



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

STAFF REPORT

To: Council
From: City Manager (CAO)
Subject: Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Meeting Requests

File No.:
Date: June 28, 2023

PURPOSE:

To identify priority issues for ministerial meetings with provincial elected officials and senior staff at the 2023 Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) conference.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The 2023 UBCM conference is scheduled for September 18 to 22, 2023. Each year UBCM provides an opportunity for Council to schedule 15-minute meetings with the Premier and 20 to 30-minute meetings with Provincial Ministries, Agencies, Commissions and Corporations staff (MACCs) to discuss matters of concern for the community and to seek support for important projects. These meeting requests are managed through the Office of the Premier on a request basis and acceptance is discretionary. Requests to meet with the Premier and Cabinet Ministers must be submitted by June 30, 2023. Requests to meet with MACCs must be submitted by August 30, 2023.

Staff have identified five topics for Council's consideration. Once topics are confirmed staff will submit meeting requests and develop Briefs for the meetings. Staff note that in addition to UBCM meetings, steps are underway to request and secure meetings with Ministry and provincial agency staff to discuss these strategic priority projects.

BACKGROUND:

Ministry staff have provided a template for applications to meet with the Premier and MACCs. Given the combination of strategic focus areas and capital projects, City staff have identified five areas of focus for Councils consideration with two areas for Ministerial Meetings and three areas MACC's. The topics are as follows:

Minister

- Budget commitment for the construction of Purpose Built Supportive Housing Units and Shelter in Courtenay
- Increased Funding for Mental Health and Substance Use Comox Valley (Complex Care)

Provincial Ministries, Agencies, Commissions and Corporations

- McPhee Meadows park development project - Grant
- East Side Fire Hall project - Grant
- Anderton Dike Remediation project - Grant

DISCUSSION:

The following provides an overview and background in the format required for Ministry and MACCs meeting requests for Council's background and consideration.

Minister Meetings:

1. Budget commitment for Purpose Built Supportive Housing Units and Shelter in Courtenay
 - a. Request Meeting: Ministry of Housing
 - b. Purpose: Confirm funding allocation towards new purpose built supportive housing units and shelter
 - c. Summary: Courtenay is at the epicentre of the housing, mental health, and toxic drug supply crises. While the purchase of the Super 8 maintained the number of supportive housing units in Courtenay it did not address the need for those living on the street. Courtenay needs at least 100 additional units of permanent supportive housing (including the ~60 at the Super 8) as well as a purpose built shelter to adequately relocate the Connect overnight shelter and day services.

2. Increased Funding for Mental Health and Substance Use Comox Valley
 - a. Request Meeting: Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (MHSU)
 - b. Purpose: Seek increased funding for MHSU in Comox Valley (Council Motion March 22/23)
 - c. Summary: Comox Valley lacks the continuum of MHSU services locally necessary to support those living in our community. This is further evidenced by the Substance Use Strategy report completed by Walk With Me that identifies gaps including medical detox, managed alcohol, safer supply, OPS, OAT, and other recommendations such as a services Hub, network improvements, culturally safe services, and reducing stigma in health care.

Provincial Ministries, Agencies, Commissions and Corporations:

3. Seeking grant support for McPhee Meadows park development project
 - a. Request Meeting: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
 - b. Purpose: Support for current grant application (Federal - Natural Infrastructure Fund for \$1M), and seek additional future grant opportunities.
 - c. Summary: McPhee Meadows is an 11-acre green space along the Puntledge River that was donated to the City in 2010. The City is working to develop this into a public park, while preserving and restoring its riparian and wildlife habitat features, and accentuating its First Nations history. The City is seeking support for a current grant application (Federal Natural Infrastructure Fund for \$1M), and also seeking additional future grant opportunities. Total project cost is estimated to be \$3.1M.

4. Seeking grant support for the East Side Fire Hall project
 - a. Request Meeting: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
 - b. Purpose: Support for future grant opportunities to fund the East Side Fire Hall project and advocate for additional supports for emergency response capital infrastructure.
 - c. Summary: Currently the City of Courtenay is limited in Fire Service to one Fire Hall, on the West Side of the River. An East Side Fire Hall is needed to improve fire safety, and meet growing commercial and residential demands for fire protection in East Courtenay. This

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will reduce fire response times, reduce commercial and public facility insurance costs, and allow setback reductions in residential developments. The City is seeking grant opportunities to help fund this much needed critical safety infrastructure. Total project cost is currently estimated to be \$16.5M.

5. Seeking grant support for the Anderton Dike Remediation project
 - a. Request Meeting: Ministry of Forests
 - b. Purpose of Meeting: Seek support for upcoming grant application (Federal - Infrastructure Canada - Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, due July 19 2023), and seek additional future grant opportunities.
 - c. Summary: The Anderton Dike is located along the west bank of the Courtenay River, is approximately 210 meters long, and is constructed of vertical concrete and steel sheet pile. It currently provides flood and erosion protection to a multi-family structure, a sanitary lift station, and a park. The City is seeking support for a planned upcoming grant application (Federal - Infrastructure Canada - Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, due July 19 2023), and also seeking additional future grant opportunities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Meetings to solicit support from Ministers and provincial/agency staff has the potential for positive financial impacts on the delivery of core and emerging service areas and initiatives. Successful grant applications will assist in the delivery of key capital programs contained within the City's annual and long-term financial plans.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

Developing submitting UBCM meeting requests and related briefing notes is coordinated by the Office of the City Manager, with materials prepared by the various departments responsible for the subject areas or projects.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

Seeking provincial support for City priorities, projects and infrastructure works to support the short, medium and long-term goals of the municipality and will further our four overarching principles of Equity, Community Well Being, Climate Action and Reconciliation. These five requests will help the City move forward on the Strategic Priorities of Affordable Housing, Natural Environment, Parks and Recreation, Municipal Infrastructure, Good Governance and Public Safety.

This initiative specifically addresses the following strategic priority actions:

- Affordable Housing - Explore approaches to develop affordable housing: Review potential of city property for housing partnerships with BC Housing
- Social Infrastructure - Continue working with community agencies to deliver day services. Explore role in the provision of social support services, including future of Connect Centre.
- Public Safety - East Side Fire Hall: Construction

OPTIONS:

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1. THAT based on the June 28, 2023, staff report "Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Meeting Requests", Council direct staff to prepare five meeting requests with corresponding briefs as follows:

Ministry

Budget commitment for the construction of Purpose Built Supportive Housing Units and Shelter in Courtenay

Increased Funding for Mental Health and Substance Use Comox Valley (Complex Care)

MACC's

McPhee Meadows Park development project - Grant

East Side Fire Hall project - Grant

Anderton Dike Remediation project - Grant

2. THAT Council direct staff to prepare meeting requests with corresponding briefs on topics of their choosing.
3. THAT Council provide alternate direction to staff.

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