



Deep Roots
Greater Heights

City of Maple Ridge

TO: His Worship Mayor Ernie Daykin
and Members of Council

DATE: November 3, 2014

FILE NO:

FROM: Chief Administrative Officer

ATTN: Council Workshop

SUBJECT: **Environmental Management Strategy Implementation Report – Short Term High Priority Implementation Recommendations**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The *Environmental Management Strategy* of April 2014 provides an evaluation of existing environmental programs, tools and practices being utilized in Maple Ridge. It contains numerous findings and recommendations that provide the City of Maple Ridge with a “road map” for future development and consideration of various environmental management objectives that are aligned with OCP and Corporate Sustainability objectives. The Strategy includes short, medium, and long term environmental strategies and action items. These Action items can help the City move towards its municipal objectives using clear, cost effective, timely, and innovative methods that continue to help us support a healthy natural environment.

On April 17 2014, Council received the Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) as information and directed staff to prepare an initial *EMS Implementation Report* for consideration. The focus was to be on short term high priority strategies.

At the April 17, 2014 workshop, the following resolution was passed:

That staff submit the Environmental Management Strategy report to Council to be received as information; and

That staff be directed to prepare a report for consideration and endorsement by Council on the various short term priority implementation items outlined in the report.

This report considers several potential next steps for Council’s consideration and endorsement. First it recommends that the *Environmental Management Strategy* be referred to the ‘to be formed’ Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (EnSAC) for review and consideration before it is forwarded to Council for endorsement. Second, it recommends that staff commence the implementation of short term high priority action items identified in this report. Lastly, it recommends that the remaining short, medium and long term strategies identified in the EMS be reviewed with the assistance of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee.

The following short term, high priority action items have been identified by staff as the items to focus on in the short term. These items are:

1. Assist with the formation of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee;
2. Prepare recommendations for updating and improving the Tree Protection Bylaw;
3. Prepare recommendations for updating and improving the Soils Deposit Bylaw;
4. Explore additional opportunities to improve communications and awareness on environmental review processes including watercourse protection requirements, environmental development permit guidelines, & environment permit processes.

This report includes information on potential implications, timelines, and resources required for implementation of short term high priority action items recommended by the consultant of record.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Environmental Management Strategy of April 2014 be forwarded to the ‘to be formed’ Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee for consideration, review and recommendation to Council; and

That Staff be directed to prepare the remaining short, medium and long term action items in a Final Implementation Strategy, in consultation with the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee and forward the recommendation to Council; and

That short term high priority action items identified in Table One in the report entitled “Environmental Management Strategy Implementation Report – Short Term High Priority Implementation Recommendations”, dated November 3 2014, be endorsed by Council.

DISCUSSION:

a) Background Context:

Environmental Management Strategy Process:

The foundations for the Environmental Management Strategy (EMS Report 2014) come from the OCP environmental management framework model. The goals of the OCP environmental model are to:

- Protect significant ecosystems in the Municipality;
- Anticipate and respond to the impacts of climate change on land, water, and air resources;
- Determine guidelines and standards that are necessary in and around environmentally sensitive areas;
- Identify situations where additional environmental studies and best management practices are required as part of the development process;
- Maintain and improve ecosystem health and human safety.

Public involvement in the Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) process occurred over the past two years. It included several community stakeholder group workshops, four Council Workshop presentations, and two public open house sessions. There was significant support from community stakeholders and the general public for the findings, recommendations, and implementation items identified by the consultant of record.

The purpose of the EMS is to evaluate how the City of Maple Ridge is doing with respect to environmental objectives and policies identified in the OCP as well as an evaluation of ongoing environmental programs and best management practices on the ground. The EMS study also includes recommendations on potential next steps with respect to potential updates and improvements to existing planning tools, identification of new potential strategies, and prioritization of implementation items over time.

The goals, objectives and recommendations of the *Maple Ridge EMS Strategy* dated April 2014, are based on the *City's Official Community Plan* as well as the *Corporate Strategic Plan* and *Sustainability Action plan*.

