

DATE: February 8, 2023

FILE: 3010-10

TO: Chair and Directors
Electoral Areas Services Committee

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

**RE: UBCM Grant Funding Application
Dyke Road Park Green Shores® Demonstration Project**

Purpose

To seek support for a grant application to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) – Disaster Risk Reduction Climate Adaptation funding program in order to implement the Dyke Road Park Green Shores® Demonstration Project.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT staff be authorized to submit a grant application to the 2023 intake of Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund Disaster Risk Reduction – Climate Action grant opportunity to construct the Dyke Road Park Green Shores® Demonstration Project;

AND FURTHER THAT should the application be successful, the Board support the proposed activities that includes grant management by staff.

Executive Summary

- The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) is working on a collaborative initiative to incorporate a Green Shores® nature-based approach to restore the Dyke Road Park's shoreline ecosystem and to respond to climate change related impacts such as sea level rise and erosion. Project partners include K'ómoks Guardians Watchmen, Stewardship Centre for BC, Project Watershed, Guardians of Mid-Island Estuaries and Pacific Salmon Foundation.
- Since project initiation in 2021, the scope has expanded the redesign of Dyke Road Park to include the removal of invasive species and the establishment of a tidal channel in the northern section of the site with a focus on habitat restoration. Due to the increased scale of the project and overall escalation in construction costs, CVRD staff and project partners are seeking alternative funding sources to cost-share the project implementation.
- Staff are seeking Board support to apply to UBCM's CEPF Disaster Risk Reduction Climate Adaptation Category 3 (Structural Mitigation) for up to \$1,000,000 in order for staff to proceed with the Dyke Road Green Shores® Demonstration Project.

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Government and Community Interests Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

K’ómoks First Nation	✓
K’ómoks Guardian Watchmen	✓
Stewardship Centre for BC	✓
Project Watershed	✓

Background/Current Situation

Partnering with the Stewardship Centre for BC and K’ómoks Guardian Watchmen on the Dyke Road Park Green Shores® Demonstration project, the CVRD is working to complete a shoreline restoration project to demonstrate a nature-based solution for shoreline management and coastal adaptation. Other project partners include Project Watershed, Guardians of Mid-Island Estuaries and Pacific Salmon Foundation with technical support from coastal engineers and landscape architects. Key engagement activities included a design charrette workshop (March 2022) and a series of onsite and virtual meetings with project partners and stakeholders. The project has involved an iterative process with project partners and stakeholders providing feedback and input into the initial conceptual and design refinement. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure was consulted and provincial staff provided guidance on the access and egress.

Key project objectives include:

- Removal of hard armouring and concrete structures (concrete viewing platform foundation is failing and is accelerating site erosion)
- Reduction of site paving
- Stabilization of shoreline through regrading and riparian plantings
- Habitat restoration (salmon species) including the establishment of a new tidal channel
- Invasive species removal
- Coastal adaptation (reduced flood risk to Comox Road)
- Connectivity to Kus-Kus-Sum and Hollyhock flats to create a vibrant and productive estuary habitat
- Protection of Indigenous cultural archeology
- Enhanced visitor experience (e.g. movement through the site and interpretative signage)
- Safer vehicle movements

The project planning and design phase was partially funded by the Government of Canada’s Climate Action and Awareness Fund with a combination of in-kind and financial contribution from CVRD planning and parks services. Planning staff have led the project management and design process. Once funding is in place, parks will lead the implementation and construction of the project. Due to expanded scope of the project and escalating construction costs attributed to inflation, the project budget has exceeded the initial estimate from 2021.

Next Steps

Staff and project partners are seeking funding sources in order to proceed with the implementation phase of the project. The recently completed Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy identifies Dyke Road Park (Comox Road area) as a high priority and recommends advancing local scale coastal flood mitigation activities (e.g. Dyke Road Green Shores® Demonstration Project), which provides a strong rationale for the CVRD’s grant application to UBCM’s CEPF Disaster Risk Reduction Climate Adaptation Category 3 (Structural Mitigation). If successful, UBCM’s grant will cover project activities that address flood risk and climate adaptation. Other potential funding sources include Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s (DFO) Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Fund (AERF). While waiting for funding announcements, staff will proceed with the permitting process (e.g. Ministry of Forests, DFO and K’ómoks First Nation

Cultural Heritage Investigation permit, and Heritage Conservation Act permit). Accounting for the timeline for permitting and funding requests, construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2024. Staff will work internally to identify any synergies with the Comox Valley Sewer Conveyance project.

Financial Factors

The construction of the Dyke Road Green Shores® Demonstration project is estimated at \$1.2 million. Currently there is \$120,000 in Community Works Funds allocated through the approved 2022-2026 financial plan from Function 621 Baynes Sound, Area B and C Parks and Greenways in 2023 and an additional \$230,000 in Community Works Funds requested in 2024 as part of the 2023 – 2027 proposed financial plan for function 621 making a total of \$350,000 in potential CWF support for project delivery. If the CVRD is successful in securing the grant funding through UBCM, the full Community Works Funds may not be required and will be reallocated.

Strategic Considerations: Strategic Drivers and Regional Growth Strategy

CVRD Board Strategic Drivers:							
Fiscal Responsibility	✓	Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection	✓	Community Partnerships	✓	Indigenous Relations	✓

- Fiscal Responsibility: Securing grant funding will help to offset the overall project costs.
- Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection: The implementation of Green Shores® principles will increase coastal resilience, protect the park and adjacent development from flood risk, and enhance ecological habitat and function.
- Community Partnerships: The project is a collaborative initiative and will be completed in partnership with the K’ómoks Guardian Watchmen, Stewardship Centre for BC, and Project Watershed. Once complete, the project will also serve as a demonstration site for the community to learn more about coastal adaptation as a response to sea level rise.
- Indigenous Relations: Staff have worked closely with K’ómoks First Nation Guardians on the project in order to protect the significant cultural and archaeological value of the site.

CVRD Regional Growth Strategy Goals:							
Housing		Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks	✓	Local economic development		Transportation	
Infrastructure	✓	Food Systems		Public Health & Safety		Climate Change	✓

The Dyke Road Park Green Shores® Demonstration project meets the following objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy:

- Policy 2B-3: Explore and encourage the practice of restoration of urban and rural ecosystems to increase ecological functions
- Objective 2-D: Ensure access to parks, recreation and areas
- Objective 8-F: Plan for climate adaptation

The project will incorporate a nature-based, restored shoreline to help reclaim the site’s ecological values including salmon species, while stabilizing erosion and adapting to rising sea levels.

Intergovernmental Factors

Staff have worked with K’ómoks First Nation Guardians on project design and with Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to confirm access and egress and landscaping requirements along Comox Road.

Citizen/Public Relations

The project will be a demonstration site for citizen groups, professionals and shoreline landowners to learn about nature-based solutions for our community and attend training sessions. Once complete, the site will include interpretive signage about the benefits of a healthy shoreline and the need to build coastal resiliency.