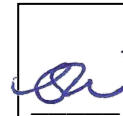



☐ Info Package

Date:


Dept.
Manager


GM/
Director


CAO

The District of North Vancouver INFORMATION REPORT TO COUNCIL

May 16, 2024

File: 12.6380.6295930

AUTHOR: Monica Woods Marshall, Section Manager Urban Forestry and Natural Areas

SUBJECT: Forest Resilience Implementation Program - Follow up from the December 12, 2023 Council Workshop

REASON FOR REPORT:

This report responds to questions posed at the December 12, 2023 Council Workshop on the Forest Resilience Implementation Program and provides an update on next steps.

BACKGROUND:

At the December 12, 2023, Council Workshop, the Parks Department presented the Forest Resilience Implementation Program for discussion. Through this program the District is operationalizing the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (CCAS), the Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan (POSSP), the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and the Tree Work in the District policy. The Program addresses tree risk through a more holistic, strategic and efficient approach and includes hazard tree mitigation, wildfire risk mitigation and forest health restoration.

The Program has three main objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1: Advance forest health restoration projects in priority areas through an ongoing operational program

OBJECTIVE 2: Continue to develop and advance related plans, strategies and policies to align forest health initiatives

OBJECTIVE 3: Enhance shared stewardship of District forests through partnerships, outreach and education

ANALYSIS:

At the Workshop, Council members expressed support for the Forest Resilience Implementation Program, noting the declining state of District forests and agreeing that forest resilience work is necessary. Some Council members raised concerns or had questions about program scope, cost and the role of other jurisdictions. These topics are addressed below:

1. Program Scope:

This program does not attempt to treat the District's 2000+ hectares of forested parkland. The program prioritizes public safety, focusing on areas with concentrated tree health concerns and hazards that pose a risk to people and infrastructure. For the first five years, 17 sites have been identified that meet the highest risk profile based on the following criteria:

- Public safety
- Risk of property damage
- Wildfire risk
- Known environmental/biological stressors (including looper moth damage, root and stem rot, dwarf mistletoe, invasive species and susceptibility to windstorms)
- Presence of sensitive ecosystems
- Community health/recreation values
- Budgetary and other constraints

As shown in Attachment 1, in the first 5 years, approximately 120 ha will be treated, which is approximately 5% of the District's natural parkland, and 15 sites fall within the District's Wildfire Hazard Development Permit Area. Staff have prioritized areas with known hazard tree concerns where the District can immediately improve safety for adjacent property owners, protect infrastructure, restore environmental degradation and improve park and trail user safety in high use recreation areas within or adjacent to the urban interface. In addition, these areas have all been assessed and identified to have high concentrations of invasive plant species.

By focusing on areas that will benefit from strategic tree removals and forest health restoration practices, the District will reduce its emergency tree failure response at these locations and will restore the integrity of these urban forest interface areas. This work will also reduce the District's exposure to risks such as infrastructure damage from tree failures, slope instabilities, flooding and wildfires.

As these are pre-identified sites that include known concentrations of hazard trees adjacent to the urban interface/high use recreation areas, signage will be installed as needed to notify of the potential for hazardous conditions and closures to some areas may be required to maintain public safety until treatment and restoration can be implemented.

2. Role of Other Jurisdictions:

Forested areas located on District land are the jurisdictional responsibility of the municipality and through this program the most critical locations of District parkland that require hazard mitigation and restoration will be prioritized for implementation. Staff will also continue to coordinate forest resilience efforts with neighbouring landowners and partners such as Metro Vancouver Parks, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Recreation Sites and Trails B.C., Grouse Mountain Resort and BC Hydro.

The Mountainview Park hazard tree and forest restoration work completed in 2023 is a recent example that involved collaboration with Metro Vancouver Parks for the coordinated effort in adjacent Lynn Headwaters. Staff also regularly coordinate hazard tree work with BC

Hydro and Grouse Mountain Resort. Staff will continue to actively pursue opportunities to further collaborate with partner agencies, share resources and secure grants where feasible.

3. Program Cost:

The Forest Resilience Implementation Program will cost an estimated \$6.5 million over the first five years. For 2024 a total budget of \$375 thousand has been allocated, which will allow staff to begin implementation in the first year at 1-2 locations (Kirkstone Park and Windridge Park). Approximately \$4.6 million of the 5-year program is currently unfunded. Staff will report back on program progress through the Financial Plan update in Fall 2024, which will inform future budget allocations for years 2025-2028.

As the program prioritizes safety and hazard tree concerns, there are cost savings and efficiencies of scale when tree removal work is proactively assembled rather than responding to each tree inquiry, complaint or failure individually. While public safety is the main priority, there are other mutual benefits of the work including invasive species mitigation, biodiversity enhancement, tree canopy restoration and maintaining the forested characteristic of the District. Through this program the District is addressing tree risk and operationalizing the CCAS, CWPP and the Tree Work in the District policy through a more holistic, strategic and efficient approach.

Timing/Approval Process: Staff will begin implementation of this program in Summer 2024. In Fall 2024, Council will receive an update on program progress through the Financial Plan update. Staff will provide regular updates to Council as projects are completed and through future budget process.

Respectfully submitted,



Monica Woods Marshall, RPBio
Section Manager Urban Forestry and Natural
Areas

REVIEWED WITH:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Business and Economic	_____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance	<u>RD</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Bylaw Services	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Services	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Clerk's Office	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate and Biodiversity	<u>CJ</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> IPG	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Parks	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Development Engineering	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate	_____
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		External Agencies:	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Library Board	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Museum and Archives	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> NSEM	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> NS Health	_____
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		<input type="checkbox"/> RCMP	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	_____

Attachment 1
Proposed Forest Health Restoration Projects

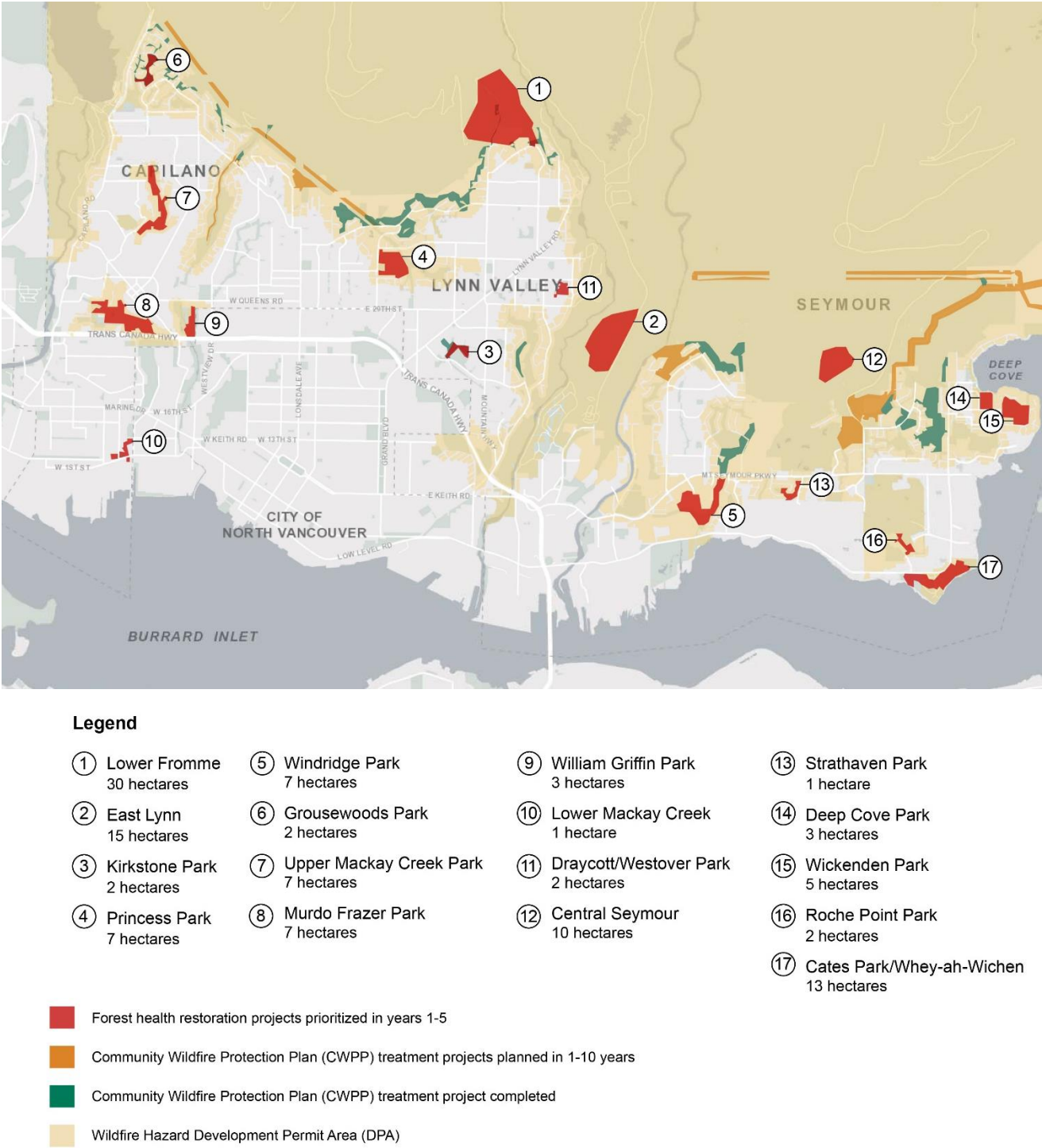


Figure 1. This map includes 17 forest health restoration project locations prioritized for the next 1-5 years, CWPP fuel treatment areas completed and CWPP future projects.