

Request for Decision

Title	Letter of Support for Village of Vilna Alberta Community Partnership Grant Application - North Saskatchewan River Canadian Heritage Rivers System Designation
Proposed Motion	That Council authorize the Mayor to provide a letter of support to Municipal Affairs for the Village of Vilna's Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) grant application, in support of a Canadian Heritage Rivers System designation for the North Saskatchewan River.
Administrative Recommendation	That the Mayor send a letter of support to the Government of Alberta regarding the Village of Vilna's ACP grant application, without acting in an official capacity as an ACP grant managing partner (should the ACP grant be awarded to the Village).
Previous Council / Committee Direction	<p><u>January 25, 2022 Regular Council Meeting</u> Motion 026/22: That Council refer Smoky Lake County's presentation regarding the North Saskatchewan River Canadian Heritage Rivers System Designation to Administration to provide a recommendation on partnering with Smoky Lake County on an Alberta Community Partnership grant related to promoting activities associated with the North Saskatchewan River.</p> <p><u>January 26, 2021 Regular Council Meeting:</u> Motion 045/21: That Council direct the Mayor to send a letter to Smoky Lake County in support of a Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) designation for a portion of the North Saskatchewan River.</p>
Report	<p><u>Background Information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In October 2019, the Smoky Lake County Council Regional Heritage Board initiated a project to potentially designate a portion of the North Saskatchewan River under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Canadian Rivers Heritage System informs, inspires, and encourages Canadians to connect with Canada's river heritage and share in its safe keeping. Achieving Canadian Heritage Status for the North Saskatchewan River is a symbolic designation with no associated statutory elements or considerations for the County.

- The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) had undertaken initial scoping with regards to heritage but did not pursue this designation.
- The NSWA has specific priorities and a workplan (endorsed by Alliance members) that does not include working towards this designation or undertaking work to complete the required management and monitoring plans if the status is granted.
- Sturgeon County Council received a presentation on this topic in January 2021. Council supported the initiative, but with no commitment to financial aid or human resources. Council passed a motion to send a letter of support to Smoky Lake County for the designation project.
- On January 25, 2022, representatives from Smoky Lake County presented to Council and requested a letter of support to the Government of Alberta for a grant application made under the Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) program. The grant application requests \$200,000 to conduct a river study and management plan for the North Saskatchewan River in support of the North Saskatchewan River Canadian Heritage System Designation.
- The Village of Vilna has volunteered to lead the ACP grant application process, in conjunction with Smoky Lake County (who is identified as a managing partner for the grant).
 - The Government of Alberta's ACP Grant program is in place to improve the viability and long-term sustainability of municipalities. Each year, a municipality may submit up to 1 (one) ACP grant application (however, a municipality may add their name to applicants as "managing partners" more than once per year).
 - As part of the selection process for the ACP grant program, the Government of Alberta considers how many active ACP grants communities have in place.
 - Sturgeon County has two active ACP grants under the Intermunicipal Collaboration category at this time – Sturgeon County and City of St. Albert Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) and the Transportation Network Infrastructure Study (TNIS).
- Administration recommends that Council direct the Mayor to send a letter of support to the Government of Alberta regarding the Village of Vilna's ACP grant application, without acting in an official capacity as an ACP grant managing partner. This recognizes Council's support of the initiative without committing the administrative resources that Sturgeon County be expected to contribute as a managing partner.

External Communication

Council's decision would be communicated to the grant proponents, and other interested parties, in addition to the submission of a support letter.

