

# **CITY OF WHITEHORSE – STANDING COMMITTEES**

Monday, November 16, 2020 – 5:30 p.m.

Council Chambers, City Hall

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## **CALL TO ORDER**

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

## **PROCLAMATIONS**

## **DELEGATE SUBMISSIONS**

### **CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

1. Borrowing of Funds – For Information Only
2. Budget Amendment & Contract Award – Waste Heat Recovery Upgrade (CGC)
3. New Business

### **CITY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

1. New Business

### **CITY OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

1. Local Content Weighting – 139 Tlingit Street
2. New Business

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

1. New Business

### **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

1. Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
2. New Business

### **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE**

1. Environmental Grant Allocations
2. New Business



**CITY OF WHITEHORSE**  
**CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall**



**Chair:** Stephen Roddick

**Vice-Chair:** Jocelyn Curteanu

November 16, 2020

Meeting #2020-24

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1. Borrowing of Funds – For Information Only  
Presented by Acting Manager Brittany Dixon
2. Budget Amendment & Contract Award – Waste Recovery Upgrade (CGC)  
Presented by Environmental Coordinator 2 Cody Reaume
3. New Business



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

<b>TO:</b> Corporate Services Committee
<b>FROM:</b> Administration
<b>DATE:</b> November 16, 2020
<b>RE:</b> Borrowing of Funds – For Information Only

### ISSUE

Borrowing funds for the Whitehorse Operations Building and other debt repayment

### REFERENCE

Bylaw 2017-25  
Bylaw 2009-14

### HISTORY

The Operations Building is the first and largest component of the City's Building Consolidation Project. Initial work on the project was first approved by Council in 2014 which allowed for preliminary planning activities which continued through 2015 and 2016 as a location for the Operations Building was secured and initial site work began. Site preparation and construction commenced in 2017 and substantial completion was reached on July 16, 2020. The City passed Bylaw 2017-35 authorizing borrowing of funds for the Operations Building in an amount not to exceed \$18.8M over a 20-year amortization period at a rate not to exceed 2.653%.

### ANALYSIS

The City is ready to enter into a borrowing agreement to finance a portion of the construction costs. Based on updated cost projections, reserves levels, and borrowing costs, Administration has updated the preliminary financing plan for the Building Consolidation Project. The revised budget of \$54.6M for the Operations Building component will be funded via three means, Gas Tax, reserves funding and borrowing.

GAS TAX	\$23,849,574
Reserves	\$20,765,735
Borrowing	\$10,000,000
Total	<b>\$54,615,309</b>

### **Gas Tax**

In 2015 the City received approval for five separate Gas Tax applications totalling \$15.2M. Since 2015 additional applications have been submitted and the total approved Gas Tax applications has increased to \$23.8M due which is largely attributed to the transit expansion component of the project.

### Reserves Funding

Reserves will fund a higher contribution than originally anticipated, for a revised maximum of \$20.7M. The 2019 statements recorded that total reserves made up \$45.8M of the City’s total accumulated surplus of \$502M.

The total reserves balance at the end of 2020, allowing for all projects currently included in the 2020 – 2023 Revised Capital Budget and the Whitehorse Operations Building Contribution, is projected to be \$35.2M. This is close to the 2016 level and approximately \$20M higher than the 2010 reserves level considered a “worst case scenario” level. Increased funding from reserves is possible due to:

- project delays which have delayed anticipated draws upon reserves;
- intentional reduction of spending from reserves (\$10M- \$8M annually) for other capital projects; and
- increased transfers to reserves, based on reserve funding formulas, resulting from revenue increases such as a higher comprehensive municipal grant and tax base growth.

### Borrowing

The original project contemplated borrowing of \$18.8M at an annual estimated debt servicing cost of \$1.5M. The annual cost was deemed to be manageable through an allocation from reserves. Through reduced spending measures, combined with project clarification and additional external funding commitments, borrowing has been reduced to \$10M, with an anticipated annual debt servicing cost not to exceed \$0.7M.

