



# Municipal District of Bonnyville No. 87

## Request for Decision (RFD)

**Meeting:** Regular Meeting of Council  
**Meeting Date:** February 13, 2024  
**Originated By:** Luis Gandolfi, Director of Protective Services  
**Title:** FRIAA FireSmart Program Grant Application

### **PROPOSAL & BACKGROUND**

With assistance from the provincial FireSmart Grant Program, a Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS) for the M.D. of Bonnyville was completed in February of 2020. This strategy called for the removal of vegetation from several high-risk areas within the MD, and we have successfully completed up to Phase 3 of a 5-phase mitigation process, as well as the completion of a table-top exercise in September of 2023. FireSmart offers grants for both vegetation and non-vegetation initiatives and Administration is seeking Council's approval to apply for grant funding totaling \$200,000 under the non-vegetation portion of the FireSmart grant process for the creation of a FireSmart Coordinator position. This would be a 2 year term position that would see the position funded through this grant, but staffed and employed by the BRFA. Taking this step would prevent the MD from making applications for grant funding through the vegetation portion of the FRIAA grant process for this calendar year.

### **DISCUSSION ON BENEFITS, DISADVANTAGES & OPTIONS**

The MD has already completed phases 1 through 3 of the WMS which addressed the communities of Marie Lake, Crane Lake, and Evergreen Estates, with phases 4 and 5 in Ardmore and Pelican Narrows remaining. The two remaining communities have little to no public land which has caused us to focus our efforts on prevention and education, rather than the elimination of vegetation. The BRFA typically manages the FireSmart process on behalf of the MD, and the creation of a FireSmart Coordinator position could see benefits from the following:

1. For the duration of the term, the BRFA would have a full-time staff member to coordinate this process which would improve the service to our ratepayers,
2. The coordinator would provide an enhanced service by providing support through: public education on private land fire mitigation, private home assessments, coordination of traditional FireSmart activities on public lands, development of guidebooks and public information, public presentations on FireSmart practices, applications for outside grant funding, fire guardianship, and so on.

After preliminary discussions with the BRFA, we believe the best scenario would be for the coordinator to be funded through the FRIAA grant system but be employed by the BRFA. Section 3 of the MD's Fire Services Bylaw 1668 calls for the BRFA to, "...carry out preventable patrols, pre-fire planning and fire inspections..." which is why we believe that this fire prevention and mitigation position should remain with the BRFA.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Wildlife Mitigation Strategy – FRIAA Project Grant Agreement, February 2020

### **REFERENCE TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Priority 2: Enhance Safety in the Community

## **REFERENCE TO PROVINCIAL/FEDERAL LEGISLATION**

N/A

## **COSTS & SOURCE OF FUNDING**

Total estimated projects costs: \$200,000. This project would only proceed with grant approval and 100% of funding would be sourced from the FRIAA FireSmart grant program.

## **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

Will be discussed with Marketing and Communications at the appropriate time.

## **ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDED ACTION**

THAT Council approves the submission of a grant application to the Forest Resource Improvement Association for Alberta (FRIAA) FireSmart Program for up to \$200,000 for non-vegetation funding for a FireSmart Coordinator position.

## **COUNCIL OPTIONS**

1. THAT Council approves the submission of a grant application to the Forest Resource Improvement Association for Alberta (FRIAA) FireSmart Program for up to \$200,000 for non-vegetation funding for a FireSmart Coordinator position.
2. THAT Council does not approve the submission of a grant application to the Forest Resource Improvement Association for Alberta (FRIAA) FireSmart Program for up to \$200,000 for non-vegetation funding for a FireSmart Coordinator position.
3. THAT Council directs Administration to bring back additional information regarding the submission of a grant application to the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) FireSmart Program, as discussed.

## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) FireSmart Program.docx
Attachments:	- Appendix A Wildfire Mitigation Strategy - Project Grant Agreement FFP-19-07 February 2020.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Feb 5, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Matt Janz

Stephanie Severin