



STAFF REPORT TO Electoral Area B Parks and Open Spaces Advisory Committee September 26, 2022

707 COMMUNITY PARK FUEL MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTION IMPLEMENTATION

Please note: The original recommendation was varied by the Electoral Area B Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee.

That a report be provided with options for implementing the fuel management prescription in the 707 Community Park that are more reflective of the ecological goals of a park, including implications and opportunities for grant funding, project phasing and length of time implementing the project, implementing a pilot or demonstration project, different implementation options other than mechanical, and using Area B Community Parks funds instead of grant funds.

RECOMMENDATION

That the 707 Community Park Fuel Management Prescription be implemented.

BACKGROUND

In 2021, a consulting firm was hired to develop a fuel management prescription for the 707 Community Park located in Electoral Area B.

Findings from the report indicate that the 707 Community Park has a high wildfire threat due to the park's dense flammable fuels and its proximity to residential areas (attachment 1 – 707 Community Park Fuel Management Prescription).

The report recommends implementing three treatment units to reduce the fire risk in the park (attachment 1 – 707 Community Park Fuel Management Prescription - treatment unit map p. 19). The proposed treatments consist of removing dead and dying trees as well as removing suppressed trees. The proposed treatments also include the pruning of low branches of the retained trees to reduce ladder fuel and improve forest health. All trees and branches are proposed to be chipped and removed from the park.

The table below summarizes the objectives for each phase.

Treatment Unit	Treatment Unit Area (ha)	% of total park area (425.7ha)	Method	Treatment Details
1	9.84 ha	2.31%	Manual	Thin to approximately 600 stems per hectare or 88% of current standing stems.

2	61.79 ha	14.51%	Mechanized	Prune branches to 5m above grade. Remove dead and dying trees.
3	23.94 ha	5.62%	Mechanized	Chip and haul away material.
Total	95.57 ha	22.45%		

The modeling provided in the consultant's report identifies that there is a high likelihood that a fire in the park could develop into a crown fire during hot and dry conditions. It suggests that a continuous crown fire could spread quickly, destroying trees, wildlife habitats, and potentially nearby homes.

The high fire risk in the 707 Community Park is of special concern and it is recommended that actions be taken as soon as able to reduce the fire risk. It is recommended that the fuel management prescription be implemented in a phased approach with Phase 1 (Treatment Unit 1) proceeding in 2024. Applications for grant funding through the UBCM Community Resiliency Investment must be made in 2023 (typically opening in October), and if not successful the project will need to be funded through taxation commencing in 2024.

The 707 Community Park Management Plan, developed in 2010, recommends implementing a fuel reduction program and regular fire risk assessments to reduce the risk of fire (attachment 2 – 707 CP Management Plan Excerpt p. 40). As such, implementing the proposed fuel management prescription would be consistent with the 2010 park management plan.

If fuel management activities do not proceed, the current high wildfire threat will likely remain and possibly increase, resulting in increased risk to park and nearby homes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost of each treatment phase is detailed in the table below.

Phase (Treatment Unit)	Area (ha)	Approximate Total
1	9.84 ha	\$146,616
2	61.79 ha	\$920,671
3	23.94 ha	\$356,706

An application will be submitted to a UBCM CRI to request financial support, which can provide up to 100% of the funding required to complete the fuel management treatments as described in the fuel management prescription.

If grant funding is not available, it is recommended that the Electoral Area B Community Park budget include dedicated funding to implement the 3 phases recommended in the fuel management prescription.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Environmental Stewardship - Protect and enhance the natural environment, including land, water, and air quality for future generations.

REVIEWED BY:

- Y. Gagnon, Manager, Parks Services
- T. Moore, Acting Director of Finance
- D. Banman, Acting General Manager, Recreation and Parks
- E. Tian, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

1. 707 Community Park Fuel Management Prescription
2. 707 Community Park Management Plan Excerpt p. 40