Assuming the entire \$10,000,000 is borrowed and utilizing the 1.825% indicator rate, amortized annually, with blended monthly payments, the amount paid annually is \$601,000. The 20-year loan, subject to renewal every 5 years, is proposed to initially entail the following total principal and interest:

Interest	\$1,633,885
Principal	\$10,000,000
Total	\$11,633,885

Subject to finalization, terms include the ability to pay off the loan at any time. Administration anticipates the final agreement will be in place in the next 30 days.

### Other Debt Repayment

Administration is working with our lenders on the Public Safety Building loan and are expecting to begin aggressive payments on the principal of this higher interest debt. The City can make 10% payments on the principal balance once per calendar year, and the benefit of doing so would reduce the remaining interest payable by nearly half. To take full advantage of this option, the first payment of \$439K will be scheduled to occur by December 31, 2020. Administration will be bringing the original borrowing bylaw for the Public Safety Building forward for amendment in the near future.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

<b>TO:</b> Corporate Services Committee
<b>FROM:</b> Administration
<b>DATE:</b> November 16 2020
<b>RE:</b> Budget Amendment & Contract Award – Waste Heat Recovery Upgrades Canada Games Centre

### **ISSUE**

Budget amendment and contract award for Request for Tender for 2020 Canada Games Centre (CGC) Waste Heat Recovery Upgrade

### **REFERENCE**

Request for Tender (RFT) 2020-074, “2020 CGC Waste Heat Recovery Upgrade”  
Purchasing and Sales Policy  
2020-2023 Capital Expenditure Plan, project number 320c00910.  
2020-2022 Operating Budget

### **HISTORY**

Design for the 2020 CGC Waste Heat Recovery Upgrade was completed in August 2020. This upgrade will allow waste heat from the ice rink refrigeration system to be delivered to two additional areas in the CGC, reducing energy costs, heating oil consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions. Energy and cost savings estimates from the design consultant are as follows:

- Heating fuel savings: 95,000 Litres per year.
- Net energy cost savings: \$85,000 per year.
- Greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction: 252 Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e per year (3.6% of 2019 corporate GHG emissions).

During the design phase, the City received a construction cost estimate from the design consultant indicating that project construction would cost significantly more than originally budgeted. Fortunately, higher-than-expected cost savings and GHG reductions indicated that the project was still viable with an improved payback period. Administration applied for an amendment to the Gas Tax project proposal and was approved.

The RFT to complete construction was released on October 1, 2020 and closed on November 6, 2020. The RFT was advertised on the City’s website and in local newspapers. The RFT documents were made available via the City’s e-procurement platform [www.whitehorse.bonfirehub.ca](http://www.whitehorse.bonfirehub.ca).

The City received three compliant bids from the following businesses:

- Budget Plumbing & Heating Inc.
- Duncan’s Ltd.
- Wildstone Construction & Engineering Ltd.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Amend the capital budget and authorize Administration to award the contract as recommended.
2. Refer the proposed award back to Administration for further analysis.

## **ANALYSIS**

The review of the bids by an internal review committee, which comprised personnel from Operations and Financial Services, included checking for completeness, mathematical errors, and proper tender security.

The review committee agreed that the low bidder is familiar with the scope of work and has the knowledge and experience to complete the work successfully, and the prices submitted are reasonable.

The low bidder was Budget Plumbing & Heating Inc., with a bid of \$494,333.00 not including GST

The overall budget includes design expenses, construction, construction administration, City staff time, and contingency.

	<b>Original</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Change</b>
Overall Project Budget	\$455,000	\$655,000	+\$200,000
Anticipated Annual Savings	\$45,000	\$85,000	+\$40,000
Anticipated Payback Period	10.1 years	7.7 years	-2.4 years

This project provides a good financial payback of 7.7 years, as well as a significant GHG reduction of approximately 3.6% of the City's annual corporate GHG emissions.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the 2020 to 2023 Capital Expenditure Plan be amended by increasing the 2020 budget for project number 320c00910 in the amount of \$200,000, funded by Gas Tax to cover the additional costs; and

THAT the 2021 and 2022 Provisional Operating Budgets be decreased by \$42,500 and \$85,000 respectively, to reflect the anticipated energy savings; and

THAT Council authorize Administration to award the contract for the 2020 CGC Waste Heat Recovery Upgrade to Budget Plumbing & Heating Inc. for a net cost to the City of \$494,333.00 plus GST.

