



REQUEST FOR DECISION (RFD)

Date: November 23, 2020
To: Her Worship Mayor Qualizza and Members of Council
From: Michael Boronowski, Chief Administrative Officer
Subject: Grant Application - Tourism Dependent Communities Fund

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to submit an application to the Tourism Dependent Communities Fund for up to \$853,063 to implement the *Journey to Iconic Fernie* initiative.

PURPOSE

This report provides Council with an overview of the recommended project to submit for funding through the Tourism Dependent Communities Fund (TDCF) and seeks approval from Council for submitting that application.

BACKGROUND

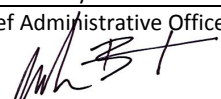
On October 8, 2020 the Deputy Minister from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture announced the TDCF. This fund is similar to the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program grants made available earlier this year. The TDCF funding guide is attached to this report.

Up to \$19.4M in funding has been set aside for the TDCF. Only a select group of tourism dependent communities are eligible, and the total application must not exceed \$1M.

Staff engaged in an internal review of initiatives identified in Master Plans and the priorities set out in the Tourism Master Plan, Resort Development Strategy, and the priorities identified in the regional Destination Development Strategy. Staff also reflected Council's identified strategic priority of advancing climate action in the development of this project with community partners.

Working in collaboration with the Community Energy Association, Tourism Fernie and the Fernie Regional Chamber of Commerce, a project entitled *Journey to Iconic Fernie* has been developed that, if funded, would:

- Provide future-proofed Level 2 EV charging stations at both the Chamber of Commerce / Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and at City Hall in historic Downtown Fernie

Reviewed by:			
Chief Administrative Officer 	Director of Corporate Administration Services	Director Financial & Computer Services	Other:

- Establish a multi-modal connection including bike-share between the Visitor Information Centre and downtown Fernie, incorporating interpretive experiences and enhanced wayfinding to connect visitors between these destinations
- Fund enhancements to the exterior, landscaping, interpretive information and parking at the Visitor Information Centre
- Fund an iconic wooden sculpture by a local artist at the Visitor Information Centre and replace the East Community Entrance Monument Sign
- Fund trailhead and trail enhancements for the Fairy Creek Falls trail to improve safety, interpretation, and the overall visitor experience.

Charging Station Rationale

Level 2 charging infrastructure has two key benefits:

- 1) Encouraging tourists to choose their EV to travel, thereby reducing emissions; and
- 2) Increasing the amount of time a tourists stays in a community by using our charging services, thereby increasing the likelihood they will visit a local shop, restaurant or destination.

The strategically sited electric vehicle infrastructure will support objectives around tourism, economic development and sustainability in Fernie.

Level 2 chargers incent drivers to ‘stop n’ shop’ and take four to six hours to fully charge a vehicle, encouraging extended visits to the community’s amenities. This proposal includes the installation of a charging hub (multiple Level 2 chargers) at two key locales in the community: the Visitor Information Centre and downtown core. Siting a hub of chargers at these locations is ideal as they already have built infrastructure and public amenities to support tourists and residents alike. Installing a hub of chargers at each location will garner efficiencies for City operations staff regarding engineering design and site works.

Grant Alignment

With a core focus on improvements to EV infrastructure and strengthening multimodal connections between Downtown Fernie and the Visitor Information Centre, this project has been designed to deliver on priorities identified in multiple strategic plans:

Destination BC’s Highway 3 Corridor Destination Development Plan:

- Enhance the road trip experience
- Showcase community character
- Create new off-peak season experiences to motivate travel – with a focus on outdoor recreation/trails, arts and culture, agritourism, storytelling
- Strengthen support for business viability
- Manage visitor growth and environmental sustainability

The province’s Strategic Framework for Tourism:

- Supporting People & Communities
- Sustainably Growing the Visitor Economy
- Respecting Nature & the Environment

Fernie's recently launched Tourism Master Plan:

