
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 24, 2005
File No.: 6300-09

To: City Manager

From: Parks Manager

Subject: Fuel Management on Steep or Inaccessible City Properties

Prepared by: Ian Wilson, Urban Forestry Supervisor

RECOMMENDATION

THAT logging on steep or inaccessible areas be re-tendered for the Fall of 2005, in the hope of attracting more bidders.

BACKGROUND

Earlier this year, the Parks Division presented to Council an overview of a recent Fuel Management Strategy completed by a team of consultants for city owned properties.

One of the challenges was that some of the remaining areas identified for fuel modification in the plan are inaccessible or very steep. Fuel modification in these areas could result in environmental degradation, or be very difficult or unsafe for workers to haul fuels out by hand. While piling and burning of fuels is the most inexpensive option, Council directed Parks to pursue helicopter logging, because of air quality concerns.

Parks composed a Request For Proposal (RFP) for three of the higher priority areas. There were some delays in the process as Parks first obtained more detailed site prescriptions through our consultant as well as a geotechnical consultant, in order to ensure that proposed works would not result in environmental degradation or hazardous conditions on these steep slopes. One concern was related to loose rock that could possibly be dislodged. Parks has received additional funds through the final budget process to further assess some of the rocky slopes on Dilworth, as recommended by our Geotechnical consultant. In the mean time the consultants developed recommendations whereby helicopter logging activities could be done with minimal risk.

The RFP requested helicopter logging or "alternative" means of tree removal, with the hope that logging contractors might be able to propose other creative solutions. The three areas proposed in the RFP included two areas on Dilworth mountain (6.3, and 1.3 ha) and 2.9 ha on a city owned property near the southern end of the Glenmore Highlands, for a total area of 10.5 ha.

Only one bid was received, from Valhalla Helicopters Inc., at a total price of \$240,750 including taxes, or almost \$23,000 per ha. Note that this bid covers the cost of cutting and removing fuels to a central landing site, but does not cover any additional costs associated with grinding or disposal of wood waste from the landing site, which could add another \$20,000 to the cost.

This cost is well above Parks' existing fuel reduction budget of \$130,000, which is already committed through partnerships to fuel reduction on other city properties. Parks has consulted with the Kelowna Fire Department, who feel that the work is important and should still be completed as soon as possible. In speaking with some of the bidders, timing of the project is part of the problem, as this is a very busy time of year for helicopter contractors.

There are four main options:

- 1) Do nothing;
- 2) Spend the estimated \$260,000 now (or in phases), to complete the helicopter logging and all wood disposal;
- 3) Re-consider the use of "pile and burn" as a means of wood disposal. This would dramatically reduce the costs but the work would have to be put off until this coming Fall/Winter when burning is permitted; or
- 4) Re-bid the contract in August, for work to be completed in October in the hope of attracting more bidders.

Option #4 helps ensure that we get the best price to do the work, but it does involve some risk over the coming fire season.

Joe Creron, Parks Manager

c.c. Director of Parks and Leisure Services
 Urban Forestry Supervisor
 Environment Manager
 Fire Chief
 Director of Planning and Corporate Services
 Risk Manager