Catherine Berris & Associates presented the findings and recommendations of the Strategy at Council Workshop held on April 17th, 2014 which was received as information by Council. The EMS Strategy contained recommendations along with an Implementation Plan with short, medium, and long term phasing of action items. Figure 7 in the Strategy provides an evaluation by the consultant of low, medium, and high priority action items based on benefits and costs of taking action versus not taking action. At the April 17^h 2014 workshop, the following resolution was passed:

That staff submit the Environmental Management Strategy report to Council to be received as information; and

That staff be directed to prepare a report for consideration and endorsement by Council on the various short term priority implementation items outlined in the report.

The Environmental Management Strategy dated April 2014 was posted on the municipal website, along with the draft implementation items for public viewing.

b) Consultant Recommendations in Environmental Management Strategy:

Environmental Management Strategy Goals

The consultant's recommendations in the Strategy are broken down into three major goals:

- 1. Conserve and manage our natural assets**
- 2. Design and build sustainable neighborhoods**
- 3. Improve communications and environmental awareness**

Each goal in the Strategy has a number of recommendations. Each of the recommendations is further broken down into action items for the short-term (within three years), medium-term (4-6 years), and long-term (over 7 years). An evaluation of potential implications associated with short term, high priority immediate action items recommended by the consultant and refined by staff is provided in this report. A table containing a detailed list of the consultant goals, recommendations, and action items is attached (see Attachment #1).

Considerations For the Short Term High Priority Implementation Plan

- A. **Establishing Priorities, Pacing and Timing.** More urgent priorities are to be met with action items to take place in the short term, within the one to three year horizon, while medium term priorities and action items will occur within the four to six year horizon, and longer term priorities and action items will occur beyond the seven year horizon.
- B. **Reporting, Business Planning and Budget.** A schedule of regular reporting with updates is suggested to reaffirm priorities and action items. Budget considerations in support of these priorities need to be part of the District's Business Plan, and reviewed annually by Council.
- C. **Staff complement.** Although the Environmental Management Strategy is largely the responsibility of the Planning Department, other departments, such as Strategic Economic Initiatives, Parks and Leisure, Engineering and Operations departments may also be involved. Staff availability and resources for these tasks could affect the timing of work plan development.
- D. **Strategic Alignment.** The Environmental Management Strategy is intended to respond to the most pressing community needs as identified by Council and reflected in corporate policies. Recognizing that these may change over time, there could be some shifting of priorities in response to new information or new conditions. In addition, new opportunities may emerge, such as senior agency cost sharing programs, potential incentive programs, or other possible options that could prompt a revised focus in strategic direction.

A. Establishing Priorities, Phasing, and Timing:

Figure 7 in the EMS identifies the key strategies, action items and priorities over the next seven (7) or more years. Please refer to Appendix One. Each of the recommendations in the *Environmental Management Strategy* were reviewed in light of District resources, budgets, and priorities along with Council's feedback.

All of these short term high priority strategies and action items can be effectively dealt with using existing in-house resources over the next several years with minimum financial assistance. The rationale for moving ahead with implementation of these action items in the short term was also based on consultation findings over the past several years. There was more significant emphasis on these particular topics with respect to growing concerns about liability and due diligence from local government and citizens; increasing concerns about demands on available municipal resources; requests for greater clarity about environmental processes, as well as greater opportunity for input from community stakeholders on environmental matters.

These recommended high priority short term implementation items, their associated costs, and timelines are outlined in Table One as follows:

Table One. Short Term High Priority Implementation Action Items

Table 1. Recommended Implementation Items					
	Issue	Council Resolution	Staff consultant or	Cost estimate	Timeline
1	Interest in an Environmental Advisory Committee	Provide Assistance with the creation of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee	Planning; EnSAC Members	To be determined	Commencement 2015
2	Update the Soils Deposit Bylaw	That staff be directed to provide a scoping report to Council with proposed amendments and updates to the Soils Deposit Bylaw and Tree Protection Bylaw.	Planning	Not applicable*	Commencement 2015
	Update the Tree Protection Bylaw	That staff be directed to provide a discussion paper to Council to identify key issues and opportunities on Bylaws			
3	Improve clarity around environmental review processes	Review environmental processes and regulations to ensure better clarity on requirements & options.	Planning Communications Information Services	Not applicable*	Ongoing

* Costs to be absorbed with Planning Department Budget

Short Term High Priority Action Items:

1. Assist with the formation of the Environmental and Sustainable Advisory Committee

At the October 20 2014 Council Workshop, a report was received by a Committee Review Task Force recommending the formation of an Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Committee.

