

Report

Date October 4, 2022
Subject UBC Partnership Group – Draft Forest Management Scenario Review

PURPOSE

To consider the draft forest management scenarios the UBC Partnership Group has developed and receive feedback from Council before the next round of public engagement begins. The UBC Partnership Group will be providing a presentation.

BACKGROUND

On June 17, 2019, the UBC Partnership Group presented a high-level proposal to the Forestry Advisory Committee (FAC) that outlined potential options and methods to proceed with the municipal forestry operations review at the request of Council. At their July 3, 2019 meeting, Council supported, in principle, to collaborate with the UBC Partnership Group to develop a sustainable forest management plan that included a list of diverse values of the Municipal Forest to the community. The UBC group provided Council with a written proposal outlining a framework for conducting a technical review of our forest management practices and providing potential forest management scenarios for Council's consideration that will be informed from the public engagement process. Council reviewed and approved the UBC group proposal and budget at the August 21, 2019 Council meeting.

There have been changes and delays in the original process. Initially, the review was paused in 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the first round of public consultation would begin, Council suspended the forestry review activities while government to government consultation took place with the Quw'utsun Nation Alliance. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was subsequently signed in August 2021 that outlines the commitment by both parties to work together and the importance of proactive communication to maintain a positive working relationship to better understand and discuss any issues related to the Municipal Forest Reserve (MFR). To achieve this, the MOU established a First Nations Working Group whose role is to exchange information related to the stewardship and use of the MFR for the benefit of the community. The government-to-government discussions with the Quw'utsun Nation Alliance are ongoing and take place separately from the public engagement process. Any input received through these discussions will be incorporated into the current scenario options or could potentially result in a fifth forest management option depending on the input received. Any new information or forest scenario options as a result of Quw'utsun Nation Alliance input will be provided to Council as they consider their decision on a future forest management scenario option.

On September 21, 2021, Council approved the resumption of public engagement on the MFR review. Later that fall, the public were invited to participate in Round 1 of the engagement process through facilitated virtual workshops and a survey that aimed to determine the vision and values held by the public around the MFR and past forestry practices. The UBC group used the input gathered from stakeholders early in the process, and the public engagement activities in Round 1 to help inform the decision-making process as they contemplated potential forest management scenario options. The UBC group has finished their analysis and presented the draft forest management options for review and comment to the FAC on September 28, 2022. The FAC asked clarifying questions, provided general

comments for consideration and recommended the draft forest management scenarios be referred to Council as presented. Staff and the UBC are seeking comments and feedback from Council before the draft forest management scenario options are used as part of Round 2 forestry public engagement.

DISCUSSION

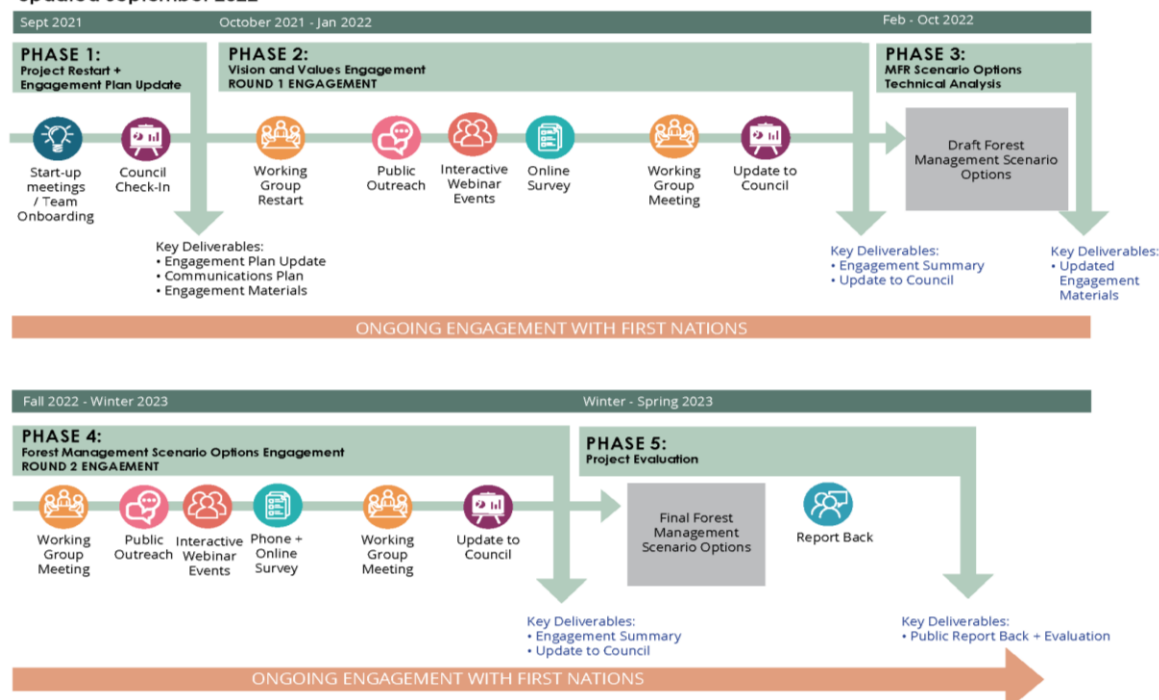
Now that the draft forest management scenario options have been completed and presented to the FAC for review and comment, the UBC Group are seeking Council feedback before the second round of public engagement begins this fall. A summary of the forest management scenario options along with more information about the modelling process (Attachment 1), the UBC Group presentation slides (Attachment 2), and the draft forest management scenario analysis (Attachment 3), have been appended to this report. Engagement materials tailored for use by the general public, and detailed outputs and results from each scenario will be included as part of Round 2 of public engagement.

