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REPORT TO FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MAY 01, 2024

SUBJECT **Capital Regional District External Grants 2023 Annual Report**

ISSUE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the Capital Regional District (CRD) external grants activity for the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023.

BACKGROUND

The CRD Grants team provides support to divisions across the organization as they pursue external grant opportunities with funders. Services apply for projects in alignment with their capital and service plans, adjusting and requesting amendments when opportunities unpredictably arise. The CRD Grants team informs divisions of upcoming opportunities, reviews applications, conducts research and engagement with external programs, advises on grant inquiries and regularly reports to the CRD Board through the Finance Committee on activity.

Appendix A details external grants activity and application status for the period ended December 31, 2023. Any embargoed grant activity will be listed as pending until such grants can be publicly disclosed. This report also provides an update on the Growing Communities Fund (GCF) (Appendix B), Safe Restart COVID-19 Funding (Appendix C) and an update on the status of grant-funded projects (Appendix D).

The CRD has been reporting annually on grants since 2019. Staff track key performance indicators including application activity and amounts awarded. The availability of grant programs, a lengthy review process, the competitive nature of grants and the unpredictable receipt of large non-application and direct allocation grants such as GCF, can make it challenging to compare grant success on a year-by-year basis.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

2023 Activity

1. 52 grant alerts circulated
2. Grant application activity
 - 45 grant applications submitted
 - 8 non-application-based grants received
 - 27 application-based grants awarded
 - 21 grant applications pending results
 - 20 grant applications declined

3. Grant coordination and reporting
 - 6 Bi-monthly external grants reports to the CRD Board through Finance Committee
 - 4 annual reports; external grants, Grants-in-Aid and 2 Community Works Fund (internal and external) reports
 - 2 reports regarding the GCF and an internal program intake
 - 1 other information report relating to basis of apportionment for grants and services
4. Financial administration
5. Internal and External Stakeholder Engagement

Table 1 provides a summary of external grants activity with a comparison to 2022.

Table 1: Grants Approved for 2023

	2023	2022
Non-Application, Direct Allocation Based External Grants Received	\$12.4M	\$0.1M
Application Based External Grants Awarded	\$11.0M	\$12.8M
Total	\$23.4M	\$12.9M
Rate of Return	26.7x	13.5x

Growing Communities Fund

The GCF provided \$1 billion across the province to support local governments with infrastructure projects necessary to enable community growth. The CRD received a one-time non-application direct allocation of \$11.5 million in 2023. The CRD Grants team developed an internal program intake with guidelines, eligibility framework and weighting matrix to select eligible projects from interested CRD services. The CRD Board approved the allocation to eight qualifying projects out of seventeen projects applied. The funded projects will commence starting in 2024 authorized through 2024-2028 Five-Year Financial Plan. The funding must be fully expended by March 2028 and the reporting is required until fully spent. Appendix B provides a summary of funded projects.

Safe Restart

The COVID-19 Safe Restart Grants provided \$425 million across the province to assist local governments impacted by COVID-19. The CRD received nearly \$2 million in 2020 and 2021. The CRD Board approved the allocation to projects based on grant program criteria. The CRD is required to report on funds until fully spent. Appendix C provides an update on expenses from 2020 to 2023 and remaining funds committed for 2024 completion.

Service Delivery Implications

Applying for grants is often time-sensitive where programs launch unexpectedly, disrupting service and work plans. Staff endeavor to seek funding for projects identified in capital plans aligned with community needs (Appendix E); however, when opportunities arise adjustments and implications are brought forward for approval.

CONCLUSION

Staff continue to monitor and track key performance indicators, which are driven by the variability of external grant program availability. The CRD Grants team works with and across services to maximize funding opportunities. Staff proactively manage various processes for optimal financial management and adjust work plans when funding programs become available and where capacity and resources permit.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

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ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: Capital Regional District External Grants Activity 2023
- Appendix B: Growing Communities Fund – Regional and Electoral Area Projects
- Appendix C: Safe Restart Funding for Local Governments – Regional and Local Services Projects
- Appendix D: Update on the Status of Grant-Funded Projects
- Appendix E: Grant Alignment with Community Needs