**CITY OF WHITEHORSE**  
**CITY PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall**



**Chair:** Samson Hartland

**Vice-Chair:** Laura Cabott

November 16, 2020

Meeting #2020-24

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1. New Business



**CITY OF WHITEHORSE**  
**CITY OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall**



**Chair:** Laura Cabott

**Vice-Chair:** Samson Hartland

November 16, 2020

Meeting #2020-24

- 
1. Local Content Weighting – 139 Tlingit Street  
Presented by Manager Richard Graham
  2. New Business



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

<b>TO:</b> Operations Committee
<b>FROM:</b> Administration
<b>DATE:</b> November 16, 2020
<b>RE:</b> Local Content Weighting – 139 Tlingit Street

### ISSUE

Local content weighting for request for proposals (RFP) for Design and Construction Administration Services for 139 Tlingit Street.

### REFERENCE

Consulting Services Selection Procedures Policy  
Council Resolution 2020-15-08 as amended by 2020-15-09

### HISTORY

On June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Council adopted the following resolutions related to the Consulting Services Selection Procedures Policy:

1. The weight allocation for the evaluation criteria for local content on requests for proposals under this policy shall be set by council on a case by case basis and shall range from zero to 20 points; and
2. This direction shall remain in place until March 31, 2021 or until such earlier time as determined by resolution of Council.

Administration is preparing to release a request for proposals (RFP) to which the Consulting Services Selection Policy applies. The RFP is for the design and construction administration services for energy upgrades, biomass heating, and renovations to 139 Tlingit Street.

The City intends to renovate and install a biomass heating system at the old Transit Building, 139 Tlingit Street, which will become the new location for the Parks and Community Development department. Renovations will include substantial energy upgrades, interior renovations to better suit the new occupants, and the installation of a biomass heating system.

The procurement process for the design of the building is scheduled to begin in the 2021 calendar year. The RFP for this work will be released by December of 2020.

### ALTERNATIVES

1. Authorize Administration to set the weighting for local content in the RFP as recommended
2. Direct Administration to set an alternative weighting for local content in the RFP with the range of 0-20 points.

## **ANALYSIS**

Under the Consulting Services Selection Procedures Policy, evaluation of proposals is a two-step process where all proposals are first evaluated on the first four technical criteria, i.e., the project team, proposed methodology and approach, past relevant experience and performance, and the proposed project schedule.

Proposals that score at least 80% on these criteria move on to the second stage of evaluation. The latter stage evaluates the final two criteria (local content and fees) which are scored based on a set formula established in the Consulting Services Selection Procedures policy.

Administration's proposal that the weighting for local content be set at 10 points is based on the following rationale:

- It is believed that there are companies in Whitehorse that would be qualified and interested in doing this work.
- As this relatively small contract is not anticipated to attract significant interest from non-Yukon businesses, the remaining points not assigned to local content have been reserved for price, to ensure good value for tax payers.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council authorize Administration to set the weighting for local content at 10 points in the RFP for Design and Construction Administration Services for 139 Tlingit Street.

**CITY OF WHITEHORSE**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall**



**Chair:** Dan Boyd

**Vice-Chair:** Jan Stick

November 16, 2020

Meeting #2020-24

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1. New Business



**CITY OF WHITEHORSE**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall**



**Chair:** Jan Stick

**Vice-Chair:** Dan Boyd

November 16, 2020

Meeting #2020-24

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1. Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan

Presented by Acting City Manager Mike Gau

2. New Business



## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

<b>TO:</b> Public Health and Safety Committee
<b>FROM:</b> Administration
<b>DATE:</b> November 16, 2020
<b>RE:</b> Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan

### **ISSUE**

Council endorsement of the proposed City of Whitehorse Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2024

### **REFERENCE**

City of Whitehorse Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2024 (attached)

### **HISTORY**

In June 2019, the City entered into a contract with TransNorthern Consulting, subcontracting to Al Beaver and Ember Research. The committee overseeing the work includes staff from Yukon's Forest Management Branch and Wildland Fire Management, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and the City.