Once the draft forest management scenario options have been reviewed, staff will work with the engagement consultant to prepare the materials for Round 2 of public engagement. The first steps will be to finalize the draft materials with input from the UBC group and to convene meetings with the Forestry Engagement Working Group to review materials before publicly releasing them this fall. Round 2 of public engagement will include workshops, a survey, and a statistically valid phone survey of North Cowichan residents. Staff are considering a mixture of in-person and virtual activities to ensure that anyone interested in participating can do so in their preferred way.

Below is an updated timeline for the forestry review and public engagement processes:

SCHEDULE

Updated September 2022



At the conclusion of Round 2 public engagement, the information will be compiled, summarized, and presented to Council. This information will also be given to the UBC group to be used when considering potential changes to the draft forest management scenarios presented in Round 1. Similar to how the draft scenarios were developed, the feedback gathered from Round 2 of public engagement will inform

the UBC group as they finalize the potential forest management scenarios for Council's review and consideration for adopting a forest management plan scenario. As mentioned in this report, any additional input received by the Quw'utsun Nation Alliance will be included into the scenario analysis and provided to Council for consideration. Following Council's adoption of a forest management scenario, a detailed forestry management implementation plan will then be required.

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council endorse the UBC Partnership Group Draft Forest Management Scenario Summary as appended to the Municipal Forester' report, dated October 4, 2022, and direct staff to proceed with Round 2 of forestry public engagement.
2. THAT Council direct the UBC Partnership Group to make the following amendments to the Draft Forest Management Scenario Summary, as appended to the Municipal Forester' report, dated October 4, 2022 to:
 - a. *[Council to describe where the amendments are to be made]*

IMPLICATIONS

The FAC did not propose changes to the UBC Partnership Group's draft forest management scenarios and moved that the scenarios be referred to Council as presented. If Council were to propose changes, the UBC group would need additional time to review and incorporate changes into the scenario analysis. The amount of time and additional budget required would be dependent on the scope of the requested changes. Staff would review any changes with the UBC group and the engagement consultant to ensure they have capacity to accommodate the additional work. Once reviewed with the consultants, staff would report back after the inauguration of the Council-Elect this fall outlining potential capacity issues, cost implications, the impact on the public engagement timeline, and seek Council direction on how to proceed.

The data outputs from the model used to complete the draft forest management scenario analysis have been included in response to requests from the public (Attachment 3). Including this data is consistent with Council's service goal for providing responsive and transparent service to the community. This working data is not in a format that can be easily interpreted and is subject to minor changes as the UBC group continues to refine the data in preparation for Round 2 of public engagement. Staff are working with the UBC group and the engagement consultant to translate this data into a format that will be easily understood as part of the Round 2 public engagement process.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council endorse the UBC Partnership Group Draft Forest Management Scenario Summary as appended to the Municipal Forester' report, dated October 4, 2022, and direct staff to proceed with Round 2 of forestry public engagement.

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Approved to be forwarded to Council:



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Attachments:

- (1) Draft Forest Management Scenario Summary
- (2) UBC Draft Forest Management Scenario Analysis Presentation
- (3) UBC Scenario Analysis Working Data