



AGENDA ITEM

Eckville Fundraising Society – Eckville Elementary School Playground Redevelopment Project – Policy RC(1) Application

August 8, 2019

BACKGROUND

Attached is a funding request from the Eckville Fundraising Society under the County's RC(1) Policy. The request is in support of a presentation the Society made to County Council at its July 11, 2019 regular meeting.

The project aims to raise funds for the construction of a new playground that would replace the existing playground at Eckville Elementary School. That playground is now 15 years old and no longer meets Canadian Standards Association standard for playgrounds (CAN/CSA-Z614-14). The new apparatuses would be built on Wolf Creek Public Schools' property at the Eckville Elementary School. Wolf Creek would be responsible for ongoing maintenance costs for the playground. The playground will have accessible components such as an accessible surface and some play structures. The goal of the Society is to serve as many children as possible in the community with the proposed development.

The total cost of the project has been identified at \$410,710. The Society has developed a comprehensive plan for the project and has developed a fundraising budget to meet this goal. Donations to date total \$62,000 of the total. A further \$50,000 has been committed by the Town of Eckville. The group hopes to raise a further \$248,616 in federal and provincial grants. In addition to these amounts, the Society is seeking \$50,000 from the County.

A copy of the RC(1) application is attached along with the project profile.

Administration is supportive of providing support to the project.

ANALYSIS

Lacombe County Policy RC(1) – "County Capital Support of Approved Recreational/Cultural Facilities" addresses the issue of capital funding for recreation facilities. This policy provides for Lacombe County support for the construction, renovation or addition (structural or equipment) of approved major recreational facilities within the boundaries of the County (including the towns and villages). Approved facilities include: covered arenas, swimming pools,



curling rinks, public libraries, community halls and other recreational/cultural facilities.

Under County policy RC(1), the criteria for the evaluating these requests are:

1. *If facility is owned or operated by an organization other than a municipality, that organization must contribute a minimum of 15% of the project cost cash funds, through fundraising activities, donations and grants.*

The new playground will be located on school property and ongoing maintenance will be the responsibility of Wolf Creek Public Schools. The Society has identified \$62,094 in donations to date (15.1% of total) and are seeking a further \$248,616 in grants (60.5% of total).

Based on these amounts, condition 1 has been met.

2. *The urban municipality in which the facility is located in must contribute to the project in an amount reflective of its resident's use of the facility.*

The Town of Eckville has committed \$50,000 towards the project.

Condition 2 has been met

3. *County support may be provided, with County resident use of the facility and projected growth of the County and the urban municipality(s) being used to establish the level of support, up to a maximum of 50% of the total project cost.*

Projected usage of the facility is difficult to estimate as playgrounds and outdoor facilities involve non-team and non-organized activities. School students will be a major source of users for the project and that will include County residents.

Typically, the County has provided matching funding equivalent to the funding provided by the urban municipality for such projects where usership is difficult to measure.

The County has seen a number of similar requests in the last six months. In late 2018, the County supported a playground and field upgrades at the Bentley School, and in July of this year the County supported the Town of Blackfalds Inclusive Playground project. In both cases, the County provided \$50,000 in financial support toward the project.

Prior to these projects, the County supported a number of outdoor facilities including:



- Alix playground in 2011 (\$45,000 in County funding);
- Lacombe accessible playground in 2011 (\$25,000 in County funding); and
- Lacombe outdoor basketball court in 2017 (\$45,200 in-kind support).

Administration supports a contribution of \$50,000 toward the project. This amount matches funding from the Town, as well as it is comparable to similar projects funded by the County in previous years.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the requested amount of \$50,000 with funding from the Recreation Capital Assistance Reserve
2. Deny the request.
3. Council provide an alternative level of support.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

This request is not currently in the 2019 County operating budget. Should Council support this request, funding would be supported from the County's Recreation Capital Assistance Reserve.

The projected balance of the reserve account based on projects already approved in 2019 is 3,441,966.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Lacombe County Policy RC(1) - Capital Support of Recreation and Cultural Facilities.
2. Section 3 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) states the purposes of a municipality are: 1) to provide good government, 2) to provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality, and 3) to develop and maintain safe and viable communities.
3. Section 180(1) of the MGA states that Council may act only by resolution or bylaw.

4. Section 248(1)(a) of the MGA states that a municipality may only make an expenditure that is included in an operating budget, interim operating budget or capital budget unless otherwise authorized by Council.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The following elements of the County's Strategic Plan are relevant to this issue:

Our Vision: "An attractive, balanced and progressive community".

Our Mission: "To build a safe and vibrant community through leadership, innovation and the development of healthy relationships".

Key Principles: 1) "Fair and Objective in our decisions and in how we treat individuals", and 2) "Accountability for our decisions and for our actions".

Recreation Strategy: A. Pursue more recreational opportunities

Key Success Measures:

- Sustainability: "Current services are maintainable and provide benefits for the future, while minimizing negative impacts on the community",
- Stakeholder Satisfaction: "Healthy relationships with neighbouring municipalities, communities and our citizens."

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the following resolution:

That Lacombe County Council contribute \$50,000 toward the cost of the installation of playground equipment at Eckville Elementary School, and

Furthermore, that this contribution be funded from the County's Recreation Capital Assistance Reserve.

PREPARED BY: Michael Minchin, Director of Corporate Services



REVIEWED BY: Tim Timmons, County Manager

