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Section 4.0: Fuel Management

4.1 - Fuel Management Overview - Fuel management is an important component of any strategy to reduce wildfire danger adjacent interface values at risk. Benefits of fuel management for wildfire hazard reduction include:

- Protection of public safety and property within and adjacent the City.
- Reduction of accidental wildfire ignition risk within and adjacent the City.
- Reduction of high intensity fire potential – minimizes fire impacts on viewscape, soil quality, slope stability / erosion, watershed, air quality and wildlife.
- Improved wildfire detection and suppression capabilities within and adjacent the City.
- Improved forest health and maintenance of diverse wildlife habitat.

4.2 - Fuel Management Strategy - The general fuel management strategy for provision of wildfire protection to WUI communities involves using:

1. Existing fuelbreaks (areas featuring deciduous or low flammability fuels, green space or access/utility infrastructure corridors). There are a number of opportunities to improve the wildfire protection afforded by existing landscape fuelbreaks. Recommendations on fuel treatments in specific fuelled areas adjacent low wildfire hazard areas are included in this plan.
2. Stand level fuel treatments involving fuel removal, fuel reduction or fuel conversion in strategic locations (adjacent values at risk - structural, utility, watershed or other resources). Stand level fuel treatments are applied in Priority Zone 2 + 3 or beyond - depending on the level of wildfire hazard protection required.

4.3 - Fuel Treatment Goals - The goal of fuel treatment is to reduce both crown and surface fire potential in priority areas. Fuel treatments are applied first to those fuels adjacent values at risk – fuel removal within Priority Zone 1 and subsequently, to fuels further from values at risk - fuel reduction in Priority Zones 2 + 3. Fuel conversion strategies can be used in Priority Zones 1 - 3 and reduce wildfire danger by retaining deciduous or low flammability species over the more combustible coniferous trees or plants. Fuel treatment goals address two priorities:

1. Reduce the chance of structural ignition from direct wildfire impingement by implementing FireSmart fuel reduction recommended guidelines wherever fuels are located within 30m of City residential values at risk. A secondary benefit will be realized in the reduction of accidental wildfire ignition risk within or adjacent City interface areas.
2. Reduce the chance of structural ignition from heavy firebrand accumulation and resulting spot fire ignitions by minimizing high intensity and crown fire potential within or up to 100m from City interface areas or within strategically located fuel treatment sites.



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4.4 - Mountain Pine Beetle – Implications for Fuel Management – The current mountain pine beetle epidemic affecting many areas of western Canada is one of several forest health issues that may affect the wildfire hazard adjacent the City. The potential fuel management implications of the mountain pine beetle epidemic are discussed in the CWPP.

Mature forests, 80 – 150 years old are most vulnerable to Mountain Pine Beetle, this vulnerability subsides as mature timber is killed by the infestation. Fires, supported by the relatively high volume of dead timber, renew the growth cycle in the stand. The relationship between pine beetle and fire as the two disturbance agents most important to renewal of pine forests is well established and occurs on a natural cycle of approximately 100 years. The effect of past forest management strategies which sought to actively suppress all wildfire and forest pests is currently a major challenge to forest managers. Without fire and other agents of forest renewal forests are now more vulnerable to pests and catastrophic wildfire events.

Pine beetle and wildfire hazard - Wildfire hazard created by pine beetle infestation varies as the affected forest dies off. Initially, pine beetle attack results in the death of affected overstory trees – dead foliage retained on the attack trees (red needle canopy) is highly combustible and until the red needles fall from the attack trees – stand level fire hazard is increased. With the loss of overstory foliage the stand level fire hazard decreases and light levels at the forest floor increase resulting in rapid growth of understory vegetation and seedlings. With the passage of time, the seedlings dominate the understory vegetation layer and the dead trees (snags) killed by the original pine beetle attack start to fall – this twofold process creates high surface fuel levels under the remaining overstory canopy – at this point, the stand level fire hazard is at its highest point with the stand now vulnerable to crown fire.

