

SUMAS MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT STUDY

Responses to items raised at the July 31, 2012 Community Meeting

Responses to comments received at the Community Meeting are organized by topic below. Comments unrelated to the Sumas Mountain Environmental Management Study (SMEMS) are not included below but will be discussed in more detail at the Sumas Mountain Town Hall session on October 24, 2012.

Study Procurement

Cost and funding

In May 2010, Council directed staff to apply for a grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to undertake an 'Integrated Community Sustainability Planning' (ICSP) initiative. This ICSP involves projects as follows:

- Community Sustainability Strategy;
- Green Energy Plan;
- Sumas Mountain Environmental Management Study; and
- Green Economic Investment Study

In December 2010, the City received a \$168,000 conditional grant from FCM to undertake the ICSP initiative. The City contributed \$73,000 to this project, and funding was also contributed from: BC Hydro (\$60,000) and Community Futures South Fraser (\$500). In-kind support is also being provided by the Fraser Valley Conservancy (\$15,000), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (\$7,500), Fortis BC (\$4,000), and Community Futures South Fraser (\$1,000), through providing data and subject matter expertise as needed.

The total budget for the project (excluding in-kind support) was \$311,500. The SMEMS portion of the ICSP budget is \$56,000 (~18%), which represents ~\$13,000 of the \$73,000 City-contributed funds.

Tendering process

The project was tendered using a standard Request for Proposal process. In June 2011, the City posted a Request for Proposals (RFP) on the BC Bid web page to retain a consultant to complete the ICSP initiative. The RFP outlined four deliverables for the project as follows: Community Sustainability Strategy, Green Energy Plan, Green Community Plan (SMEMS), and Green Economic Investment Plan. The RFP was posted from June 30 to July 28, 2011. An information meeting for potential bidders was held at Abbotsford City Hall on July 11, 2011. The City received six proposals for the ICSP initiative. The City compared and evaluated the proposals based on the following criteria: (1) experience, reputation and resources, (2) technical, and (3) financial. Each of the criterion accounted for one-third of the proposal evaluation score. After review of the proposals, Stantec Consulting was selected to complete the ICSP initiative at a cost of \$311,427.

Study Approach

'Study' vs 'plan'

The project was originally called the 'Sumas Mountain Environmental Management Plan'. However, the word 'plan' did not accurately describe what the project is about. A 'plan' conveys the idea that a land use plan is being developed, which is not the intent of the project. Instead, it is a 'study' to assess existing environmental resources and how they can be connected to one another, and to explore potential habitat management strategies.

Study area

The study focused on the portion of the mountain that is located within the City of Abbotsford. 30% of the mountain (northeast portion) is located outside of the City boundary within the FVRD (Area G), and was therefore not included. However, Area G contains the eastern flank of the Sumas Mountain Interregional Park. The Park is considered to be one of the large primary core areas on the mountain and the study explores possible ways of connecting this portion of the Park to the western flank of the Park, which is located within the City of Abbotsford.

Data source

The data used in the study was collected from 2005 to 2010. Detailed information relating to the data can be found in the Summary Document and on the SMEMS web page (www.abbotsford.ca/smems).

Consultation

Process

In February 2012, the project team engaged City staff, select stakeholders, and City Committees to gather and develop information (e.g. data maps, preliminary computer modelling results, draft management objectives) for facilitating a dialogue with the community, including Sumas Mountain landowners, in September 2012. The project team wanted to present Sumas Mountain landowners the information in a manner that was well thought out in order to promote meaningful dialogue. This process required input from a broad group of key stakeholders and technical experts over several months, including:

- Committees of Council (Area H Advisory Committee, City Industry Development Advisory Committee, Environmental Advisory Committee, Parks Recreation and Culture Committee);
- Council (working sessions and the Community Sustainability Steering Committee);
- Education institutions (University of the Fraser Valley);
- Government agencies (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Fraser Valley Regional District, Metro Vancouver Regional District Parks, Ministry of Environment, and Ministry of Forest, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations, Tourism Abbotsford);
- Industry (aggregate producers, Kinder Morgan, and woodlot licensees);
- Local non-governmental organizations (Abbotsford Mission Nature Club, Abbotsford Soil Conservation Association, Bear Aware Network Fraser Valley, Community Futures South Fraser, Fraser Basin Council, Fraser Valley Conservancy, Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition); and

- Recreational users (Abbotsford Fish and Game Club, Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association, Trails BC).