The consultants completed the following deliverables, which are available on the City's website at <https://www.whitehorse.ca/departments/planning-sustainability-services/plans-in-process/wildfire-risk-reduction-strategy>:

- *Wildfire Risk Identification and Analysis*, which was presented at CAR in April 2020;
- *Risk Identification and Recommended Strategy*, dated April 2020; and
- *Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategy*, dated July 2020.

Based on the expert reports, Administration has drafted a proposed Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2024 (the Strategy/Action Plan), for Council consideration.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Adopt recommended Action #8 as direction to Administration and the remainder of the Strategy/Action Plan as a guiding document.
2. Refer the matter back to Administration.

### **ANALYSIS**

The consultant reports provide an analysis of various risk reduction options for cost and effectiveness, and make recommendations for implementation over the next 20 years. The reports identify what needs to be done from a technical perspective to reduce the risk of wildfires within and around the city for the next 20 years.

However, the related planning, preparation, risk mitigation and adaptation are collaborative and shared responsibilities of the City, residents within and outside Whitehorse, risk managers, and decision makers of various agencies and governments, notably the Government of Yukon (YG). The staff-drafted Strategy/Action Plan identifies broad goals for wildfire risk reduction along with specific tasks for the City to undertake over the next four years.

The four major strategic goals are:

- Organizational Preparedness – developing common understandings with other levels of government and addressing areas where the City has jurisdiction.
- Encouraging and requiring FireSmart Canada principles on private property.
- Removal of forest fuels on public lands – the long-term objective would be to convert coniferous forests to primarily deciduous in areas surrounding neighbourhoods by removing flammable conifers and encouraging re-growth of less flammable forest types; and
- Encouraging biomass recovery of forest fuels.

There are 12 proposed actions, of which the priority for Council's consideration is Action #8:

- To work with YG, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council to clarify roles and responsibilities around forest and fuel management.

This action relates to clarifying the scope of the City's responsibilities at the outset of the project. The basis for coordination amongst all the governments responsible for wildfire risk management needs to be established by clarifying respective roles and responsibilities. Ultimately, management of forests and wildfires in the Yukon is the responsibility of the Yukon government, with First Nations also having a role to play in respect of their settlement lands. The part to be played by the City needs to be clarified with the other levels of government as a priority action item.

Based on a shared understanding of the City's role in relation to that of other governments, additional actions are proposed, including:

- Identifying potential sources and applying for external funding to support implementation;
- Investigating and considering potential amendments to City bylaws and policies to support wildfire risk management within City boundaries;
- Formalizing intergovernmental understandings and arrangements with respect to fuel management.

Administration proposes that Council confirm Action #8 by passing a resolution to adopt it, thereby confirming direction to Administration to engage in discussions with other government partners.

Administration further proposes that that remainder of the Strategy/Action Plan be adopted as a guiding document to indicate Council's endorsement of the goals set out in the document and to provide Administration direction to carry out further work on the remaining actions, seeking further Council direction where that will be required.

**ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council adopt proposed Action #8 in the City of Whitehorse Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2024, as presented; and

THAT Council adopt the remainder of the City of Whitehorse Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2024 as a guiding document.



## Introduction

Wildfire is a hazard facing Whitehorse and communities across Canada and around the world. The risk grows the longer we are without wildfire, and there is much to be done to understand and reduce the risk. This planning, preparation, and adaptation is a collaborative and shared responsibility of the City, residents within and outside Whitehorse, risk managers, and decision makers of various agencies and governments.

