

# Report

Date

February 21, 2023

File:

Subject

Community Emergency Preparedness Fund Grant

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## PURPOSE

To seek Council endorsement of an application by the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) for a Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) Grant for growth and improvements to the regional emergency management model.

## BACKGROUND

The UBCM regularly releases a grant program to assist with developing, sustaining, or enhancing emergency preparedness for communities within the Province.

In 2021 Council moved to participate in a single regional Emergency Management Organization established by the CVRD.

In 2022 Council supported the CVRD's proposal to apply for a regional grant of \$115,000 under the CEPF's Emergency Support Services funding stream for purchasing two towable generators to provide backup energy sources for reception centres and other supplies.

## DISCUSSION

As North Cowichan moves to a regional emergency management model, emergency management grants will be used to support the full program's growth and improvement, benefiting all local authority and First Nation members. Under several grant programs, the regional emergency management program is eligible for the maximum funding available based on the number of eligible applicants included in the regional application. A larger funding base increases the options for projects, and a regional approach ensures consistency and cost-effectiveness in the Cowichan region. Wherever practical, grants will be applied for regionally (all four municipalities and the regional district).

The three grants that are being considered through the UBCM CEPF include Emergency Operations Centre, Emergency Support Services and Public Notification and Evacuation Route Planning. An overview of each is outlined below:

### Emergency Operations Centre

An Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is a critical function (with teams, equipment, supplies and facilities) to coordinate response and recovery actions and resources, support emergency response personnel in the field, and coordinate all official communications regarding a significant emergency. As the Cowichan region moves to regionalize its emergency management functions, a continued investment into EOCs and the Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC) is essential.

The following activities and equipment purchases are proposed for 2023 to update and improve EOC and REOC capacity in the region:

- EOC Equipment - furniture, displays, planning tables, laptops and phones, small generators, storage and web/telephone conferencing equipment for Lake Cowichan and the Town of Ladysmith EOC/REOC locations
- A Field Observation Unit (drone) for regional EOC
- EOC Radio Communications Equipment (FM Transmitter backup and Email-Over-Radio Network integration) – to benefit the whole region

### **Emergency Support Services**

Under the Emergency Program Act, municipalities and regional districts are responsible for responding to emergencies in their areas, including providing Emergency Support Services (ESS). ESS are services provided on a short-term basis (generally 72 hours) to preserve evacuees' emotional and physical well-being in an emergency or disaster. ESS includes services such as food, lodging, clothing, reuniting families, emotional support and other specialized services. ESS may use reception centres and group lodging as needed in larger events where multiple families are evacuated.

The following activities and equipment purchases are proposed for 2023 to update and improve EOC and REOC capacity in the region:

- ESS Equipment: mobile printers/photocopiers to support in-field use of the digital provincial ESS registration system.
- ESS Trailer upgrades (shelving, electrical)
- Laptop storage carts to support storage of devices at primary reception centres and EOCs
- Group lodging supplies
- Secondary Reception Centre kits (to increase response capacity in smaller communities, e.g. Crofton, and rural areas)

### **Public Notification and Evacuation Route Planning**

This funding stream intends to support the development of Evacuation Route Plans and/or Public Notification Plans that provide information for local governments, First Nations, and community members in an emergency.

The following route plans are proposed for development to update and improve emergency planning in the Cowichan region. While the regional Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Assessment is under development, these areas were selected based on known risk and event history.

- *Evacuation Route Plans:*
  - Lake Cowichan
  - Saltair & Chemainus
  - Town of Ladysmith & North Diamond
  - Maple Bay & Genoa Bay
  - Crofton, Westholme, & Mt. Sicker

## OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council:
  - (1) Support an application by the Cowichan Valley Regional District to receive and manage the Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund - Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) 2023 grant funding up to \$150,000 on behalf of the Municipality of North Cowichan to purchase EOC equipment, a field observation unit, and radio communications equipment;
  - (2) Support an application by the Cowichan Valley Regional District to receive, and manage the Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund - Emergency Support Services (ESS) 2023 grant funding up to \$150,000 on behalf of the Municipality of North Cowichan to purchase ESS equipment, laptop storage carts, group lodging supplies, reception centre kits, and to upgrade the ESS trailer; and,
  - (3) Support an application by the Cowichan Valley Regional District to receive, and manage the 2023 Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund - for Public Notification and Evacuation Route Planning grant funding up to \$150,000 on behalf of the Municipality of North Cowichan. This grant funding will help develop evacuation route plans for Lake Cowichan, Saltair, Chemainus, the Town of Ladysmith, North Diamond, Maple Bay, Genoa Bay, Crofton, Westholme and Mount Sicker.
2. THAT Council advise the Cowichan Valley Regional District that the Municipality of North Cowichan does not wish to participate as a partnering applicant in their regional application under the Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund stream.

## IMPLICATIONS

The recommended option supports Council's previous motion (September 1, 2021) to move towards a regional Emergency Management organization model and would not impact North Cowichan's budget. However, it would prohibit North Cowichan from making a separate grant application for the same funding stream. It is also consistent with Council's Strategic Plan and Engagement Strategy of working collaboratively with regional government partners, ensuring a strong relationship with the CVRD.

## RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

- (1) Support an application by the Cowichan Valley Regional District to receive and manage the Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund - Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) 2023 grant funding up to \$150,000 on behalf of the Municipality of North Cowichan to purchase EOC equipment, a field observation unit, and radio communications equipment;
- (2) Support an application by the Cowichan Valley Regional District to receive, and manage the Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund - Emergency Support Services (ESS) 2023 grant funding up to \$150,000 on behalf of the Municipality of North Cowichan to purchase ESS equipment, laptop storage carts, group lodging supplies, reception centre kits, and to upgrade the ESS trailer; and,

- (3) Support an application by the Cowichan Valley Regional District to receive, and manage the 2023 Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund - for Public Notification and Evacuation Route Planning grant funding up to \$150,000 on behalf of the Municipality of North Cowichan. This grant funding will help develop evacuation route plans for Lake Cowichan, Saltair, Chemainus, the Town of Ladysmith, North Diamond, Maple Bay, Genoa Bay, Crofton, Westholme and Mount Sicker.

Report prepared by:



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Report reviewed by:



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**Approved to be forwarded to Council:**



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Ted Swabey  
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment: EMC 2023 Emergency Management Grants 2022-01-24