The current pine beetle epidemic in many areas of BC forest and adjacent communities is well-established. Forest managers note that a wider range of trees species and age classifications appear to be vulnerable to beetle infestation and confidence that further infestations can be controlled with existing operational or experimental methods is low. Over the long-term, forest managers predict large losses to be sustained in mature pine forests - this can result in significant increases to wildfire and public safety hazards in certain areas. Trees killed by beetle attack may stand for years, however, the stability of dead standing timber can be difficult to establish and falling trees may endanger persons in the vicinity. Dead trees also increase available fuel for wildfires.

Plans to deal with increases to wildfire and public safety hazards should include the following considerations:

- Beetle-attacked lodgepole pine trees should be removed from any municipal land with particular emphasis on removal of attacked trees located within striking distance of parkland, parking lots, trails roadways or as required for public safety.
- Fuel reduction treatments should focus on the removal of lodgepole pine susceptible to beetle attack.

Pine beetle in the Rossland Area – Although bark beetle infestations rated moderate to severe are evident in some areas within 20 km's of Rossland; BCMoFR forest health specialists currently believe that the potential for Mountain Pine Beetle infestations in the forests closer to the Rossland interface is generally low. Lodgepole pine – the species most vulnerable to attack by Mountain Pine Beetle – does not extend continuously from the pine beetle infested areas to the Rossland interface. In addition, the forests surrounding Rossland are composed of a more diverse mix of forest species and thus are less affected by pine beetle infestations.



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Mapping of mountain pine beetle and Douglas fir beetle infestations in the Rossland area is now done annually by provincial and federal agencies with aerial overview maps tracking the progress of infestation growth and location. Figure 4-1 shows the level of mountain pine beetle and Douglas fir beetle infestation at 2008. The closest areas that show any level of infestation (and these areas are generally trace, low or moderate severity of concern are located 8 – 10 kilometres west of the Rossland interface in the upper Record Creek drainages and 5 kilometres north of the Rossland interface on the north side of Topping Creek.

BCMoFR forest health specialists have observed that MPB infestations are currently behind the Marvin Eng projection forecast for peak infestation in 2014. These projections were developed in the north of the province – the location of BC’s most seriously afflicted forests) – probably overestimate beetle spread in southern forests.