While the way forward is organizationally and financially challenging, this Strategy identifies broad direction along with interim steps to creating a wildfire-resilient community. The Action Plan outlines specific tasks for the City of Whitehorse to undertake over the next four years. While some actions will directly affect risk, many are foundational, and set the framework for more measurable risk reduction.

## What is the Risk

Wildfire risk in Whitehorse is as high as ever due to a number of factors. Local topography, weather, and boreal forest influence fire risk. Human factors also contribute to risk: changing climate, minimal woodcutting within and around the city, ongoing fire suppression that inhibits periodic burning and forest succession, and the increased number and value of homes within the wildland urban interface.

To better understand the wildfire risk, the City of Whitehorse contracted a team consisting of TransNorthern Consulting, Wildland Fire Risk Management Ltd., and Ember Research Services Ltd., who evaluated Whitehorse's risk from wildfire and recommended a 20-year strategy for wildfire risk reduction.

The consulting team assessed the severity and likelihood of fire, historical weather, forest fuel type, and topography. They also quantified the likely exposure of structures to wildfire. Needless to say, risk within the City of Whitehorse remains high.

## Acronyms

FMB: Forest Management Branch, Government of Yukon

WFM: Wildland Fire Management, Government of Yukon

WUI: Wildland Urban Interface – Intermix: Any area where combustible forest fuel is found adjacent to homes, farm buildings or other outbuildings. This may occur at the interface, where development and forest fuel (vegetation) meet at a well-defined boundary, or in an intermix, where development and forest fuel intermingle with no clearly defined boundary; the zone where buildings meet forested areas and where wildland fires are most at risk of igniting structures.

## The Strategy

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The Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy aims to move the City of Whitehorse towards four key strategic goals.

### **1. Organizational Preparedness**

Effective risk management requires a shared understanding of impacts, objectives, and responsibilities within the City of Whitehorse. Wildfire risk reduction is a new area of work for the City. While the City has jurisdiction for actions that can mitigate some kinds of wildfire risks, management of hinterland areas to date has mainly focused on managing city growth into wilderness areas, as managing Yukon forests is not a clear City responsibility. Organizational preparedness, including developing common understandings with the other responsible governments that overlap with the City, is foundational to the strategy.

### **2. Encouraging and requiring FireSmart Canada principles on private property**

Research has shown that the majority of home ignitions in a wildfire are caused by ember throw, rather than direct exposure to radiant heat. FireSmart principles are actions to be carried out on private property that increase a home's likelihood of surviving a fire, and that minimize the spread of fire through a neighbourhood. As a municipality, the City of Whitehorse has jurisdictional and regulatory tools well-suited to encouraging household and neighbourhood action.

### **3. Removal of forest fuels on public land**

Conifer-dominated forests on public land near houses contribute greatly to the wildfire risk. The long-term objective is to convert coniferous forests to primarily deciduous in areas surrounding neighbourhoods by removing flammable conifers and encouraging re-growth of less flammable forest types. The consultant report recommends a 500-metre deciduous buffer in the 20-year time frame, while this Action Plan assumes an interim goal (e.g., 10-year) of 30 to 100 metres around neighbourhoods. Actions in the short term will be to initiate vegetation management through contracted tree removal while also setting the foundation for a more sustainable cost-neutral approach to tree removal.

### **4. Enabling biomass recovery of forest fuel**

The volume of forest fuel removal needed to protect neighbourhoods from wildfire is beyond the current financial capacity of the City, and the availability of external funding is unknown. Enabling tree removal costs to be offset through the sale of forest resources will allow for faster, cheaper removal. Forest fuel can be recovered for use as a local supply of cordwood or biomass for high efficiency heating systems. Biomass recovery, though seemingly straightforward, require amending policies, meeting regulatory requirements, and partnerships with Yukon (FMB) and First Nation governments.

## The 2021-2024 Action Plan

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The Action Plan is a work plan to move the community incrementally towards these four strategic goals. The actions contained within this Action Plan will need to be confirmed by Council through budget appropriation. These actions will be reviewed against other City priorities during annual budget cycles. Identifying and securing operational and capital resources is the pre-requisite to further action.