Staff Resources: Planning staff resources will be required to assist with the formation of the Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Committee and provide ongoing support to the Committee.

2. Update and improve Tree Protection Bylaw

Update and improve the Tree Protection Bylaw, with emphasis on consideration of scoping report and discussion paper for Council's consideration.

Staff Resources: The Planning Department would be the lead on these projects, with technical support from the Bylaws Enforcement, Parks, and Finance Departments.

3. Update and improve Soils Deposit Bylaw

Update and improve the Soils Deposit Bylaw, with emphasis on consideration of a scoping report and discussion paper for Council's consideration.

Staff Resources: The Planning Department would be the lead on these projects, with technical support from the Bylaws Enforcement and Engineering Operations Dept's.

4. Improve communications and environmental awareness

Provide greater clarity and communications outreach concerning the environmental development review process and environmental permit requirements including watercourse protection assessments, environmental development permit requirements, and municipal environmental best management practices;

Staff Resources: Planning staff will take the lead on these projects, with some support from Information Services, Communications and possibly the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee.

Short, Medium and Longer Term Action Items:

Remaining short, medium and longer term recommended strategies and action items that are not considered for high priority implementation in this report as they were more likely to require larger municipal resources, more complex review and/or supporting studies, or they included strategies that might need to be phased over longer periods of time.

The *Final Implementation report* is recommended to be completed with ongoing input and review from the Council appointed Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Committee in 2015.

Next Steps

The Recommendations provided in this report to Council envision the following steps in advancing the strategies in the EMS:

1. Council refers the Environmental Management Strategy, dated April 2014 to the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee for their review and possible endorsement. Once completed, the Committee would then forward the Strategy to Council for endorsement.
2. To assist and support the proposed *Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee* program which is likely to commence in 2015. Staff will provide whatever assistance is needed to get the Committee up and running.
3. Staff will commence work on the short term high priority items identified on Table One of this report.
4. Remaining short, medium and long term implementation items will be prepared in discussions with the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee prior to submission for endorsement by Council.

B. Reporting, Business Planning and Budget:

It is noted that annual Business Planning will provide a mechanism to ensure that the Implementation Plan for the Environmental Management Strategy reflects Council priorities. This will provide an opportunity to reaffirm direction, consider budgets, and required staffing.

C. Staff Complement and Interdepartmental Implications:

The Planning Department will be responsible for taking the lead on the implementation for the short term high priority items with some support from other departments. Departments that are anticipated to be involved in the implementation from the short-term through to the long-term include:

- Planning
- Parks and Leisure
- Engineering and Operations
- Corporate Sustainability & Finance
- Information Services

These departments were involved in the Environmental Management Strategy and are aware of the recommendations in the report. It is noted that some of these items may appear in future department work programs. The availability of appropriate City staff to work on these recommendations, once adopted into the work plan, will be a factor in the timing of the Implementation Plan.

D. Strategic Alignment:

As requested in previous Council Workshops on May 2013, March and April of 2014, the discussion items and preferences shared by Council are reflected in this report.

Recognizing that priorities may change over time in response to new information or conditions, there will be an opportunity to address these changes and priorities through several mechanisms. The first mechanism to ensure adaptive management measures are in place will be through the annual business planning process. There are also potential opportunities for review of complex medium and long term recommendations with the assistance of an Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee in the future.

ALTERNATIVES:

There are two possible alternative resolutions that Council may also wish to consider, as follows:

1. That Council endorse the Environmental Management Strategy April 2014 without additional review or endorsement by the 'to be formed' Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee.
2. That Council direct staff not to proceed with commencement of the Short Term High Priority Action Items and instead refer the short term high priority action items to the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee for further consideration and review before forwarding it along for endorsement by Council.

CONCLUSIONS:

The *Environmental Management Strategy* contains a significant amount of research, information and management tools that will aid in meeting future environmental demands over the short, moderate, and long-term, with regular review and consideration of the information. This ongoing review of how we can effectively implement environmental programs, management strategies, and best management practices will be necessary to ensure that the goals of achieving a sustainable community are well-supported and effective in the future.