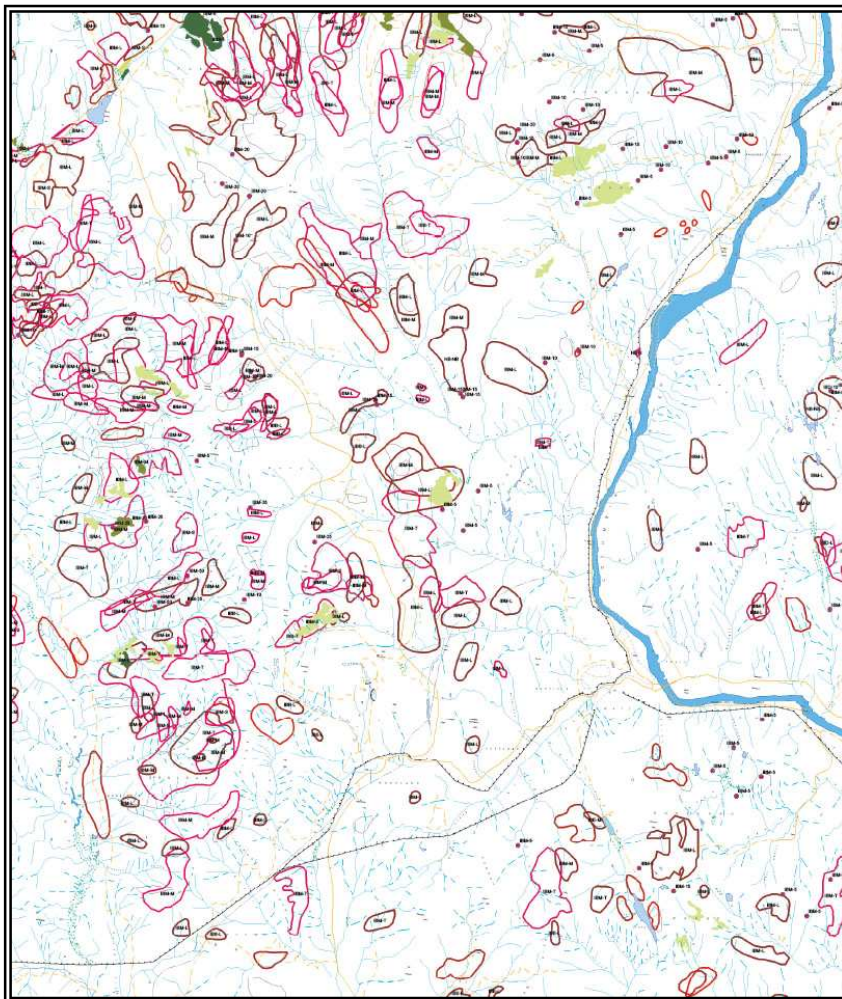


Figure 4-1: Rossland area mountain pine beetle and Douglas fir beetle infestations at 2008. Unshaded polygons denote only spot infestations - shaded polygons denote heavier infestations.

Recommendation 4.4.1 The City should review the Community Wildfire Protection Plan every five years. The City should require that forest health issues in the forest surrounding the City continue to be monitored and reported on within the Community Wildfire Protection Plan review. Federal and provincial programs targeting mitigation of wildfire hazard due to pine beetle attack may be accessed for funding assistance where required.



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4.5 - Fuel Treatment Recommendations - Fuel treatment recommendations are provided to guide hazard reduction in Category 1 – 4 fuel treatment units. Fuel treatment recommendations are based on FireSmart fuel management guidelines and incorporate the following general principles:

1. Removal of selected whole trees to leave a forest of more separated and fire resistant trees – removal of trees to reduce stem density to <40% crown cover with 3 – 6 metres between tree crowns will minimize the potential for crown fire spread.
2. Pruning of trees to increase the height to live crown to a minimum of 2 meters, this reduces the potential for surface fire to spread into tree crowns.
3. Removal of surface fuels or slash created by spacing and pruning.

Fuel treatment recommendations provide for shaded and open fuel breaks by varying whole tree spacing criteria.

Shaded fuel break - Fuel treatment recommendations for smaller, non-continuous blocks of fuels located within the City interface. These areas are subject to accidental or spot fire ignitions and fuel treatments focus on preventing ignitions from developing into high intensity crown or surface fire. This treatment will focus on surface/ladder fuel removal with less aggressive whole conifer thinning (standard specifies 3 crown widths between tree crowns). This treatment can also be applied wherever site aesthetic issues exist.

Open fuel break - Fuel treatment recommendations for continuous fuels located on or adjacent the City interface. These areas are subject to crown fire impingement and fuel treatments focus on preventing crown fire spread. This treatment will focus on surface/ladder fuel removal with more aggressive whole conifer thinning (standard specifies up to 6 crown widths between tree crowns).

Fully detailed fuel treatment recommendations are appended to Section 4.0 as **Appendix 4A – General Fuel Treatment Recommendations**. Both fuel treatment standards (specifying tree, surface fuel removal and burn pile criteria) and fuel treatment actions (methods – handfall, mechanical, chip + spread and firewood salvage with environmental and operational guidelines) are provided.

Recommendation 4.5.1 The City should commit to an annual fuel treatment program (implemented over 5 years on a priority basis) that targets progressive fuel reduction in high hazard fuel type areas identified by the CWPP planning process (Map 2 - WUI Fire Protection Units). The goal of fuel treatment is to reduce both crown and surface fire potential in priority areas. Fuel treatment programs will require that fuel break plans and site specific prescriptions be developed in consultation with qualified interface fire protection professionals.



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4.6 - Existing and Proposed Landscape Fuelbreak Units - The City is situated within an encircling network of wildfire hazard areas that range from higher hazard fuel types such as continuous coniferous or slash fuel types to lower hazard fuel types such as deciduous, mixed / open fuel types and fuel modified areas (highways, golf course, ski run or open fields and transmission line right of ways).