## Organizational Preparedness

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Wildfire risk reduction and large-scale removal of forest resource have not previously been areas of work for the City. In order to pursue a Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy, the City must confirm its capacity by either reallocating resources or adding capacity to its staffing complement

### Action 1

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#### **Identify City lead department and implementation staff**

Wildfire risk management is a new area of work for the City, which has not previously identified a lead administrative department, or identified positions responsible for implementation. To date, Parks and Community Development, Planning and Sustainability Services, and the Fire Department have been active on this topic, but none is necessarily the best fit to lead a concerted action plan. The identified manager of the lead department will champion progress on this Action Plan. The lead department will be responsible for developing partnership agreements where needed and will lead or assist in City policy development and/or amendments to bylaws.

### Action 2

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#### **Apply for external and internal funding**

The lead department will research and apply for external funding based on this Action Plan, the consultant reports, and individual project proposals. The lead department will also be responsible for internal capital funding submissions and budget amendments.

## FireSmart Actions

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Reducing the vulnerability of structures on private land is as important as fuel management on public land. Actions promoted by FireSmart Canada are understood to be effective, and are critical to avoiding the spread of fire from wilderness areas to the urban areas.

FireSmart actions are implemented at the individual property level, and are most effective when carried out throughout a neighbourhood, with emphasis on areas adjacent to forests. Modelling conducted by the consulting team identifies neighbourhoods with the highest potential exposure to ember throw and radiant heat.

The following actions are within the City’s jurisdiction and control but their effectiveness depends in part on public acceptance. For the City to initiate bylaw and policy changes will require a concerted public communications strategy to achieve public readiness and support.

### Action 3

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#### **Consider amending the Zoning Bylaw to require Firesmart landscaping requirements in WUI areas**

Landscaping and removal of conifers is a key element of FireSmart principles. The Zoning Bylaw is the City’s primary tool for setting landscaping standards on new developments.

FireSmart requirements in the Zoning Bylaw could include:

- Providing a 1.5 m non-combustible zone around the perimeter of structures (non-combustible means not vegetated or FireSmart recommended species only, and non-flammable materials such as gravel mulch or hard surfacing).
- Removal of conifers within 10 metres of dwelling.
- Use of non-combustible materials for fences and decks in defined WUI areas (cross-referenced to Building and Plumbing Bylaw—see Action 10).

If approved, these requirements would apply to new construction in identified WUI areas. Other tasks associated with the Zoning Bylaw include:

- Defining a landscaping prescription.
- Outlining a compliance and enforcement path.
- Harmonizing FireSmart requirements with other elements of the Bylaw, such as vegetative buffer requirements.

Tasks for the City include conducting an interdepartmental and public review of the Zoning Bylaw, and creating resources to assist homeowners in accomplishing this requirement.

### Action 4

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#### **Consider amendments to the Maintenance Bylaw to require FireSmarting of properties within the WUI (existing properties)**

The Maintenance Bylaw is the City’s tool for requiring safe, clean private property. The bylaw currently contains wording pertaining to fire risk:

- *13(3) No person shall park or store outside on any property: solid fuels such as wood, where the amount of solid fuel so stored is in excess of two winter seasons' supply for consumption on site, unless permitted by the Zoning Bylaw.*
- *15. Every owner or occupier shall clear their property of brush, trees, or other growth that constitutes a fire or health hazard.*

The bylaw does not prescribe a compliance path. The clauses above are rarely enforced.

The Maintenance Bylaw is potentially a powerful and useful tool for bringing existing properties into compliance with FireSmart principles. However, its use is problematic because of the time and effort involved in education and enforcement. The City can only contemplate Maintenance Bylaw amendments and enforcement as part of a broader, phased program to encourage and require FireSmart actions.

## Action 5

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### **Consider amendments to the Building and Plumbing Bylaw or other relevant bylaws to restrict certain building materials used in the City**

The Building and Plumbing Bylaw currently addresses new construction within Country Residential 1 and Country Residential 2 zones by requiring fuel modification in Fire Smart priority zones 1 and 2 within two years of obtaining occupancy, only for new lots purchased after July 1, 2007.

However, for greater effectiveness in mitigating wildfire risks, the City can consider regulating the use of building materials in the city, where they contribute to or reduce those risks. Consideration can be given to whether such modifications would apply only to new construction or include renovations; and whether they would apply to the entire city or only to certain areas.

Examples of these kinds of provisions could include:

- Allowing only ULC rated roofing materials (Class A, B, C).
- Not permitting open vents or soffit.
- Not permitting wood siding.
- Recommending ignition-resistant deck materials and requiring deck skirting.
- Recommending ignition-resistant fence materials and requiring non-combustible segments between fences and houses and FireSmart-recommended fence styles.

Consideration would also have to be given to how such regulations would be enforced, and to whether incentives might be available to encourage public support (e.g., reduction of homeowner insurance premiums).

The City's tasks in this action are to research, consider, and consult on modifications to the Building and Plumbing Bylaw and any other bylaws that may be found to be relevant.

## Action 6

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### **Review and consider amending the Tree Removal Policy and the Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw**

The existing Tree Removal Policy was established in 1997 and is premised on the value of trees contributing to a park-like environment in the City of Whitehorse, rather than addressing them as a target of wildfire risk mitigation management. The Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw was adopted in 2015 and also addresses the protection of vegetation. The City can review these documents to ensure that they coordinate with and do not conflict with wildfire risk reduction efforts.

Neither document specifically addresses the larger practice of fuel management through FireSmarting. Consideration can also be given to whether the City should adopt a FireSmarting policy/bylaw that

provides guidance regarding management of vegetation and trees in the city as part of a fuel management initiative.

## Action 7

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### **Support participation in the FireSmart Community Recognition Program**

FireSmart Canada has a comprehensive framework and program to encourage neighbourhoods and communities to implement firesmart actions. WFM has initiated participation in this program by training a group of Local FireSmart representatives. The City can assist this effort by providing FireSmart Canada training, doing outreach to neighbourhoods and communities, and approving funding to groups through the Environmental Grant Fund.

## Fuel Management

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An overriding objective in the WUI is to convert conifer-dominated forests to primarily deciduous forests. This requires removal of conifers (typically spruce) and re-growth of deciduous trees (typically aspen) through either natural growth or seeding. This Action Plan assumes an interim goal of 30- to 100-metre deciduous buffer in the next 10 years, with the goal of a 500-metre deciduous buffer in the 20-year and more time frame.

Whitehorse residents and forest users should be made aware that fuel management will change forested areas adjacent to neighbourhoods. The immediate effect might be stark, but is necessary to reduce risk, and will be mitigated as deciduous forests dominate.

Some uncertainty remains around how fuel management and biomass recovery is regarded under the Forest Resources Act and the Yukon Lands Act. The City will be required to work closely with FMB to clarify the regulatory process.

## Action 8

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### **Work with Government of Yukon, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and Ta'an Kwach'an Council to clarify roles and responsibilities around forest and fuel management**

Administration of forested areas within Whitehorse is a shared responsibility. While the City has taken the lead on protected areas, development control and fire prevention, Government of Yukon has primary responsibility for wildfire response, and for the Forest Resources Act. The responsibilities and priorities of First Nation governments with respect to fuel management also need to be clarified. Coordination among responsible governments is preferable. Understanding roles through an MOU or other agreement, will serve all parties in pursuing matters such as:

- Preparing priority projects adjacent to Whitehorse neighbourhoods.
- Preparing project submissions to YESAA, both for the comprehensive approach and for individual projects.
- Funding.
- Overseeing fuel management contracts.
- Public consultation on forest removal projects.

- Pilot projects such as a biomass fuel recovery project.

#### Action 9

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##### **Formalize personal fuelwood harvest MOU with FMB**

The City and FMB previously drafted a Memorandum of Understanding to clarify roles around the personal fuelwood harvest process within Whitehorse. Reviewing and formalizing this agreement will define responsibilities and resources, streamline the process for the public, and enable a greater role for personal fuelwood harvest in fuel management.

