



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: April 16, 2021
Submitted by: Community Services Department – Environment Division
Subject: Environmentally Sensitive Area Management Strategy Update – Community Feedback

Purpose

To provide Council with a summary of community feedback on the proposed update to the Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Management Strategy, and seek direction on next steps.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT the two community feedback reports be received for information as recommended in the report dated April 16, 2021 from the Community Services Department – Environment Division regarding Environmentally Sensitive Area Management Strategy Update – Community Feedback;

AND THAT staff be directed to pause work on the ESA Management Strategy Update and report back to Council with a revised scope of work, confirm alignment with Council's vision for managing our natural areas, and seek direction on project completion.

Background

The City's Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Management Strategy was initiated in 1997 and adopted by Council in 2003. The Strategy includes an inventory and map of ESAs, and management recommendations for different ecosystem types. The Strategy formed the basis for the current development permit area (DPA 4: ESAs) in the 2010 Official Community Plan (OCP), including associated guidelines (OCP Chapter 16 and Appendix 2) and policies (OCP Chapter 6). Watercourse setback areas, as defined in Zoning Bylaw No. 2937, are included in DPA 4.

The current ESA Management Strategy and development permit process help the City balance development activities with environmental protection and meet senior legislative requirements. An update was needed to reflect the current landscape of Port Moody, improve mapping accuracy, and better align with present-day environmental requirements and best management practices. Updating the ESA was identified in previous and existing Council Strategic Plans and City financial plans. The protection, restoration, and connection of ESAs was also included in the Climate Action Plan as directed in Council's Declaration of a Climate Emergency at the June 11, 2019 Regular Council meeting.

Technical work on the ESA Update was completed in early 2020. A targeted community engagement process was initiated to gather input that would inform the presentation to Council, with stakeholders including City committees (Environmental Protection Committee [EPC], Parks and Recreation Commission [PRC]), First Nations, local stewardship groups, developers active in Port Moody, and property owners along the marine shoreline. Marine shoreline properties were contacted directly as these were proposed as a new addition to the development permit area. Properties already within and adjacent to existing ESAs and/or DPA 4 were not directly notified as changes to the process for these properties were not anticipated. Details of this initial engagement are included in **Attachment 1**.

At the onset of this targeted consultation, it became clear that 1) a number of residents were not aware of existing environmental requirements and development permit processes and were expressing deep concerns, and 2) more information and engagement was needed. In response, at the October 20, 2020 Special Council Meeting, Council made the following resolution:

CW20/097

THAT the City of Port Moody extend the online consultation period for the Environmentally Sensitive Area Strategy for up to 90 days and investigate further options for public consultation.

Subsequently, staff developed additional communication tools and notified the community as a whole about the ESA Update and engagement opportunities through a variety of communication channels, including two online engagement sessions. The extended consultation period closed on February 21, 2021.

Discussion

A summary of the engagement process and community feedback is detailed in two attached reports:

- “Community Feedback Summary” from City staff, which provides some metrics on the feedback received since fall 2020 and a qualitative summary of the most common concerns and other areas requiring clarification (**Attachment 1**).
- “What We Heard Report” from the SFU Centre for Dialogue, which summarizes comments and discussions from the two online engagement sessions held in early 2021 (**Attachment 2**). A list of questions from these sessions is compiled in this report, with answers from City staff.

A significant amount of feedback has been received since fall 2020. Given the targeted approach to inform residents, this feedback has been almost exclusively from single-family home property owners within and adjacent to ESAs. Most of these residents are concerned about private property rights and potential limitations to these rights. Staff tried to provide additional clarification wherever possible on the current ESA framework and the intent of the update, but many property owners remain concerned about the perceived negative impacts of the proposed changes. No concerns were raised from the broader development community. Regional partners are supportive, and the EPC and PRC supported the proposed update as presented in 2020.

Because of the timing of the project schedule, the engagement process was initiated during COVID-19, which also may have had impact on its reception.

The focus of discussion on this project has veered away from the broader objectives of the ESA Management Strategy, which is to balance urban development with the protection of our community's natural environment. Unless property owners have re-built or re-developed, they are understandably unaware of existing environmental requirements, the current ESA Management Strategy, and development permit tools. The feedback received to date and lessons learned during the engagement process need to be thoughtfully considered as part of analyzing options for updating the ESA Strategy to meet its technical objectives and the needs of the community.

Staff recommend the following next steps:

- Share the two community feedback reports with all session participants, targeted stakeholders, and residents who have contacted the City directly.
- Pause the ESA Management Strategy Update so that staff resources can focus on other Council priorities (e.g., Official Community Plan, Urban Forest Strategy, Parks Acquisition Strategy, etc.), while taking the time to consider community feedback and analyze options.

As part of budget planning processes for 2023, staff will report back to Council with a revised scope of work for updating the ESA Management Strategy that is aligned with Council's vision for managing our natural areas and with regulatory requirements, and will seek direction on the completion of this project. This revised scope of work will include options for further public consultation for Council's consideration.

Other Option(s)

THAT staff report back to Council with the draft update of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Management Strategy and an overview of options for moving forward.

Financial Implications

No additional funding is required at this time.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

The first phase of public engagement for the update to the ESA Management Strategy is complete (**Attachments 1 and 2**).

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

Updating the ESA Strategy is consistent with the Environmental Leadership priority in the 2019-2022 Council Strategic Plan.

Attachment(s)

1. ESA Management Strategy Update Community Feedback Summary.
2. ESA Management Strategy Update What We Heard Report.

Report Author

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Director of Environment and Parks

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Environmentally Sensitive Area Management Strategy Update – Community Feedback.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - ESA Management Strategy Update Community Feedback Summary.pdf - Attachment 2 - ESA Management Strategy Update What We Heard Report.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 30, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Theresa Cochran, General Manager of Community Services - Apr 25, 2021 - 5:37 AM

Kate Zanon, General Manager of Community Development - Apr 26, 2021 - 10:21 AM

Dorothy Shermer, Corporate Officer - Apr 28, 2021 - 9:08 PM

Rosemary Lodge, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Apr 29, 2021 - 10:17 AM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Apr 30, 2021 - 10:40 AM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - Apr 30, 2021 - 11:32 AM