



**Subject:** *Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund Application*  
**To:** Corporate and Residential Services Committee  
**Date Prepared:** November 6, 2023  
**Prepared by:** Amy Pyne, Manager, Real Estate & Corporate Projects  
**Approved by:** Adam Clarkson, Director, Corporate Services

### Summary

Applications for the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund opened for applications in late October, 2023. The pre-screening deadline was November 14, 2023, with full applications due November 28, 2023. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions in March/April 2024.

Based on timelines, staff proceeded with a pre-screening application for 80% grant funding for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure. Staff are requesting Council provide direction to continue with the application process.

### Financial Impact Statement

\$50,000 to be included in the draft 24/25 budget, contingent on grant funding.

### Recommendation

Staff recommend submitting an application to the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund to fund electric vehicle charging infrastructure with a municipal contribution of \$50,000 contingent on a successful funding application.

### Recommended Motion

*Move that the Corporate and Residential Services Committee recommend that Council direct the CAO to submit an application to the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund to fund electric vehicle charging infrastructure, with a municipal contribution of \$50,000 to be included in the draft 24/25 budget contingent on a successful grant funding.*

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## Background

The Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund (the “Fund”) is a provincial grant program supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation projects with the goal of helping communities lead their climate action.

The Fund is developed and administered by the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) on behalf of the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change. The Fund will provide non-repayable grants between \$75,000 and \$1,000,000 per project that range from 60%-80% of eligible project costs; for example, projects of up to \$249,999 will require a contribution of at least 20% of eligible project costs.

In late October 2023, the Fund opened a call for applications. The application includes a pre-screening process, which closed on November 14, 2023. The full application is due November 28, 2023. The full application is strengthened by having evidence of support from municipal Council. Evaluation of submissions will take place over the winter months, with applicants to be notified of funding decisions in March/April 2024.

Based on timelines and past direction of Council to apply for similar funding, staff proceeded with a pre-screening application for 80% grant funding for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure.

### Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

The Federal Government has published draft regulations requiring all new passenger vehicles and light trucks sold in Canada after 2035 be electric zero-emission vehicles. These rules are to be phased in, with interim targets to be implemented around 2025 and 2030.

In 2020, Council supported an effort to partner with Nova Scotia Power and the Clean Foundation on a joint application to the Natural Resources Canada Zero-Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program’s program [C20(93)]. That funding program was focused primarily on fleet/workplace chargers; the application was ultimately unsuccessful.

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## Discussion

### Pre-Screen Application

The pre-screen process is to ensure that an organization’s proposed project fits under the Fund and to ensure basic eligibility requirements are met.

Staff submitted a pre-screen application that provided a high-level overview of intentions. Staff developed a project plan that includes engineering feasibility and strategy work, installing a mix of Level 2 and Level 3 charging stations across the three locations (including the necessary groundwork). The project description was limited to 200 words:

*The Municipality of East Hants is seeking funding to support a transition to zero emission vehicles within the community. The Municipality is interested in exploring, supporting, and monitoring the benefits of electric vehicles (EVs) to support clean energy initiatives in the community by providing access to EV chargers for corporate (light-duty), workplace (municipal staff and tenant’s staff), and public use.*

*The Municipality is interested in a pilot project to facilitate a larger fleet conversion plan to convert municipal fleet by 2035 and to support evidence based decisions on a potential electric vehicle strategy for the community of East Hants.*

*Strategically, the Municipality is considering EV infrastructure locations that span three communities: the municipality's offices (15 Commerce Court, Elmsdale) which are also home to a library, provincial public-services tenants, is a shared-campus with the East Hants Aquatic Centre, and aligns with an active transportation connection; the East Hants Sportsplex (1076 Hwy 2, Lantz) the largest recreation facility in the municipality located in a rapidly growing community off the new Hwy 102 interchange and connector; and Burntcoat Head Park (45 Faulkner Lane, Noel) our most popular tourist destination, averaging 40,000 visitors annually.*

No detailed funding was required as part of the pre-screening process, only an estimated total project cost. Staff submitted an estimated project cost of \$248,745 which would see a municipal contribution of approximately \$49,749 and a Fund contribution of \$198,996. This funding model would allow for up to ten (10) Level 2 chargers or a combination of up to five (5) Level 2 and Level 3 chargers; staff would flush out the charging infrastructure plan as part of the engineering and feasibility and strategy work.

Staff connected with other municipalities and received quotes from vendors to develop the cost estimate. The project budget and work plan would be built-out as part of the full application.

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## **Alternatives**

Council may direct staff to cancel the application for EV Charging Infrastructure under the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund.