

AGENDA ITEM NO: 15.2.2MEETING DATE: March 7, 2023**STAFF REPORT - COVER SHEET**SUBJECT: Growing Communities Fund Date: March 6, 2023DEPARTMENT: Finance Department Prepared by: Glen Savard

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**1. SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Province of British Columbia has recently announced *The Growing Communities Fund* that will disperse a one-time total of \$1 billion in grants to all 188 of B.C.'s municipalities and regional districts to help build community infrastructure and amenities to meet the demands of extraordinary population growth. These funds will help each community address their unique infrastructure and amenity needs such as recreation facilities, parks, water treatment plants and other community infrastructure. This grant funding program represents the largest single provincial investment in communities in the province's history.

The funds are distributed to each municipality and regional district based on a funding formula that is reflective of population size and growth. As a result of this formula, the allocation for the City of Chilliwack is \$16,392,000. Specific criteria, requirements, restrictions or project timing of the funding, if any, has not been announced at the present time, however, the recent announcement has provided general funding criteria and categories.

Each year as part of the financial planning process, the City is faced with many competing priorities and needs with respect to capital infrastructure and Council is tasked with making careful budgetary prioritization decisions amongst many projects. This planning results in many capital projects that are not fundable immediately, but are planned for in future years within the 10-year Financial Plan. This grant funding will allow a number of priority projects to be advanced and funded sooner than otherwise possible, thereby, addressing many various infrastructure requirements within the community.

Based on the general criteria provided in the recent announcement and given the level of grant funding allocated to the City of Chilliwack, projects and funding allocation is recommended as included in the attached schedule. Having this list of projects now will allow staff to begin pre-planning work and coordination. Should any restrictions or funding criteria be announced in the future that render any of the approved projects as ineligible, Council will then have the ability to reallocate any funding as needed.

**2. RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council approve the allocation of funds from *The Growing Communities Fund*, towards the infrastructure projects, as presented.

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Glen Savard, Director of Finance

**3. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S  
RECOMMENDATION/COMMENTS:**

Supports Recommendation.

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Chris Crosman, CAO

## **Allocation of Provincial *Growing Communities Fund* Grant Funding:**

### **Project Allocation Recommendations**

Wastewater Treatment Plant - Biological Treatment Expansion	\$ 5,000,000
Racquet Sport Facilities	5,660,000
Public Safety Building Renovation	1,600,000
Pedestrian Improvements	1,200,000
Multi-Use Gaming Areas	750,000
Cycle Pump Tracks	600,000
Townsend Park Bleacher Structure	500,000
Valley Rail Trail Improvement	430,000
Hope River Rd. Trail	350,000
Neighbourhood Spray Park	150,000
Dog Off Leash Areas	152,000
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Total Allocation	<u><u>\$ 16,392,000</u></u>

## B.C. building stronger communities with \$1-billion Growing Communities Fund

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/28220>

One billion dollars in new grants will be going to local governments in B.C. to help build community infrastructure and amenities to meet the demands of unprecedented population growth.

"B.C.'s strong economy and natural beauty continue to attract people from across Canada and around the world. Cities and towns need support to build thriving, livable communities," said Premier David Eby. "The new Growing Communities Fund will help local municipalities improve roads, build more arenas and water facilities, and improve recreation options for families."

The Growing Communities Fund will provide a one-time total of \$1 billion in grants to all 188 of B.C.'s municipalities and regional districts, which they can use to address their community's unique infrastructure and amenities demands – such as recreation facilities, parks and water-treatment plants, as well as other community infrastructure. It will help communities prepare for future growth and build the amenities needed to support new home construction, especially with the Housing Supply Act where targets are set.

"Addressing B.C.'s housing crisis requires a variety of responses, including increasing the supply of available housing which, in many communities in B.C., requires investments in community infrastructure and amenities," said Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs. "Today's announcement demonstrates a cross-government co-operation to address the unique aspects of the housing crisis in each community, ensuring they can thrive into the future."

These grants will complement existing infrastructure funding (such as sewer, water and recreation facilities) and will be distributed to B.C.'s 188 municipalities and regional districts by the end of March 2023. The Growing Communities Fund will come from the surplus shown in the Second Quarter Financial Report. The Province is putting this year's surplus to work for people, to support them now and for the long term.

"I thank the Province for this investment into much-needed community infrastructure," said Brenda Locke, mayor of Surrey. "As we know, Surrey is the fastest-growing city in the province. With that growth, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to work together to create livable communities and create a variety of housing options. This investment will ensure the quality of life in Surrey is not only maintained, but improved. From recreation facilities to parks to roads, this investment will benefit the residents of Surrey both now and well into the future."

The Province has heard from local governments about the need for infrastructure and amenities to support their growth. Infrastructure funding programs are routinely significantly oversubscribed. For example, there are six times more requests for funding through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program Community, Culture and Recreation stream than what is available. This one-time fund supports the priorities of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM).

"Today's announcement provides the largest single provincial investment in communities in our province's history," said Jen Ford, president, UBCM. "This unprecedented transfer will help meet the needs of growing populations through the expansion of facilities and replacement of aging infrastructure. It will also support climate adaptation to sustain service delivery and safeguard residents from the risks of extreme weather. By delivering the funds with maximum flexibility, the Province is ensuring that they will be directed to urgent local priorities. This

shows tremendous commitment from the province and is welcome news for residents in all communities.”  
**James Smith**

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## **Aaron Hinks**

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## **Translations**

- Growing Communities Fund\_French.pdf  
([https://bcgovnews.azureedge.net/translations/releases/2023PREM0008-000171/Growing Communities Fund\\_French.pdf](https://bcgovnews.azureedge.net/translations/releases/2023PREM0008-000171/Growing%20Communities%20Fund_French.pdf))
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## **Acknowledgment**

The B.C. Public Service acknowledges the territories of First Nations around B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands. We acknowledge the rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of all Indigenous Peoples - First Nations, Métis, and Inuit - respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments.