

Memo



To: Regular Meeting
From: **Deputy Manager of Operations and Sustainability**
Date: 2018-09-24
Subject: Airport watermain, road right of way, and trees.

Background

Council approved the project to upgrade the watermain at the airport in the 5-year Financial Plan adopted in 2018. The path of the watermain upgrade at the airport goes through a treed area and the trees must be removed to dig the trench for the watermain and to clear the road right of way. The right of way extends twenty metres from the north end of the airport parcel away from Unifab as shown in Figure 1. Most of it is clear already, but the section closest to 2nd Street has two stands of Ponderosa pine trees. A biologist was engaged to review the area for any sensitive habitat and to provide recommendations for controlling the establishment of invasive species after ground disturbance. Staff will implement these recommendations in the project.





Images 1: Area to be thinned on the left, cleared on the right.

No obvious wildlife use was noted in the right of way although specific trees outside of it were identified as being used by woodpeckers. The overall habitat value of the trees in the road right of way was deemed to be low. Thinning was recommended for the area outside of the road right of way. Specifically, all trees with a diameter at breast height of less than 7cm should be removed and this accounts for about eighty percent of the trees in the stand. This creates a closer approximation to the high value habitat described as widely spaced clumps or individual mature ponderosa pines with an understory of bunchgrass and some shrubs.

In recognition of the 0.28ha of area to be disturbed, staff plan to plant an equivalent area along the Kettle or Granby rivers to restore riparian area habitat. Success of the restoration planting means the survival of planted native trees and shrubs such that they provide valuable ecosystem services.

Council passes Urban Forest Policy #1105 in May of 2018. It provides the guidelines for tree removal, one of which is the interference with municipal or utility infrastructure. The trees within the road right of way fit within that justification for removal. The policy directs staff to manage the urban forest for public benefits including habitat improvement and riparian area improvement. The thinning and subsequent improvement of the rest of the treed area and planned planting along riparian areas work towards these objectives.






Image 2: Area to be cleared.

Benefits or Impacts

General

Overall, the watermain project creates additional development potential at the airport which creates economic benefits like an expanded tax base and additional employment.

Strategic Impact

-  We will continue to proactively identify and plan for infrastructure repair and replacement.
-  We foster a vibrant economic environment.
-  We are open yet disciplined in land development decisions.

Policy/Legislation

Urban Forest Policy 1105

Attachments

Kettle Ecological Technical Memo

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Memo 2018 - Airport Watermain Trees.docx
Attachments:	- Grand forks airport Rd tree removal vCouncil.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Sep 19, 2018

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature - Task assigned to David Reid was completed by assistant Cavan Gates

David Reid - Sep 19, 2018 - 12:49 PM

No Signature - Task assigned to Diane Heinrich was completed by assistant Daniel Drexler

Diane Heinrich - Sep 19, 2018 - 2:38 PM