

DATE: March 2, 2021

FILE: 7200-01

TO: Chair and Directors
Electoral Areas Services Committee

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: 2020 Community Resiliency Investment Funding Program: Project Review

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Electoral Areas Services Committee with a review of the completed 2020 Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) grant funding for FireSmart initiatives.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

This report is provided for information purposes only.

Executive Summary

At the October 6 2020 board meeting, staff provided an update regarding the Comox Valley Regional District's (CVRD) revised CRI 2020 grant funding application that pivoted funds to more fully utilize the grant in the context of COVID-19 and Public Health Orders regarding physical distancing.

The pivoted 2020 CRI grant program provided funds to:

- Develop and install educational signage for the reduction of human-caused wildfires;
 - Signage installed in Black Creek-Oyster Bay fire service area and at K'ómoks First Nation (KFN) Band Office.
- Train staff and fire service volunteers in FireSmart principles and wildfire safety;
 - 46 staff and volunteers of the CVRD and KFN received training.
- Encourage residents to FireSmart their property with the removal of fuel debris by way of chipper program.
 - The curb-side pick-up of fuel debris by way of chipper resulted in the removal of approximately 65 tons of wood chips from approximately 485 residential properties.

The removal of yard-waste debris by way of curbside chipper program supports the fire service goal of FireSmart and wildfire risk reduction, but may also have the added benefit of improved air quality as debris is not burned by the property owner.

Prepared by:

Concurrence:

J. Bast

D. DeMarzo

James Bast
Manager of Fire Services

Doug DeMarzo
General Manager of
Community Services

Government Partners and Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

Pinna Sustainability (Air Quality Coordinator)	✓
Oyster River Fire Rescue	✓
Fanny Bay Volunteer Fire Department	✓
Denman Island Fire Rescue	✓
Hornby Island Fire Rescue	✓
K’ómoks First Nation	✓

Chipper Program

The curb-side yard-waste chipper program was delivered as a pilot project only and was contingent on available grant funding. Staff is not recommending a service establishment and on-going commitment of CVRD resources.

The CRI grant funded curbside yard-waste chipper program was delivered to residents within the:

- High density residential areas of Black Creek-Oyster Bay fire protection service area;
- Fanny Bay fire protection service area;
- Denman Island fire protection service area;
- Hornby Island fire protection service area; and
- KFN lands within the Comox Valley.

The program included:

- Each fire department and KFN directly promoting FireSmart principles and the program through hand delivered flyers, social media, and local publications.
- The selected contractor moved the chipper equipment curbside from driveway to driveway collecting and chipping each participating resident’s yard-waste.
- The chips were delivered to the CVRD composting facilities on Bevan Road, Cumberland and Hornby Island.

The program was delivered through the month of November 2020 with each fire service and KFN distributing FireSmart educational materials and encouraging residents to reduce wildfire fuel load within their property.

The program removed approximately 65 tons of yard-waste from 485 residential properties.

Program delivery in November is considered late for the traditional yard-waste burning season. That is; many residents had already burned their yard-waste in the spring and early fall. Accordingly; it is difficult to quantify if the chipper program effected the number of Burn Permits, but it is recognized that the 65 tons of removed yard-waste may eventually have been burned by the resident.

The fire chiefs and KFN staff indicated that participating residents appreciated the program and support it as an alternative to backyard burning.

The 2021 CRI grant funding application has been approved and staff is again working with the fire chiefs and KFN to deliver a curbside chipper program.