

District of Barriere

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Request for Decision

Date: August 27, 2025	File: 530.20/Rpts
To: Council	From: Chief Administrative Officer Public Works Manager
Re: Strategic Priorities Fund – Capacity Stream	
<p>Recommendation: THAT Council instructs Staff to apply to the Strategic Priorities Fund – Capacity Building Stream in the amount of \$265,000 to undertake the following strategic priorities and goals of Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wastewater Master Plan Update2. Completion of Water Master Plan3. Asset Management Integration and Financial Planning <p>AND THAT Council instructs Staff to provide overall grant management for the project; AND FURTHER THAT Council will support any reasonable cost overruns if those should occur.</p>	

Purpose

For Council to consider providing direction to staff to apply to the Strategic Priorities Fund – Capacity Building Stream to support Council’s strategic goals.

Background

On June 23, 2025, Council discussed the Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) program and possible projects for Staff to focus on when considering the different funding streams. Council provided the following resolution at that meeting:

THAT Council instructs Staff to pursue Capital Option “3 – Fire Service” for the Strategic Priorities Fund application and prepare the necessary cost estimates to be funded from operating funds or surplus.

AND FURTHER THAT Council instructs Staff to pursue a wastewater and/or water utility infrastructure development plan under the Capacity Building stream.

For clarity, this report focuses on the Capacity Building funding stream application only. A separate report will be provided to Council for the Capital funding stream application.

The District has been successful in past years with applications to the SPF in particular regarding extending water and wastewater utility services.

The SPF is an application-based funding program, which pools a portion of the annual Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF) for strategic investments that are considered large in scale, regional in impact, or innovative and support the CCBF national objectives of productivity and economic growth, a clean environment, and strong cities and communities.

This intake of the SPF program will see an investment of up to \$125 million to support infrastructure (\$119 million) and capacity building (\$6 million) projects in communities across the province.

The 2025 SPF program guidelines (see attached) include the following options for the 2025 edition of the Capacity Building stream:

Asset Management, Long-Term Infrastructure Planning, and Integrated Community Sustainability Planning that support the national objectives and are large, regional in impact or innovative.

Municipalities are limited to one (1) capital infrastructure application and one (1) capacity building application for a total of two (2) SPF applications.

The fund would cover up to 100% of net eligible costs of approved projects up to a maximum federal Canada Community-Building Fund contribution of \$7 million.

The application deadline is September 12, 2025, and a Council resolution is required to be submitted alongside each of the applications.

If successful, the project must start within 2 years of approval and must be completed within 5 years of approval.

Capacity Building – Strategic Priorities

Staff discussed the Capacity Building stream with our engineer of record TRUE Consulting. Together we analyzed opportunities to address Council's Strategic Plan Priorities and Goals (highlighted in the Strategic Impact section of this report) while equally building upon some of the past projects that were undertaken.

The following list of Tasks were determined by our joint team to meet Council's Strategic Goals:

Task 1 – Wastewater Master Plan Update

- Review and update the 2009 Community Sewer System Preliminary Feasibility Study (Urban Systems), incorporating system changes, new development patterns, and infrastructure improvements over the past 15 years.
- Assess the technical, regulatory, and financial feasibility of connecting additional service areas (Clusters A, B, and other un-serviced areas) to the Cluster C Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Scope a potential outfall to the river, including feasibility, preliminary regulatory considerations, and construction cost estimate.
- Evaluate collection system capacity, required lift stations, force mains, and potential phasing of service area expansion.
- Develop conceptual design options, cost estimates, and a recommended implementation plan.

Task 2 – Completion of Water Master Plan

- Review the 2020 Water Master Plan (Phase 1) findings and recommendations.
- Conduct any outstanding modelling, demand forecasting, and infrastructure assessment required for a complete water master plan.
- Identify water supply, treatment, storage, and distribution improvements needed to meet current and projected demands, including fire flow and redundancy requirements.
- Provide prioritized capital projects list with order-of-magnitude costs.

Task 3 – Asset Management Integration and Financial Planning

- Develop a 20-year AMIP, including all engineered assets (water, wastewater, roads, stormwater, fleet, facilities, parks, technology) and the Fire Department.
- Develop an AMFP (Financing Policy) that links the AMIP costs to realistic funding strategies, including levels of service decisions, taxation, utility fees, reserves, and grant opportunities.
- Identify a Top 5 Multi-Utility Project List (projects with combined water, sewer, and road impacts) to guide integrated investment decisions.
- Establish required annual investment levels to meet 100% renewal, and a recommended financial policy target (e.g., 30% contribution toward full funding).
- Ensure alignment with the District's forthcoming TCA (Tangible Capital Asset) policy.

Task 4 – Stakeholder Engagement and Plan Adoption

- Facilitate workshops with Council and staff to review findings and recommendations.
 - Prepare final documents:
 - Updated Wastewater Master Plan.
 - Completed Water Master Plan.
 - Integrated Asset Management Plan with financial strategy.
 - Present final plans to Council for adoption and integration into development review processes, capital planning, and grant applications.
 - Host a public open house to provide an opportunity to discuss all the findings with the community and to provide context of the asset management challenges the community faces.
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Benefits or Impact

General

This resolution would provide Staff the direction to apply for the grant with the above listed objectives to complete some key Council Strategies and Goals. The resolution also provides for two funding program requirements by instructing staff to oversee the grant management and for the District to cover any financial shortfalls if they should occur.

Finances

100% funding would be provided through the SPF up to the approved amount if successful. Although no cost overruns are anticipated for this project, the resolution must include a component that Council will financially support any cost overruns.

Strategic Impact

Priority #1: Implement an Organizational Asset Management Program

Goal 2. Develop Asset Management Policies

The Results We Want to See:

- a. Present Asset Management Framework Policies and Plans for Council consideration, including:
 - a. Tangible Capital Assets Policy
 - b. Asset Management Policy
 - c. Asset Management Framework/Strategy
 - d. Asset Management Investment Plan (AMIP)
 - e. Asset Management Financial Investment Policy

Priority #3: Create Opportunities for Community Growth

Goal 3. Complete critical Utility Bylaw and Utility Master Plan revisions

The Results We Want to See:

- a. Present a Wastewater Bylaw for Council consideration in 2025.
- b. Present a Water Bylaw update for Council consideration in 2025.
- c. Wastewater Master plan update is started by end of 2026, funding dependent.
- d. Water Master Plan update is started by end of 2026, funding dependent.

Risk Assessment

Compliance: Strategic Priorities Fund 2025 Program Guidelines

Risk Impact: Low

Internal Control Process:

Staff will follow the necessary processes when submitting the funding application.

Next Steps / Communication

- True Consulting to complete the application at no cost to the District.
- Submit SPF Capacity Planning application before September 12, 2025.

Attachments

- Strategic Priorities Fund 2025 Program Guidelines

Recommendation

THAT Council instructs Staff to apply to the Strategic Priorities Fund – Capacity Building Stream in the amount of \$265,000 to undertake the following strategic priorities and goals of Council:

- 1. Wastewater Master Plan Update**
- 2. Completion of Water Master Plan**
- 3. Asset Management Integration and Financial Planning**

AND THAT Council instructs Staff to provide overall grant management for the project; AND FURTHER THAT Council will support any reasonable cost overruns if those should occur.

Alternative Options

1. Council could instruct Staff to not proceed with the application. Although this is an option, this would not be in alignment with Council's Strategic Plan in particular for the Asset Management and Utility Master Plan update components.

Prepared by:

D. Drexler, Chief Administrative Officer