The consolidated list of short term high priority action items recommended for endorsement in this report will help to provide important improvements over the next several years. This report lays the immediate foundation and provides key stepping stones for moving ahead with the broader implementation of recommendations identified through the *Environmental Management Strategy*. These strategies will also help the City of Maple Ridge continue to move towards our goals and objectives by addressing and adapting to ongoing environmental challenges. There will also be ongoing opportunities in the future for Council to work with the 'to be formed' Environmental and Sustainable Advisory Committee to assist in the review and evaluation of remaining short, moderate and long term strategies / actions items.

"Original signed by Rod Stott"

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"Original signed by J.L. (Jim) Rule"

**Concurrence: J.L. (Jim) Rule
Chief Administrative Officer**

Attachments:

Appendix A - Environmental Management Strategy Implementation Plan

Links:

Please see on line Environmental Management Strategy, April 2014

<http://www.mapleridge.ca/DocumentCenter/View/2947>

Figure 7: Implementation Plan Table

Key Actions		Resources Required	Phasing	Relative Priority	Role
Refine Existing Bylaws and Strategies					
A4 a	Update Soil Deposit Bylaw	Low	Short	High	D, MAg
B3 a	Update Watercourse DP and Watercourse Protection Bylaws	Low	Med	Med	D, DFO
B3 b	Update Natural Features DP map	Low	Med	Med	D
B4 a	Stormwater/rainwater in Subdivision Servicing Bylaw	Low	Med	Med	D
B5 a	Update Natural Features DP focus and guidelines	Med	Med	Med	D
B8 a	Sustainable design standards in Subdivision Servicing Bylaw	Med	Med	Med	D
New Bylaws, Strategies, Plans and Tools					
A1 a	Sustainable management plans at a broad scale	High	Med	Med	D, Met, MFL
A1 b	Interdepartmental IWMPs	Med	Med	High	D
A1 c	Groundwater management plans	High	Med	High	D, MFL
A2 a	Ecological network management strategy	Med	Med	High	D, Met, MFL
A3 a	Quantify values of natural assets	Low	Long	Low	D
B2 a	New Tree Preservation and Management Bylaw	Low	Short	High	D
B2 c	New tools for tree protection and planting	Med	Long	Med	D
B2 d	Update bylaws re: tree protection and planting	Low	Med	High	D
B2 e	Expand tree protection and management programs	Med	Med	Med	D
B2 f	Urban Forest Management Plan	High	Long	Low	D
B3 c	New Watercourse DP map	Low	Med	Med	D
B4 b	Stormwater and rainwater design standards	Med	Med	Med	D
B5 b	New Natural Features DP map	Low	Med	Med	D
B6 a	Natural Hazards DP for slopes and creeks	Med	Med	Med	D
B6 b	Integrate wildfire into Natural Hazards DP	Low	Long	Low	D
B7 a	System for sustainable development practices review	Low	Short	High	D
B7 b	Incentives for sustainable development practices	Low	Short	High	D
B9 a	Integrate monitoring and enforcement into policies and processes	Low	Short	High	D, P
B9 b	Use indicators and targets	Med	Med	Med	D
B9 c	Use full-cost accounting for decision-making	High	Long	Low	D
C1 a	Consider an EnvAC	Med	Short	High	D
C2 a	EMS website as an information hub	Med	Med	High	D
Management Activities					
A1 d	Collaborate on broad scale resource management	Med	Ongoing	High	D
A4 b	Improve soil deposit practices	Med	Ongoing	High	D
A4 c	Improve environmental farm practices	Med	Ongoing	Low	D
B1 a	Development process incentives and tools for nature protection	Low	Ongoing	High	D
B2 b	Development process tree protection and planting	Med	Ongoing	High	D
B3 d	Collaborate on watercourse implementation, monitoring, enforcement	Med	Ongoing	High	D
B4 c	Integrate ISMPs in area planning	Low	Ongoing	Med	D
B8 b	Coordinate among departments for EMS consistency	Low	Ongoing	High	D
C1 b	Refine communication processes	Low	Ongoing	High	D
C2 b	Environmental marketing in communications strategy	Med	Ongoing	High	D
C3 a	Expand environmental education partnerships	Med	Ongoing	Med	D
C4 a	Encourage businesses offering nature experiences	Low	Ongoing	Low	D
Other					
C5 a	Provide more resrouces to environmental section to implement the EMS	Med	Short	High	D