



## STAFF REPORT

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**DATE:** May 22, 2020 **FILE:** 0360-20

**TO:** Chair and Directors,  
Regional Board

**FROM:** Dave Leitch  
Chief Administrative Officer

**RE:** RECREATE PROJECT FUNDING – RECONSIDERATION REQUEST

### PURPOSE/PROBLEM

To consider a recommendation from the Strathcona Gardens Commission that a letter be sent to the Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, requesting that the denial of funding for the Strathcona Gardens ReCreate Project be reconsidered on the basis that the project is shovel-ready and fits well with the Federal government's COVID-19 recovery plans.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The attached report was considered at the May 13, 2020 meeting of the Strathcona Gardens Commission at which time the following resolution was passed:

Leigh/Grunerud: SGC 54/20

THAT the Commission recommend that the letter to Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities be authorized to be sent on behalf of the Regional District, and

THAT we request a list of projects that were approved.

The actions listed below are offered in support of the Commission's recommendations.

### RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT the report from the Chief Administrative Officer be received.
2. THAT the letter attached to the May 22, 2020 report from the Chief Administrative Officer and addressed to the Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, be authorized to be sent on behalf of the Regional District, and

THAT the Regional District request a list of projects that were approved under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure (Community, Culture and Recreation) Program.

Respectfully:



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Dave Leitch  
Chief Administrative Officer

**Prepared by:** T. Yates, Corporate Services Manager

Attachment: Copy of May 8, 2020 report to the Strathcona Gardens Commission



## STAFF REPORT

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**DATE:** May 8, 2020

**FILE:** 0360-20

**TO:** Chair and Commissioners,  
Strathcona Gardens Commission

**FROM:** Dave Leitch  
Chief Administrative Officer

**RE:** RECREATE PROJECT FUNDING

### **PURPOSE/PROBLEM**

To consider a response regarding the decision to deny funding for the Strathcona Gardens Recreate project.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The attached correspondence has been received from the Province of B.C. regarding the Regional District's request for funding the Strathcona Gardens Recreate project. This decision is clearly a disappointment given the amount of time and effort put into the development of this project by the Regional District and the broader community, not to mention the financial resources that have been spent pursuing the redevelopment vision for the Strathcona Gardens facility.

A response letter has been prepared which is intended to articulate a number of concerns with the decision and to hopefully generate a second look at the proposal. It is being presented at this time for review by the Commission before being forwarded to Minister McKenna.

The Commission's input is appreciated.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. THAT the report from the Chief Administrative Officer be received.
2. THAT the Commission recommend that the letter to Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities be authorized to be sent on behalf of the Regional District.

Respectfully:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Leitch", is written over a horizontal line.

Dave Leitch  
Chief Administrative Officer

**Prepared by:** T. Yates, Corporate Services Manager

**Attachments:** March 19, 2020 correspondence from MAH  
Draft letter to Hon. Catherine McKenna

**From:** [David Leitch](#)  
**To:** [Tom Yates](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program - Community, Culture and Recreation Application Response  
**Date:** May 8, 2020 3:21:11 PM  
**Attachments:** [CCR\\_UF\\_IC0042\\_Strathcona\\_RD.pdf](#)

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**From:** INFRA, CSCD MAH:EX  
**Sent:** March-19-20 4:58 PM  
**To:** Victoria Smith <VSmith@srd.ca>; David Leitch <DLeitch@srd.ca>  
**Cc:** INFRA, CSCD MAH:EX <INFRA@gov.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program - Community, Culture and Recreation Application Response

Good afternoon,

On behalf of Liam Edwards, Executive Director, please see the attached letter regarding your grant application to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) Community, Culture and Recreation program. As noted in the attached, program staff will be available to provide feedback on the application and are pleased to provide advice should there be a future intake to the program. *Please note that at this time we respectfully request that inquiries related to the attached letter are delayed until such time that the COVID-19 pandemic is under control.*

Kind regards,

Local Government Infrastructure and Finance Branch  
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing



Canada

March 18, 2020

Ref: 252252

Victoria Smith  
Senior Manager Strategic Initiatives  
Strathcona Regional District  
301 - 990 Cedar St  
Campbell River BC V9W 7Z8

Dear Victoria Smith:

**Re: Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) – Community, Culture and Recreation Project # IC0042 - Strathcona Gardens Recreation Complex Upgrade**

Thank you for your application for funding under the ICIP – Community, Culture and Recreation Program.

We would like to advise that, after careful consideration, the above-noted project was not selected for funding under the ICIP – Community, Culture and Recreation Program.

The program received significantly more applications than could be funded. This decision does not reflect on the importance of this project for your community, but rather the degree by which the program has been oversubscribed. All applications were equitably reviewed and given consideration for funding. If you have any questions, please contact Laird McLachlin, Community, Culture and Recreation Program Lead, by email at: [Laird.McLachlin@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Laird.McLachlin@gov.bc.ca).

Additional program information can be found at the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program website: [www.gov.bc.ca/Investing-in-Canada-Infrastructure-Program](http://www.gov.bc.ca/Investing-in-Canada-Infrastructure-Program). Should future funding become available, staff are pleased to provide advice on preparing an application.