#### Action 10

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##### **Evaluate the green personal fuelwood pilot project and take new action**

The City and FMB have initiated a pilot project to allow green personal fuelwood harvest near Wolf Creek, Copper Haul Road, and the sewage lagoon. The project will help gauge whether:

- Personal use fuelwood harvest is effective at reducing fire risk.
- Residents are interested in harvesting green fuelwood.
- Impacts and issues can be adequately managed.

Depending on the pilot results, the City and FMB can consider follow up action, such as allowing cutting of green wood in all existing personal fuelwood areas, or identifying new areas for personal harvest.

## **Biomass Recovery**

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#### Action 11

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##### **Work with FMB to define the planning and permitting requirements under the Forest Resources Act for biomass recovery**

Biomass recovery is a potential financial tool for fuel management. Yukon has made promising steps towards building the industry and the regulatory framework for biomass recovery, though much work remains. FMB has started the legal work to define the planning and process requirements for biomass recovery. City of Whitehorse will continue to collaborate with FMB on this topic and in particular, define the City's role will be in planning and permitting.

#### Action 12

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##### **Seek funding (internal or external) for biomass projects at Parks building and Operations building.**

The City has identified candidate buildings for biomass heat conversion. Installation of biomass heating will require substantial capital funding, either through the City's own reserves, or more likely, external funding. The City's task will be to review the business case for biomass, examine the technical requirements, verify a secure fuel supply, and seek capital funding if a biomass project is found to be a viable option.

**CITY OF WHITEHORSE**  
**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall**



**Chair:** Jocelyn Curteanu

**Vice-Chair:** Stephen Roddick

November 16, 2020

Meeting #2020-24

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1. Environmental Grant Allocations

Presented by Environmental Coordinator Sabine Schweiger

2. New Business



## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

<b>TO:</b> Development Services Committee
<b>FROM:</b> Administration
<b>DATE:</b> November 16, 2020
<b>RE:</b> Environmental Grant Allocations

### **ISSUE**

Environmental Grant Allocations

### **REFERENCE**

Environmental Grant Policy  
City of Whitehorse Sustainability Plan

### **HISTORY**

The City has a \$25,000 annual budget to fund projects that advance the Whitehorse Sustainability Plan. The purpose of the environmental grant program is to encourage and enable societies, commercial organizations, and schools to be active partners in achieving the City's sustainability goals.

Evaluation criteria is identified in the Environmental Grant Policy and includes factors such as how the project supports the Whitehorse Sustainability Plan, public and community benefit, eligible costs, and likelihood of success.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve the Environmental Grant requests
2. Refer the request back to Administration for further consideration

### **ANALYSIS**

Seven applications were received for the annual major grant intake and reviewed on October 29, 2020 by an internal committee consisting of two environmental coordinators and the manager of Parks and Community Development. Specific applications were also reviewed by subject experts in Lands and Building Services and Water and Waste Services.

Three projects were incomplete and were withdrawn by the applicants. One application lacked sufficient information to be considered during this intake.

Three applications are recommended for the full amount requested (Appendix A).

### **ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council approve the allocation of Environmental Grants in the amount of \$5,946.96.

## Appendix A: October 2020 Major Environmental Grant Summary

Organization	Project	Project Budget	Grant Request	Proposed Expenses	Recommended Funding
<b>l'aurore boréale</b>	Series of 10 French language articles – local economy and sustainability	\$9,000.00	\$3,500.00	Research, writing and printing 10 articles	<b>\$3,500.00</b>
<b>Morrison Hershfield</b>	Covered bike parking	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	4 wbike racks	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
<b>Selkirk Elementary School Council</b>	Selkirk Elementary School – Safe Dark Commuting	\$2,659.19	1,446.96	Reflective tape, brochure	<b>\$1,446.96</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$13,659.19</b>	<b>\$5,946.96</b>		<b>\$5,946.96</b>