



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: April 28, 2023
Submitted by: Fire and Rescue Services
Subject: Updated 2019 Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Purpose

To present for Council consideration the updated 2019 Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT the updated 2019 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) be adopted as recommended in the report dated April 28, 2023, from Fire and Rescue Services regarding Updated 2019 Community Wildfire Protection Plan;

AND THAT staff be directed to move forward with public communication and initiate the pilot fuel treatment demonstration project at a location to be determined in collaboration with the Interagency Wildfire Management Working Group;

AND THAT staff be authorized to apply for additional funding through the UBCM Community Resiliency Investment program to continue FireSmart education and begin prioritized fuel treatment projects in high-risk neighborhoods.

Background

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) framework was created by the provincial government in response to the devastating 2003 wildfire in Kelowna. In recent years, fuel accumulation and urban sprawl have led to amplified wildfire risk, particularly within wildland-urban interface communities. Furthermore, climate change is altering wildfire behaviour, increasing fuel availability, and extending wildfire seasons. Recent fires in Hope, Agassiz, and neighboring Coquitlam reinforce the need for anticipation of and preparation for interface fire events within the boundaries of Port Moody. Historically, the Lower Mainland has focused on structural firefighting, but due to the growing wildfire threat, proactive planning must consider both risk mitigation and immediate operational readiness in the community. Port Moody must take advantage of the shrinking opportunity window to develop proactive adaptation measures.

Discussion

The updated 2019 CWPP (**Attachment 1**) was started by Port Moody Fire Rescue (PMFR) with funding support from the Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) program, administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). The plan was developed in collaboration with multiple city

departments, including but not limited to Environment, Parks, Operations, and Planning. B.A. Blackwell & Associates Ltd. was selected as the external consultant for this project due to their industry expertise and familiarity with Port Moody's Area of Interest (AOI) as they developed the initial CWPP in 2007. The objectives of the updated CWPP include: 1) Enhance public safety and protect the lives of those who reside, work, and play in Port Moody; 2) Reduce the likelihood of wildfire entering the community; 3) Reduce the impacts and losses to property and critical infrastructure; and 4) Reduce negative socioeconomic impacts and build post-disaster resilience.

The CWPP framework begins by identifying areas of high wildfire risk within Port Moody's AOI using a values-based approach. This includes a wildfire vulnerability assessment on both public and private lands based on fuel type, fuel proximity, predicted wildfire behavior, topography, water accessibility, and local First Nations knowledge. Results fostered 45 recommended action items focusing on reducing the risk of damage to property and infrastructure from wildfires. Recommendations cover a diverse scope, including education and community involvement, structural protection, emergency response, training, fuel mitigation, and bylaw and policy adaptation. A summary table highlighting key implemented actions is included as

Attachment 2.

The updated 2019 CWPP aligns with FireSmart Canada's interdisciplinary principles of wildfire management, which encompasses education, legislation, development, interagency cooperation, emergency planning, cross training, and vegetation management. The FireSmart program has proven successful in various municipalities across BC through a combination of both top-down and bottom-up adaptation strategies. Fuel mitigation treatments are grounded in the latest wildfire management research for immediate risk reduction, while educational sessions and FireSmart literature empower residents to protect their homes and loved ones.

Recommendations within this plan act as a toolbox of best practices aimed at reducing wildfire threats within Port Moody's AOI. As there is no one course of action or combination of actions that is the singular answer to the challenge of wildfire risk in interface communities, continuous prioritization based on resources, strengths, constraints, and funding availability is crucial. Wildfire threat is multi-faceted and dynamic. Therefore, it is important to set up an adaptive management approach and monitor effectiveness as variables and circumstances change over time.

Other Option(s)

Council may choose to direct staff to make changes to the CWPP prior to Council adoption.

Financial Implications

Continuous funding support from UBCM's CRI program presents a win-win scenario with negligible in-house costs. Ultimately, proactive investments in wildfire anticipation and preparation are crucial to ensure that the Port Moody community has the capacity and resiliency to co-exist with wildfires now and into the future.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

A fulsome communications plan regarding fuel mitigation treatments will be developed to ensure deliberate, equitable and transparent community outreach. PMFR anticipates this to include such initiatives as community pop-up events, educational brochures, social media outreach, and community open houses.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

The updated 2019 CWPP addresses increased wildfire threat to Port Moody due to climate change. Recommendations outlined within this plan encompass both threat mitigation and adaptation solutions, which directly aligns with Council's mission and priority of sustaining resilient natural environments. Adopting the updated 2019 CWPP will further enhance environmental protection and public safety for long-term climate resiliency within Port Moody.

Attachment(s)

1. 2019 Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
2. Achievement Highlights from Updated 2019 CWPP.

Report Author

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Updated 2019 Community Wildfire Protection Plan.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - 2019 Community Wildfire Protection Plan.pdf - Attachment 2 - Achievement Highlights from Updated 2019 CWPP.pdf
Final Approval Date:	May 2, 2023

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

Darcey O'Riordan, Fire Chief - May 1, 2023 - 9:12 AM

Stephanie Lam, City Clerk and Manager of Legislative Services - May 1, 2023 - 2:52 PM

Lindsay Todd, Manager of Communications and Engagement - May 1, 2023 - 3:58 PM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - May 1, 2023 - 5:02 PM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - May 2, 2023 - 2:02 PM