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Ministry of Municipal Affairs  
and Housing

Local Government Infrastructure  
and Finance Branch

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 9838 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9T1  
Phone: 250 387-4060  
Fax: 250 387-7972

Location:  
4th Floor - 800 Johnson Street  
Victoria BC V8W 1N3  
[www2.gov.bc.ca/mah](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/mah)

Victoria Smith

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Thank you for your interest in the ICIP-Community, Culture and Recreation Program. We wish you every success with your community project.

Best regards,



Liam Edwards, Executive Director  
Local Government Infrastructure and Finance  
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

pc: Brian Bedford, Director  
Local Government Infrastructure & Engineering  
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Dave Leitch, Chief Administrative Officer  
Strathcona Regional District

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File: SGC General 0540

May 1, 2020

**EMAIL ONLY:**

[infc.minister-ministre.infccanada.ca](mailto:infc.minister-ministre.infccanada.ca)

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, PC, MP  
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities  
180 Kent Street  
Suite 1100  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 0B6

Dear Minister:

**RE: STRATHCONA GARDENS RECREATE PROJECT**

Further to the attached letter from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the Province of British Columbia regarding the Strathcona Gardens RECREATE Project application to the Canada-BC Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – Community, Culture and Recreation Stream we are respectfully requesting that you consider this matter further. We understand and appreciate the fiscal challenges during this unprecedented time, and that funding to address the Covid-19 crisis is a high priority.

The Strathcona Regional District, like many other regions throughout the country, had significant infrastructure needs before the Covid-19 pandemic, such as coping with growth, resilience and connectivity. This is why we were careful to submit a project that was of the most critical need and had far reaching impact for the Regional District. The revitalization of the Strathcona Gardens Recreation Complex would do more than create jobs and stimulate the economy; this facility and the programs it provides have been major contributors to the region's quality of life for decades. The incorporation of the Wellness Program into the aquatics facility, in collaboration with the Vancouver Island Health Authority, has shown significant positive benefits. In addition, the pool is the only indoor public pool within a 100 kilometre radius of Campbell River, and the only indoor public pool open year-round in the region. Unlike other larger communities that have multiple facilities within their regions, the age and condition of the Strathcona Gardens pool is critical and at risk of closing without significant repairs and upgrades.

After careful consideration of the parameters of the grant application, the revitalization project was submitted with a phased in approach, focusing on components such as new aquatic and wellness spaces amenities to support rehabilitation, medical treatment therapy, health and well-being, and social benefits.

The Regional Board had proactively amended the Financial Plan to ensure that the Strathcona Regional District had full funding for our share of costs. This was done starting three years ago, by setting aside dedicated funding for this phase of the project and amending the Financial Plan to increase the annual requisition for 2020 and future years. This has ensured that our application is 'money ready'.

Over the past three years we completed conceptual design, schematic design, seismic, geotechnical, parking and traffic studies to ensure that we were 'design ready'.

And subject to approval of Federal and provincial funding we were 'shovel ready'.

In my fifteen years in local government I have never been involved in such a complete, thorough and well prepared application, and am extremely proud of the team and our staff that have spent the better part of four years, countless hours and money in not only putting this project together, but also completing the work plan to fully rehabilitate the entire facility without additional funding required beyond the Phase 1 grant application. Phase 2 involves a complete rebuild and expansion of the arena facilities that could not be done without first addressing the redevelopment work outlined in Phase 1.

The pandemic's impact on the region's economy makes the Government's commitment to assist with this project even more critical than when the initial application was submitted. As a Commission, we have worked and invested close to \$0.5 million at putting forward the strongest possible case for the renewal of this facility, which is the region's only multi-use recreation complex. Further postponement of this project will risk escalation of construction costs and force the local government in our region to prioritize where money is spent to offset the impact of the pandemic on its revenues, operations and functions. We are convinced that this project is in line with the type of infrastructure development work that is essential for kick-starting the economy.

This region is anxious to bounce-back from Covid-19, and it is recognized that the recreation facility, located in the largest urbanized centre on North Vancouver Island, is integral to supporting all of the smaller communities that rely on our services and resources. We are a region with administrative boundaries overlapping many traditional First Nations territories, and we are working closely with a number of these communities. Through this latest health crisis, we also recognize that there is more to do when it comes to serving our most vulnerable sectors, who have suffered the most from the ongoing civil lockdown. The renewal of Strathcona Gardens Recreation Complex has a strong focus on servicing this clientele with the goal of improving health and maintaining independence.

After managing the health crisis, we are looking ahead to ensure that we can strengthen employment in the region, maximize employment and economic growth, and establish greater strength and resiliency when facing future challenges. An infrastructure development of this type would positively contribute to sustaining and creating a significant post-lockdown economic stimulus that could commence right away.

We understand that there are significant demands and requests of our senior governments and are appreciative of the opportunities. We would ask not for reconsideration of the decision, but rather to be considered a back-up in the event that regions that were approved are not able to fulfill the requirements of the Grant, or, for our application to be considered for the Federal Stimulus Plan that you announced on January 31, 2020 seeking 'shovel ready' projects for the Federal post-shutdown stimulus plan.

The Commission welcomes further discussion with the appropriate representatives of Canada and the Province of British Columbia about our vision and how best to integrate this project into the broader stimulus package being considered for our country.

Sincerely,

Andy Adams, Chair

Strathcona Gardens Commission Chair

Strathcona Regional District Director

Mayor, City of Campbell River

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