

TO: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: **GA - UBCM LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS PROGRAM GRANT FUNDING**
PURPOSE: To obtain endorsement for a Grant Application (GA) from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Local Government Development Approvals Program (LGDAP).

RECOMMENDATION

THAT staff be authorized to submit an application to the UBCM Local Government Development Approvals Program, for up to \$150,000 in grant funding;

THAT the proposed project activities as described in Section 3.0 of the report entitled “GA – UBCM Local Government Development Approvals Program Grant Funding” dated February 26, 2024, be supported; and,

THAT overall grant management, as required by the UBCM Local Government Development Approvals program, be undertaken.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

The DAP Project is consistent with the following policies and plans:

- Corporate Strategic Plan (2022);
- Regional Context Statement (2013);
- Official Community Plan (1998); and,
- Economic Development Strategy (2007).

2.0 BACKGROUND

In 2019, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs initiated the Development Approvals Process Review (DAPR) to examine issues affecting local government development approvals. The Review identified a number of opportunities to address these challenges, including the implementation of established best practices and testing innovative approaches to improve development approval processes. To advance this work, the Ministry established the Local Government Development Approvals Program (LGDAP), with an initial \$15 million in grant funding administered by UBCM to be distributed to local governments.

For 2024, the Ministry of Housing has added an additional \$10 million in grant funding for the LGDAP, with a maximum of up to \$150,000 available per applicant for eligible

activities. All local governments in BC are eligible to apply for the grant. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by an Evaluation Committee. To qualify for funding, applications must be a new or subsequent phase of a project, and capable of completion by the applicant within one year of the date of grant approval.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

In August 2021, the City was successful in obtaining \$500,000 in funding from the LGDAP to support a review of the City's Development Approvals Process (DAP) and provide recommendations and an implementation strategy for its improvement. The objectives of the DAP Project are:

- i. **Customer Experience.** Provide a customer-focused development approvals system that better serves applicants and the community.
- ii. **Transparency.** Simplify the process thereby making it clearer and more transparent, and ultimately more predictable.
- iii. **Efficiency.** Increase efficiencies thereby reducing approval times and reducing the cost of development.

In September 2021, the City began the work of reviewing and implementing changes to the City's development approvals processes. This first stage of work, now referred to as DAP 01, was completed in June 2022 and resulted in 18 recommendations to advance DAP objectives. In September 2022, the second stage of the work (DAP 02) began with actioning the 18 recommendations and was largely concluded in August 2023. DAP 02 identified further activities and implementation steps to be undertaken through a future DAP 03, including the need for continued business process improvements, data development, and coaching/training to build capacity in staff.

The 2024 LGDAP grant fund intake is an opportunity to accelerate DAP 03 work. In review of eligible activities, DAP 03 priorities, and the available grant amount, staff have identified two key initiatives to submit for funding:

- **Business Process Documentation:** Expediting activation of new or further streamlined approvals processes for both simple (e.g. single- and two-family homes) and complex development through identification, development and refinement of business tools such as process maps and standard operating procedures.
- **Change Management and Capacity Building:** Successful implementation of new processes would be accelerated with coaching and training of staff, to build capacity and understanding of the new development approval tools and processes.

To support these activities, it is proposed to apply the LGDAP grant funding to retain external consultant(s) to provide subject matter expertise in these areas and

supplement current staff efforts. Consultant support would accelerate DAP 03 implementation while helping ensure staff can keep pace with other operational activities. The intended outcome of these efforts is to have clear and transparent documentation of protocols and workflows and develop staff familiarity, understanding and competency with the new systems and processes, which will ultimately reduce processing times and enhance the customer experience.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Additional information on the City’s DAP Project, including updates and new approval processes, can be found at: <https://www.burnaby.ca/our-city/projects/development-approval-process-dap>. More information on the Local Government Development Approvals Program, including a guide providing details of the 2024 program requirements, schedule, and eligibility criteria for grant funding, can be found at UBCM’s website: <https://www.ubcm.ca/lgps/local-government-development-approvals>. Community engagement is not applicable to this initiative.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The LGDAP grant provides up to 100% of the cost of eligible activities up to a maximum of \$150,000 per applicant. As such, it is recommended that the City apply for the maximum amount of funding and, if successful, secure the consultant(s) necessary to assist staff with this work immediately.

A Council resolution is required, indicating the City’s support for the proposed activities and willingness to provide overall grant management.

The grant is envisioned to supplement other funding sources for the DAP Project. As accelerated implementation of DAP 03 activities is desirable, in the event the City is not awarded the grant, staff intend to use allocated funding from the Government of Canada Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) received by the City towards the consultant(s).

Respectfully submitted,

E.W. Kozak, General Manager Planning and Development

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Alex Kolsteren, Planner 2, and reviewed by Leah Libsekal, Program Manager Development Applications, and Karin Hung, Director Strategic Initiatives.