

Urban Deer Management



Purpose

To provide Council with an update on the status of urban deer management strategies within the region, including funding opportunities as well as discuss the implications of examining the problem in Victoria.



Urban Deer Committee of the Whole July 22, 2017

Background

At the December 1, 2016 Committee of the Whole meeting, as part of the Quarter Three Update, Council passed the following motion:

That Council request staff to provide a report at the next Quarterly Strategic Update on the implications of examining the urban deer problem in Victoria such as determining the extent of the problem and what funding might be available to examine this.



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Deer Management Options

Conflict Reduction - hazing and frightening, landscaping alternatives, repellants and fencing

Population Reduction – capture and relocation, capture and culling, controlled public hunting

Deer-Vehicle Collision Mitigation Options – roadway design, signage, wildlife crossings, speed limit reductions

Fertility Control – immunocontraception vaccines

Public Education – information campaigns



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Provincial Role in Deer Management

- Participation on community-based deer management committees
- The provision of technical advice
- The development of hunting regulations and the issuance of permits to manage deer populations within or near urban areas
- The loaning of available equipment to communities

More recently:

- Jointly delivered an Urban Deer Workshop in collaboration with UBCM
- Convened a Provincial Urban Deer Advisory Committee



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Funding Opportunities

- Launched the Urban Deer Operation Cost Share Program, which provides \$100,000 (total) to local governments.
- Five local governments, Oak Bay, Cranbrook, Invermere, Elkford, Grand Forks were recently awarded funding for both conflict and population reduction measures.
- Oak Bay was awarded a grant under the urban deer cost-share program to radiocollar up to 20 deer and place motion-activated video cameras on trails frequented by deer.



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Regional Deer Management Strategies

Capital Regional District

- Published a Regional Deer Management Strategy
- Developed public education tools for all municipalities
- Funded two pilot projects, between 2013-2015 in Central Saanich and Oak Bay, which included both conflict reduction and population control measures.

Esquimalt

- In 2016, completed a public survey of residents to document their attitudes and wishes regarding deer as well as a public education initiative. A population count is currently planned.



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Issues and Analysis

- Differing views on jurisdictional responsibility between the Province and local governments.
- Extent of the problem in Victoria is currently unknown but reports suggest that deer-urban conflicts are on the rise in the region and anecdotal evidence suggests that residents in the City are being impacted to a degree.



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Next Steps

- Should Council wish to proceed with a deer management strategy, there are a number of tools, including population counts, public opinion surveys, education campaigns and deer management plans that could be used to determine the extent of the problem and develop appropriate solutions for consideration.
- No funding is currently allocated to the 2017 budget for this work. Should Council wish to pursue deer management strategies, staff recommend providing direction to develop a project plan to bring forward for Council's consideration for the 2018 budget process.

