report for further information.

Daily Needs

The Daily Needs Assessment aims to evaluate the costs and potential risks associated with establishing and operating businesses in Mackenzie, BC. Like other Northern rural communities, Mackenzie faces a lack of daily needs like Dentists, Optometrists and Veterinarians to name a few. This strategic analysis is poised to provide indispensable insights for shaping informed decisions and crafting resilient business strategies that resonate with the local economic conditions to provide these Daily Needs businesses with the information they need to invest.

The report's key components delve into the intricacies of the business landscape, addressing startup costs with an itemized breakdown covering permits, licenses, property acquisition, equipment procurement, and initial marketing expenses. Operational costs undergo a detailed analysis encompassing rent, utilities, labor, raw materials, and other recurring expenses, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of ongoing financial commitments. The end product of this study would be a ready-to-use report for future practitioners and businesses to invest in Mackenzie.

Conclusion

This application to the Complete Communities fund will help staff prepare for the upcoming required Official Community Plan update, focusing on areas that are presently lacking in information to perform educated decision-making. Additionally, this application supports advancing the economic objectives of the District by giving future practitioners and businesses information on how to and how much will it cost to start a business in Mackenzie.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Community and Social Development

- Our investment in the municipality's services and infrastructure, our commitment to principles of social equity and well-being, and our belief in the value of resident engagement, creates a healthy community in which everyone feels valued and enjoys a high quality of life.

Environmental Sustainability

- The way we operate has an impact on the environment. We are committed to integrating sustainability and Environmental, Social and Governance factors (ESG) into our decision making and business practices.



Economic Vitality

- The District is a leader on efforts aimed at diversifying the community's economy, supporting local businesses, and attracting new investment to the community. Diversification, a strong business sector and new investment are key to our economic vitality.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Luke Thorne, Land and Environmental Coordinator

Reviewed By: Corporate and Financial Services

Approved By: Chief Administrative Officer

APPENDIX A: UPCOMING PROVINCIAL POLICY CHANGES

On November 3, 2023 the Province introduced legislation that will bring about sweeping changes to the local planning framework through new requirements to allow increased density in areas currently zoned for single-family or duplex use. The legislation will also change housing needs reporting and public hearing requirements and require more frequent updating of Official Community Plans together with pre-zoning that accommodates a 20-year housing supply.

OCP and Zoning framework changes

The proposed legislation also institutes a broader series of changes to the planning framework:

- Requires all local governments to update their housing needs reports (HNR) using a standardized methodology to estimate housing needs over a 20-year time horizon.
- Requires that official community plan (OCP) and zoning bylaws be updated every 5 years to reflect and pre-zone for the 20-year total number of housing units required to meet anticipated housing needs. OCPs must also include housing policies respecting each class of housing need required in the most recent HNR.
- Prohibits public hearings for housing-focused rezonings that are consistent with OCPs, where the residential component of a development comprises at least half of the gross floor area.

Regulations **may** be made to exempt certain local governments, or a class of local governments, from OCP and HNR related requirements, and to establish HNR methodology.

Timeline

Public hearing changes noted above will take effect with the passage of legislation, but interim timelines relating to OCP, zoning, and HNR changes are as follows:

- January 2024 – HNR instructions to be provided to local governments.
- June/July 2024 – OCP/zoning review/update instructions to be provided to municipalities.
- January 1, 2025 (date subject to regulation) – local governments must have completed their interim HNR.
- December 31, 2025 (date subject to regulation) – Municipalities must have completed their first review and update of their OCPs and zoning bylaws (based on interim HNR).

After this initial transition period, the next HNR will be due on or before December 31, 2028, and then on a 5-year cycle. OCPs will need to be updated every 5 years after the initial updated OCP in 2025.