- Recover from COVID-19 and grow visitors into multi-day, year-round economic and community contributors
- Develop and enhance Fernie's visitor infrastructure, amenities, brand, tourism products, experiences and people
- Ensure collaboration, community support, people and financing for tourism recovery and success
- Manage locations where visitation is impacting the sense of community or natural environment and support the resiliency of the industry

Fernie's Resort Municipality Initiative – Resort Development Strategy:

- Grow shoulder days, weeks and seasons
- Attract higher yield visitors
- Manage the capacity of the destination
- Maintain and grow access to natural attractions and recreational amenities
- Continue to focus and improve getting into and around Fernie
- Create focal points for visitor staging and gathering

INTERNAL CIRCULATION

This report and application have been reviewed by the Manager of Parks, Facilities and Recreation and the Leadership Team.

LEGAL/STATUTORY AUTHORITY

N/A

LEGAL/STATUTORY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

N/A

COMPLIANCE WITH CORPORATE STRATEGIES & POLICIES

This project advances progress in two of Council's Strategic Focus Areas:

Infrastructure – Well maintained infrastructure and facilities that meet community needs and allow growth and development for prosperity

Social – Build social capital and engage citizens and partners to improve the well-being and diversity of our community

It also directly supports Council's strategic priorities:

COVID-19 Recovery – By supporting both local employment in implementation and ongoing economic development.

Climate Action Plan – While not complete, enhancements to multimodal and EV transportation are known climate-positive actions.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The TDCF fund covers 100% of costs for projects, however municipalities are responsible for covering cost-overruns.

Project Elements	Budget	Contingency Class	Contingency per class	Budget with Contingency
VIC EV Upgrades (4 stations)	\$ 88,600	B	25%	\$ 110,750
Downtown (City Hall) EV Upgrades (5 stations)	\$ 103,250	B	25%	\$ 129,063
VIC Landscaping, parking & Interpretive Enhancements	\$ 125,000	B	25%	\$ 156,250
East Community Entrance Monument Sign	\$ 75,000	C	35%	\$ 101,250
Fernie Iconic Sculpture	\$ 30,000	B	25%	\$ 37,500
Fairy Creek Falls Trail & Trailhead	\$ 75,000	B	25%	\$ 93,750
Iconic Fernie Pathway Enhancements	\$ 50,000	B	25%	\$ 62,500
Staging Enhancements with Bike Rental	\$ 120,000	C	35%	\$ 162,000
SUBTOTAL	\$ 666,850			
Contingency				\$ 186,213
TOTAL				\$ 853,063

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

While there are no significant budgetary implications, the potential impact on the 2021 and 2022 workplans for the Parks, Facilities & Recreation, Engineering and Streets & Utilities departments are an important consideration.

Should the City of Fernie be successful in this application, in part or in whole, there would be reduced capacity for staff in responding to other emerging projects or challenges during the detailed planning and build-out of the proposed project.

EXTERNAL AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tourism Fernie, the Community Energy Association, and the Chamber of Commerce have offered to provide letters of support for this application, should it move forward.

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Staff have engaged with Tourism Fernie, the Community Energy Association, and Chamber of Commerce in developing this application. Tourism Fernie has also engaged with a number of additional stakeholders to formalize elements in the plan.

If successful, staff would develop a comprehensive communication plan with these groups to ensure effective community, stakeholder, and First Nations engagement in the development of signage and interpretive material, as well as to communicate impacts of the work while underway.

OPTIONS

1. THAT Council direct staff to apply for the TDCF grant to fund the *Journey to Iconic Fernie* initiative.
2. THAT Council amend the project by modifying the scope or items within the application.
3. THAT Council not approve the staff recommendation to apply for TDCF grant funding.

CONCLUSION

Following the announcement of the TDCF, staff have been engaged with the Tourism sector through Tourism Fernie and the Community Energy Association to develop an application project that is tailored to align with community priorities, master plans, and the grant criteria.

Staff recommend Council approve this initiative for submission.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Boronowski
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment:

- TDCF Community Funding Guide