

Report

Date February 7, 2024

File: SPP00100

Subject **Development Approvals Program Grant Application Approval**

PURPOSE

To obtain Council support to submit a grant application for a service review to the Local Government Development Approvals Program administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM).

BACKGROUND

The Local Government Development Approvals Program intends to support the implementation of established best practices and to test innovative approaches to improve development approvals processes while meeting local government planning and policy objectives. The program was launched in 2021, and the Ministry of Housing has provided \$10 million in funding to support the current application intake.

A grant application requirement is a Council resolution indicating support for the proposed activities and a willingness to provide overall grant management.

DISCUSSION

The 2024 Business Plan for the Planning and Building Department includes continuing improvements to development application processing, and one of the activities identified is to complete a development application service review. This project proposes to complete a holistic review of the development applications review and approval process, identifying opportunities for streamlining. The (draft) 2024 budget includes \$100,000 to complete this project. There is a direct alignment between the grant program and a 2024 Business Plan deliverable. The available grant program can contribute 100% of the project's cost up to a maximum of \$150,000, allowing the budgeted funds to be reallocated.

OPTIONS

1. (Recommended Option)

THAT Council:

- (1) Support an application to the Development Approvals Program for a grant of \$100,000 for the completion of a development application service review; and,
- (2) Support providing overall grant management for the project.
 - *If successful, this grant would fund 100% of a project already planned and budgeted for 2024, allowing the funds to be reallocated.*

2. THAT Council refer the Development Approvals Program grant application to the Committee of the Whole for further discussion and project recommendation to Council.

- *If referred to the Committee of the Whole, Council will need to consider the application deadline of March 8, 2024, and the limitations to project eligibility (e.g., IT projects are*

generally not eligible).

IMPLICATIONS

Should the grant application be successful, it would cover 100% of the development application service review costs. The currently budgeted funds could be reallocated towards implementing the recommendations from the review or to the development contractors helping to address the application backlogs. There may also be future intakes of this grant program, which may provide additional opportunities to implement recommendations from the service review or to initiate other improvements.

The grant application is due on March 8, 2024, and UBCM suggests that they will respond within 90 days of the deadline. This application will not delay the project start since projects can start any time after the application is submitted. Grant-funded projects must be completed within one year. This is a very reasonable timeframe for the proposed project. However, UBCM does allow the possibility of an extension for up to one additional year.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

- (1) Support an application to the Development Approvals Program for a grant of \$100,000 for the completion of a development application service review; and,
- (2) Support providing overall grant management for the project.

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