

Report

Date August 17, 2022
Subject Request for Extension to "Village" Grant

File:

PURPOSE

To obtain Council authorization to apply for an extension to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Strengthening Communities Grant for the Village project.

BACKGROUND

At the April 21, 2021 Council Meeting, Council considered a request from the Cowichan Valley Regional District to be the lead municipality in submitting a regional grant application on behalf of the Cowichan Housing Association (CHA) and other partner organizations to the UBCM Strengthening Communities Fund for the Village project located at 610 Trunk Road in Duncan.

The grant application was successful, providing \$2,467,562 over a one-year period ending in September of 2022.

DISCUSSION

The Village program has been very well received, providing housing and wraparound support to unsheltered adults in the region. To date, with a short delay in the full start-up of the project, and the achievement of some operational savings, the Cowichan Housing Association (CHA) has not fully expended the grant funding and is seeking an extension to the timeline by which the grant funds must be spent.

CHA has requested an extension to the Temporary Use Permit from the City of Duncan for an additional 8 months, and is requesting an extension to the grant timelines that matches this. During these 8 months, they will be looking for a more permanent site for the project, or a transition for the residents to alternative housing. CHA is seeking funding from BC Housing to cover some of the costs of the project extension which would not be covered by the Village grant funding and are optimistic given the success of the project to date.

A letter from CHA as well as a document summarizing some of the successes of the project to date are included as Attachment 1 to this report. The continuation of the project is contingent upon having an extension to the timelines for spending the grant funding.

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council authorize the Chief Financial Officer to request an eight month extension from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities on the Strengthening Communities' Services grant funding received for the Cowichan Housing Association's Village project.

- An extension to the timelines for the grant funding has no financial impact to North Cowichan. To date 75% of the funding has been received and transferred to CHA. The remainder of the funding will not be provided until a final report has been submitted and approved. However, without an extension, the successful program will come to an end in September and the approved funding will not be fully spent.
2. THAT Council direct staff to advise Cowichan Housing Association that Council will not be seeking an extension to the Strengthening Communities Services Village grant funding on their behalf.
- Should Council choose this option, the final report on the program will be submitted at the end of September 2022 and any unspent grant funding will be returned.

IMPLICATIONS

The Village project has been very successful, providing housing and wraparound services to 34 people in the region. Attachment 1 contains statistics and testimonials detailing the positive impact the project has had on people's lives as well as on the neighbourhood. Continuing with the program while a more permanent location or alternative arrangements can be found is consistent with the goals and objectives of Council's Safer Community Plan.

There is no additional impact to staff time or resources resulting from an extension of the timelines.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council authorize the Chief Financial Officer to request an eight month extension from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities on the Strengthening Communities' Services grant funding received for the Cowichan Housing Association's Village project.

Report prepared by:



Talitha Soldera, CPA, CGA
Director, Financial Services

Report reviewed by:



Sarah Nixon
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Approved to be forwarded to Council:



Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment(s):

- (1) Village Grant Extension Request