

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: May 30, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Jim Gordon, P.Eng., Director, Engineering & Municipal Operations

SUBJECT: Vegetation Control on the Hump

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the corporate report dated May 30, 2022, from the Director of Engineering & Municipal Operations, titled "Vegetation Control on the Hump" providing information on the feasibility of bringing maintenance of the Hump greenery to pre-2019 levels and to provide direction to staff.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The blackberries on the Hump are currently being trimmed in areas immediately south of the fence. However, the tree shoots growing from stumps south of the fence are not being trimmed. The tree shoots have grown to the extent that they block some resident's views and also the views of pedestrians and those seated on the benches at various viewpoints along the Hump.

In response to a delegation that appeared before Council at its regular meeting on February 22, 2022, Council requested that the feasibility of more extensive trimming, including the trimming of tree shoots be investigated.

This report discusses options for consideration related to maintenance of the vegetation growth on the Hump.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Motion # & Meeting Date	Motion Details
2019-278 July 8, 2019	THAT Council directs staff to bring forward a corporate report that will outline what level of work can be done in regard to trimming / cutting along Marine Drive (maintaining vegetation on the Hump). <u>Motion CARRIED</u>
2019-311 July 22, 2019	THAT Council 1. Receives for information the corporate report dated July 22, 2019 from the Acting Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations titled "Marine Drive "Hump" Vegetation Management Plan";

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

	<p>2. Directs staff to maintain the vegetation of the blackberry bushes; however, exclude the trimming of the trees;</p> <p>3. Endorses the amended Marine Drive "Hump" Vegetation Management Plan as outlined in this corporate report;</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Motion CARRIED</u></p>
2022-055 February 28, 2022	<p>THAT Council directs staff to report back on the feasibility of bringing maintenance of the hump greenery to pre-2019 levels including compliance to new policies in place as well as budget implications.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Motion CARRIED</u></p>

The blackberry bushes on the Hump are currently being trimmed in areas immediately south of the fence. Council requested that the feasibility of more extensive trimming, including the trimming of tree shoots be investigated.

A delegation appeared at the Regular Council meeting on July 8, 2019, requesting that the foliage along the Hump be trimmed. Council directed staff to bring forward a corporate report outlining the level of work that can be done in regard to trimming, cutting and maintaining the vegetation growth on the Hump (Appendix A).

Staff reported back to Council on July 22, 2019, with several recommendations for maintenance of the blackberry bushes and shoots growing from tree stumps (Appendix B). Council endorsed the vegetation management plan discussed in the report and directed that staff maintain the blackberry bushes but exclude the trimming of the trees (Appendix C).

Since 2019, staff have trimmed the blackberry bushes close to the fence but not the tree shoots growing from stumps. More extensive trimming of the blackberry bushes can be done, although this is limited where they are entangled with the tree shoots.

A delegation appeared at Council on February 28, 2022 advocating for trimming of vegetation on the Hump as per practices prior to 2019. Council directed staff to report back on the feasibility of bringing Hump greenery to pre-2019 levels (Appendix D).

DISCUSSION

A maintenance plan proposing regular blackberry bushes trimming three times per year and trimming of the tree shoots every three years was discussed in 2019. It was suggested that this would allow the stumps to remain alive and yet the tree shoots would not grow to the extent that they would block views.

A review of this plan from a stump health perspective was conducted by the former Manager, Parks and is included in Appendix E. A selection from the review follows:

A program of cutting back vegetation every three years will not have a negative effect on the health and vigor of this plant community. Woody plants will produce 1 m – 5 m of regrowth each year after having been cut back. Allowing 2-3 years of regrowth will allow plants to continually support a healthy root system.

Appendix E also contains opinions from GeoWest Engineering, geotechnical engineers. A selection follows:

The majority of the Hump is inclined at or near its angle of repose. The vegetative cover provides a vital role in maintaining its stability by way of root reinforcement and by controlling surface water and groundwater pore pressures. Deeper rooting tree species provide the greatest mechanical root reinforcement benefit, but taller growing trees can become a destabilizing windthrow hazard and would also block views from Marine Drive.

Both of the recent professional opinions are consistent with the recommendations in the July 22, 2019 report.

The tree shoots have now grown to the extent that they cannot be easily trimmed using a tractor mounted flail mower. A project to trim the tree shoots and blackberry bushes for the first approximate 5-10 metres south of the fence could be done by a contractor using high angle slope safety equipment, chainsaws, chipper and traffic control at a cost estimated to be \$25K.

The project for more extensive trimming is feasible; however, there are challenges as outlined in the following sections of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no provision in the Financial Plan for the \$25K expenditure. If Council wishes to proceed, the work to be carried out would need to be funded from contingency or by amending the Financial Plan.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications, but approval to enter onto the lands and carry out the work would need to be obtained from Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railway (BNSF).

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

As tree trimming on the Hump may be controversial, advance communication of the project would be necessary.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS

The Communications department and Engineering and Municipal Operations would need to work together on the timing of the work.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

There may be some minor climate change implications with the removal of regrowing tree shoots. Also, some air and noise pollution exists with the use of chainsaws and vehicles involved with the work.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TREE PRESERVATION AND TREE CANOPY ENHANCEMENT

There would be no reduction in tree canopy as proposed removal of vegetation included in the proposal for consideration is the removal of tree shoots growing from stumps.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Enhanced trimming and maintenance of the blackberry bushes and tree shoots aligns with Council's strategic priority "Our Waterfront" with the objective "Attract visitors and residents to the Waterfront."

OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES

It is feasible to carry out more extensive vegetation trimming on the Hump, including trimming of the tree shoots, in the first 5-10 metres south of the fence subject to the financial, environmental, social and other challenges outlined in this report. The benefits of improved views would accrue to nearby residents, pedestrians and tourists.

Another option available for Council's consideration is to direct staff to continue with trimming blackberry bushes immediately south of the fence only. However, this would not address the other vegetation that will continue to block the views of some residents, pedestrians and those seated on the benches on the sidewalk along the Hump. It will also result in an unkept look which is contrary to White Rock's image as a beautiful tourist friendly City and with increased growth of tree shoots, continue to reduce the views along the Hump.

CONCLUSION

More extensive trimming of the growth south of the Hump is feasible subject to the allocation of financial resources of approximately \$25K. This would improve views for residents, pedestrians and visitors and result in a more groomed appearance of the area south of the Hump

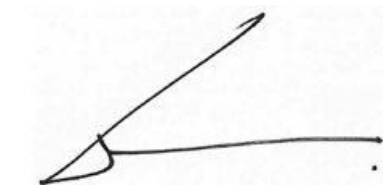
Respectfully submitted,



Jim Gordon, P.Eng.
Director of Engineering & Municipal Operations

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

I concur with the recommendation of this corporate report.



Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer

- Appendix A: Excerpt 5.1.3 from Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting on July 8, 2019
- Appendix B: Corporate Report to Council dated July 22, 2019, titled “Marine Drive “Hump” Vegetation Management Plan”
- Appendix C: and Excerpt 6.2.8 from Minutes of Regular Council Meeting dated July 22, 2019
- Appendix D: Excerpt 5.1.a from Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting on February 28, 2022
- Appendix E: GeoWest Engineering Ltd. Memorandum dated April 20, 2022