Stakeholders involved

Stakeholders include individuals/companies that own land on the mountain as well as those that have a connection to the mountain. Known stakeholders include the following:

- Landowners and residents
- Government
 - Federal:
 - Fisheries and Oceans Canada
 - Department of National Defence
 - Environment Canada
 - Provincial:
 - Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations
 - Ministry of Environment
 - Ministry of Energy and Mines
 - Metro Vancouver Regional District
 - Fraser Valley Regional District
 - City of Abbotsford
 - Committees of Council
 - Staff from planning, parks, engineering, tourism, sustainability, etc.
- First Nations
 - Matsqui First Nation
 - Sumas First Nation
 - Stó:lō Nation
 - Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre
- Industry
 - Development industry

- Forestry
 - Sumas First Nation
 - Woodlot No.0045
- Kinder Morgan
- Mining
- Tourism
 - Heritage Valley Resort
 - The Lodge at Twin Creeks
- Institutions
 - School District #34
 - University of the Fraser Valley
- Non-governmental organizations
 - Abbotsford Mission Nature Club
 - Abbotsford Soil Conservation Association
 - BC Teen Challenge
 - Bear Aware Network Fraser Valley
 - Fraser Basin Council
 - Fraser Valley Conservancy
 - Fraser Valley Watershed Coalition
 - Girl Guides of Canada
 - Greater Vancouver Youth for Christ
 - Scouts (Camp Poignant)
- Recreation
 - Hikers, cyclists, horseback riders, bird and wildlife watchers, etc.
 - Abbotsford Fish and Game Club
 - Backcountry Horsemen of BC
 - Fraser Valley Mountain Biking Association
 - Hole in the Wall Recreation
 - Horse Council of BC
 - Ridgedale Rod & Gun Club
 - Trails BC

First Nations

The City sent letters to Sumas First Nation and Matsqui First Nation in April 2012, however neither band has responded to date. The City has spoken with staff from the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre and they offered to assist the City in consulting more meaningfully with Sumas First Nation. In addition, the Area H Advisory Committee (a Committee of Council established to assist with the transition of Area H into City jurisdiction) has a Sumas First Nation representative.

There will be additional consultation with local First Nations in association with the upcoming Official Community Plan review.

Development & Planning

Land development

Land development is when a property is rezoned and/or subdivided and may also include a Building Permit application. As part of these processes, bylaws and/or policies adopted by Council are implemented where applicable. These may include the Official Community Plan, Zoning Bylaw and the Development (servicing) Bylaw.

Servicing and the Urban Development Boundary

The water and sewer master plans (i.e. the ~20 year plan) do not include any plans for expansion of these services beyond the Urban Development Boundary.

Property Rights

Study implementation

Implementation of the SMEMS only happens when it (or portions of it) is adopted by Council as a Bylaw or Policy, such as the Official Community Plan (OCP). The OCP is a document adopted by Council that contains a vision, objectives and policies to guide future growth and change. The OCP is intended to guide development by setting out the location, type, and density of all land uses, such as residential, commercial, industrial and institutional. An OCP may also include policies relating to services, transportation, environment, social planning, etc. Therefore, if a property owner wants to develop their property for a use or density not permitted within the existing zone, they must apply to rezone their property. A property owner has the right to apply to have their property rezoned at any time. Rezoning is when Council approves a request to allow a different use or density of the property. When Council reviews the rezoning proposal, they review it in the context of the OCP.

A property owner is entitled to the provisions of existing zoning and is not required or obligated to rezone their property, even when the OCP envisions a different type of use.

Greenspace preservation and property value

The discussion of additional greenspace preservation takes place when an OCP is created or updated. As part of this process, a visioning exercise is completed with the community to ensure the vision of the OCP reflects the community's vision. From this vision, all aspects of an OCP are reviewed, such as land use, servicing and environmental management. These items are interconnected and must correlate to achieve the overall vision. As such, property values may be affected by the overall vision, goals and objectives of the OCP.

Species at risk

Management of wildlife/species at risk (and their habitats) in Canada is under the jurisdiction of the federal and provincial governments. While the City does not have direct jurisdiction for wildlife/species at risk, the City has an interest in ensuring development and other activities are consistent with senior government legislation and best management practices (BMPs). When a property owner wants to develop their land, the City ensures they have satisfactorily addressed wildlife/species at risk issues in compliance with senior government legislation. This applies to all

development regardless of its location in the City. For further information on species at risk, please refer to the Summary Document.

Sensitive Habitat

Definition

Sensitive habitat is a phrase used to measure/categorize habitat. In very general terms, there are three categories for measuring habitat – high, moderate and low.

Please refer to the SMEMS Summary Document for more information on the sensitive habitat categories. Detailed information SMEMS web page (www.abbotsford.ca/smems) for a link to the Sumas Mountain Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory Mapping report, which provides more detailed information about the sensitive habitat categories.

Sensitive area protection

Sensitive areas are protected when land development occurs and several options for protection exist. Some sensitive areas, such as streams, are typically protected with fencing and signage. They can also be protected with a restrictive covenant, which is a legal document registered on a property title that describes the protection/management provisions. Below is a sample of fencing and signage used for streamside protection.

