

To: Electoral Area Services Committee

Date: 2025-03-05

From: Tarina Colledge, Manager of Emergency Management

Subject: Allied Pathways to Emergency Management, EMCR Indigenous Engagement Requirement Fund Project

Reviewed by: Graham Daneluz, Director of Planning & Development
Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services/Deputy CAO
Kelly Lownsbrough, Director of Corporate Services
Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDATION

This report is being brought forward for the Board's information and there is no staff recommendation.

BACKGROUND

In November 2023, the Province introduced the Emergency and Disaster Management Act (EDMA), replacing previous emergency management legislation. Notably, this was the first legislation in British Columbia to undergo co-development with First Nations governing bodies since the enactment of the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA).

To support the implementation of the EDMA, the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) allocated funding to First Nations governing bodies and local authorities, aligning with the Community Charter's requirement that the Province provide *Indigenous Engagement Requirements (IER) Funding* resources to support newly assigned responsibilities. As part of this initiative, the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) received a conditional grant to be utilized between March 2024 and March 2025.

DISCUSSION

With the IER funding, FVRD staff collaborated with consultants familiar with our emergency management framework—including policies, hazard reports, and emergency plan—to develop materials that align with the funding's intent and promote respectful engagement with First Nations.

Emergency Management staff discussed with the Integrated Planning & Engagement Department the development of a project that fosters cross-sector collaboration, enhances efficiencies, and reduces duplication of engagement efforts. Central to this initiative was the integration of the CEDAR Network, a tool that provides mutual benefits for both FVRD departments and First Nations within our shared landscape, and also to member municipalities.

In the initial phase, the project focused on:

- » Developing a survey to identify engagement interests of each First Nation;
- » Updating of CEDAR Network content to host contact information for emergency management personnel, EM Duty Officers, and FireSmart representatives;
- » Encouraging the use of CEDAR as a platform to collectively and respectfully centralize First Nations' emergency management priorities.

To facilitate greater understanding and dialogue, FVRD produced an information package that not only supports this project but will serve as an ongoing resource for emergency management initiatives (attached). Additionally, an introductory video on emergency management was created, providing a lasting public-facing tool for education and engagement (publication post March Board).

Two workshops were held in partnership with Spuzzum First Nation and Sts'Ailes First Nation, who graciously welcomed participants in their communities. We extend our sincere appreciation to these First Nations for their hospitality and support in fostering meaningful discussions. Attendees included emergency program managers from FVRD member municipalities, co-located First Nations, adjacent **regional districts, Métis Nation BC, and representatives from EMCR's Indigenous Emergency Readiness (IER) team, and both FVRD emergency management and integrated planning teams.**

The workshops provided valuable insights into community-specific challenges and engagement approaches. While not all First Nations within the region were able to participate, FVRD remains committed to expanding outreach efforts and exploring additional opportunities for collaboration. Staff will continue to engage with interested First Nations and refine our approach to align emergency management planning with Indigenous priorities and perspectives.

FVRD has submitted a mid-term progress report to EMCR and expressed interest in securing second-year funding. Looking ahead, we plan to build upon our learnings by developing an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Guide. This resource will:

- » **Enhance awareness of First Nations' shared interests in emergency management;**
- » Clarify the application of new State of Local Emergency (SOLE) powers, including engagement requirements;
- » Support the development of EOC training and exercises that integrate both the guide and the CEDAR Network.

COST

The Indigenous Engagement Requirements Fund project was fully covered by a provincial conditional grant of \$65,000. This funding supported contract costs, materials development, co-facilitation, travel, accommodations, First Nations community facility rentals & catering, and a small token of appreciation for participants.

While second-year funding is anticipated to match the initial allocation, confirmation from the Province is pending.

CONCLUSION

The funding was essential in being able to develop the initial approach to this work and staff feel confident that we can carry forward with repeating this workshop confidently and tailoring it as needed to future engagements, whether with First Nations or non-First Nations. We are eager to get working on initiatives with year 2 funding once it has been received.