

NO: **R043**

COUNCIL DATE: **March 11, 2013**

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **March 6, 2013**

FROM: **General Manager, Engineering  
General Manager, Planning and Development**

FILE: **6440-20(EMS)  
4812-9110-00**

SUBJECT: **Update on the Preparation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Engineering Department and the Planning and Development Department recommend that Council receive this report as information.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the development of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the City.

## BACKGROUND

At its Regular meeting on November 28, 2011, Council approved the recommendations of Corporate Report No. R216; 2011 titled "*Terms of Reference for the Preparation of a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy*", thereby authorizing staff to proceed with preparation of a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the City based on the terms of reference contained in that report.

In general, the focus of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (the "Strategy") is to provide direction for biodiversity management in the City over time. The Strategy will identify and quantify the current biodiversity and wildlife habitat resources within Surrey and establish both short-term and longer-term management recommendations and guidelines to assist in ensuring that priority biodiversity across the City is conserved and thrives in perpetuity. With the establishment of appropriate biodiversity targets and goals, the effectiveness of the Strategy can be monitored over time.

The Strategy will:

- Identify and quantify current biodiversity and wildlife habitat resources within the City of Surrey;
- Set conservation objectives for species and populations of wildlife and ecosystems (i.e., biodiversity targets) across the City;
- Establish habitat conservation criteria for corridors, sites and hubs in support of maintaining biodiversity and specific ecosystems and wildlife across the City;

- Identify the lands that should be managed to maintain a network of natural areas to ensure that target levels of biodiversity are maintained in perpetuity across the City; and
- Establish indicators and measures that will be monitored over time to assist in measuring progress on and the effectiveness of the Strategy, which will assist in ensuring that amendments are made to the Strategy as necessary to maintain its effectiveness.

## **DISCUSSION**

Following authorization for the preparation of the Strategy, in May 2012 a consultant was retained to undertake the project, and a supporting Steering Committee and Working Group were established.

### **Staff Steering Committee**

A Steering Committee involving senior staff from each of the Planning and Development Department, the Engineering Department and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department has been formed and oversees the work of the consultant responsible for preparing the Strategy.

### **Working Group**

A Working Group has been formed with representation from each of nine community and environmental groups, First Nations, surrounding municipalities, government agencies and members of the City Committees (Environmental Advisory Committee, Development Advisory Committee) along with City staff. The members of the Working Group are listed in Appendix I. The Working Group is providing input and feedback on the development of the Strategy.

### **Project Status**

The majority of the Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) mapping component of the project has been completed. Implementation strategies and guidelines, as well as monitoring indicators and measures, are currently being developed by the consultant with input from and review by the Steering Committee and the Working Group.

### **Financial Strategy**

The GIN that is a fundamental part of the Strategy and includes proposed wildlife hubs, sites and corridor areas will be a significant community amenity but, unlike riparian areas, there is no statutory protection for some of these areas from development. Local governments have some mechanisms available as a means to acquire some of the GIN. These tools include regulated streamside setbacks and the ability to permit density bonuses with clustering outside of the GIN area; however, some areas may need to be purchased by the City to ensure their long-term protection and appropriate management.

Similar to the “green space levy” being explored as part of the Grandview Heights Area #4 NCP to fund the establishment of a large natural hub and wildlife corridor in the core of Area#4, the Strategy will include a Financial Strategy for Council’s consideration that will recommend financial mechanisms to acquire the lands identified in the Strategy that will need to be purchased.

### **Next Steps**

The Strategy is expected to be completed by the end of June 2013.

The following represent milestone dates:

- March 2013 - Presentations to City Committees
- April 2013 - Public Open House
- May 2013 - Development of a Financial Strategy
- June 2013 - Forward Final Strategy for Council consideration

## **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The proposed Strategy is an integral part of the Ecosystem Management Study and will assist in meeting the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter; more particularly the following:

- EN 12: Enhancement and Protection of Natural areas, fish habitat and wildlife habitat: By undertaking an Ecosystem Management study to update the City's mapping, policies and practices with regard to the identification, protection and management of environmentally sensitive areas using the Ecosystem Management Approach;
- EN9-7: Sustainable Land Use Planning and Development Practices: By formalizing site planning processes that avoid critical habitat and preserve and protect and enhance natural habitat and landscape features; and
- EN17: Enhance Biodiversity: By developing practical, effective and equitable approaches to protecting fish habitat and wildlife habitat through the development of a coordinated biodiversity strategy.

## **CONCLUSION**

The preparation of a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy is well underway. This Strategy will provide policy direction for biodiversity management in the City over time, and will include the identification and quantification of the current biodiversity and wildlife habitat resources within Surrey. It will establish both short-term and longer-term management recommendations and guidelines to assist in ensuring that priority biodiversity across the City is conserved and thrive indefinitely. The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy is expected to be forwarded to Council for consideration in the early summer of this year.

Jean Lamontagne  
General Manager,  
Planning and Development

Vincent Lalonde, P.Eng.  
General Manager, Engineering

JA/SG/brb

Appendix I - Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Working Group Membership

# APPENDIX I

## Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Working Group

### City Committees

Environmental Advisory Committee  
Development Advisory Committee

Al Shulze  
Deana Grinnell

### Community Groups/NGOs/ Conservation Organizations

Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society  
Little Campbell Watershed Society  
Sunnyside Acres Heritage Society  
Surrey Environmental Partners  
A Rocha Canada

Marg Cuthbert  
David Riley  
Roy Strang  
Deb Jack  
Peter de Koning  
Christy Juteau

Langley Environmental Partners Society

Lisa Dreves  
Kim Greenwood

Semiahmoo Fish and Game Club

Ron Meadley  
Phillip Milligan

Ducks Unlimited

Dan Buffet

David Suzuki Foundation

John Werring

### First Nations

Semiahmoo First Nation

Joanne Charles

### Municipalities

Township of Langley  
Corporation of Delta  
Metro Vancouver

Justin St. Andrassy  
Marcy Sangret  
Erin Embley