Relevant Policy/Legislation/Practices:

Government of Alberta Program: Alberta Community Partnership Program – *Intermunicipal Collaboration* - the government provides funding to

	<p>partnerships of two or more municipalities to develop regional plans, service delivery frameworks and regional service delivery efficiencies.</p>
<p>Implication of Administrative Recommendation</p>	<p><u>Strategic Alignment:</u></p> <p>Thriving Communities - The Village of Vilna and Smoky Lake County's efforts to include the North Saskatchewan River as a part of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System promotes economic and tourism opportunities, as well as cultural preservation.</p> <p>Collaborative Governance – Showing support for Smoky Lake County and the Village of Vilna in their efforts to secure an ACP grant application demonstrates good intergovernmental practices with regional neighbours.</p> <p>Environmental Stewardship – If the Village of Vilna's ACP grant application is approved, funding will be used to conduct a study and management plan for the North Saskatchewan River. This research will contribute towards improving local river health.</p> <p><u>Organizational:</u></p> <p>Organizational capacity exists to draft and distribute the proposed support letter.</p> <p><u>Financial:</u></p> <p>None.</p>
<p>Alternatives Considered</p>	<p>Council could choose to support the Village of Vilna's ACP grant application as a managing partner.</p>
<p>Implications of Alternatives</p>	<p><u>Strategic Alignment:</u></p> <p>Thriving Communities – The North Saskatchewan River is important to the region. A Canadian Heritage Rivers System designation could serve to further illustrate Sturgeon County as a beautiful, surprising place to live. Actively participating in Smoky Lake and Village of Vilna's project may help to emphasize the importance the County places on maintaining its natural river systems.</p> <p><u>Organizational:</u></p> <p>Administration's 2022 Work Planning does not currently consider more active participation on this project. Administration would need to reprioritize work to accommodate the capacity required.</p> <p><u>Financial:</u></p> <p>Should Sturgeon County participate as a managing partner on the ACP grant application, there would be onus on the County to maintain an active understanding on allocation of any funds awarded under the grant.</p> <p>It is unknown at this time if participation in this project would lead to future funding requests to leverage work completed under the ACP grant funding (should it be awarded).</p>

Follow up Action	Send a letter of support to the Government of Alberta for the Village of Vilna's ACP grant application to complete activities related to the North Saskatchewan River (Corporate Planning and Intergovernmental Services / CAO's Office, February 2022).
Attachment(s)	Attachment 1: Draft Letter of Support – Village of Vilna's ACP Grant Application
Report Reviewed by:	Jennifer Lavallee, Manager, Corporate Planning and Intergovernmental Services Travis Peter, Director, Development and Strategic Services Reegan McCullough, County Commissioner – CAO

Strategic Alignment Checklist

Vision: *Offering a rich tapestry of historical, cultural, and natural experiences, Sturgeon County is a municipality that honours its rural roots and cultivates desirable communities. Uniquely situated to provide world-class agricultural, energy, and business investment opportunities, the County prioritizes responsible stewardship and dreaming big.*

Guiding Principles: Collaboration | Accountability | Flexibility | Excellence | Safety | Future Readiness | Affordability | Innovation

Community Outcome	Not consistent	Consistent	N/A
Planned Growth			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internationally competitive to attract, grow and sustain diverse businesses; tenacious focus on new growth and innovation 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern broadband and digital capabilities 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low cost, minimal red-tape regulations 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable and effective infrastructure planning; comprehensive land use and infrastructure planning 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Thriving Communities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beautiful, surprising places with high standards; integrated natural spaces & trail systems; healthy and resilient 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging cultural, historical, and civic amenities; strong community identity and pride 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe, welcoming, and diverse communities; small community feel and personal connection; commitment to high quality of life 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Stewardship			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean air, land, and water; Carbon neutral municipal practices; circular economy opportunities 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation of natural areas and agricultural lands; enhanced greening and biodiversity; safekeeping ecosystems 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable development; partnerships with industry and others to drive emission reductions 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative Governance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predictable and stable external relationships; volunteer partnerships 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful connections with Indigenous communities 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing community consultation and engagement; transparent and action-oriented decision making based on sound rationale 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful and informed debate; clear and supportive governance processes 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Operational Excellence			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged and effective people – Council, Admin and Volunteers; continuous learning and improvement mindset; nimble and bold, with strong leadership 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality cost-effective service delivery; robust procurement and operational practices and policies; asset management and performance measurement; careful debt and reserve stewardship; long-term financial planning and sustainability 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future focused thinking to proactively respond to emerging opportunities and challenges 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative revenue generation and service delivery models integrated strategic and business planning 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>