Deciduous Mixed Open (DMO) fuelbreaks - A number of lower wildfire hazard areas featuring DMO fuel types have been identified by the CWPP planning process. Fuel treatment units established in WUI Fire Protection Units are located to augment or improve the wildfire protection afforded by DMO fuelbreaks. There are several areas within WUI Fire Protection Units 5, 7, 9, 10 and 11 where development of landscape fuelbreaks would further improve City wildfire protection.

Highways - The interface perimeter of the City has very few road or highway right of ways. There are sections of Highway 22 / Highway 3B northwest of the City core, Highway 3B northeast of Unit's 12, 13 and 14 and Highway 3B southeast of the City core that could function as a strategic fuel break. Several fuel treatment units have been located adjacent these highway sections to further improve City wildfire protection.

Recreational Trails - There are a number of recreational trails incorporating (mountain biking , hiking, cross country ski trails and sections of the Trans-Canada Trail (Rail Grade / Wagon Road) that, if thinned to recommended fuel treatment standards, would serve to limit fire spread from or past the trail right of way. Thinning on trail right of ways would also reduce ignition potential adjacent these high traffic / high ignition risk areas and a standard is proposed in Recommendation 4.5.3.

Powerlines - The interface perimeter of the City has very few powerline right of ways that could function as strategic fuel breaks and reduce the probability of fire spreading into the City. There are several sections of British Columbia Transmission Corporation (BCTC) and Fortis transmission line that could function as fuel breaks in Unit's 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14. There are areas along the right-of-way where fuels have accumulated to levels that increase the wildfire hazard. Maintenance of the transmission right of way corridor to a fuel break standard will reduce the wildfire ignition risk on and adjacent the transmission line right of way and increase the reliability of the City's power supply.

There are a number of opportunities to improve the wildfire protection afforded by existing landscape fuelbreaks. Recommendations on fuel treatments in specific fuelled areas adjacent low wildfire hazard areas are included in this plan.

The City and cooperating agencies must recognize that fire protection strategies incorporating fuelbreak development will require a long-range commitment to completing a variety of fuel treatments. Maintenance of treated areas will also be required. Fuel treatment strategies may or may not generate revenue from sale of salvage timber removed from fuelbreak areas – market conditions and treatment costs are significant variables in this respect.

In addition, fuelbreaks are only one component of a multi-faceted fire protection strategy. The City will need to merge any fuelbreak strategy with other strategic initiatives such as FireSmart modifications to structures and wildfire prevention, preparedness and response issues.



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Recommendation 4.6.1: The City should meet with BC Ministry of Forests and Range officials to discuss the potential for development of a landscape fuelbreak within WUI Fire Protection Units 5, 7, 9, 10 and 11.

Recommendation 4.6.2 The City should meet with Ministry of Transportation & Highway officials to discuss highway right of way vegetation clearing procedures and standards along those sections of Highway 22 / Highway 3B northwest of the City core, Highway 3B northeast of Unit's 12, 13 and 14 and Highway 3B southeast of the City core that could function as a strategic fuel break.

Recommendation 4.6.3 The City should develop vegetation clearing procedures and standards for recreational trail maintenance in areas identified as strategic fuelbreaks – thinning with understory fuels removed over a 5m area on each side of the trail is proposed. Use of trails to facilitate access by fire suppression crews should also be considered in the development of any trail maintenance standard.

Recommendation 4.6.4 The City should meet with British Columbia Transmission Corporation (BCTC) and Fortis officials to discuss powerline right of way vegetation clearing procedures and standards along those sections of BCTC and Fortis transmission line that could function as a fuel break in Unit's 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14. The City should work with utility companies to establish critical electrical infrastructure hazard reduction guidelines and cooperative arrangements for maintenance of low wildfire hazard conditions on and adjacent transmission line right of ways.



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4.7 - Fuel Treatment Unit Summary - The CWPP planning process has identified a number of areas of high hazard fuel types (C2, C3, C4, C7, S2, S3) within or adjacent City WUI fire protection units. The location (adjacent values at risk) and / or continuity (providing a path for high intensity fire to advance towards and into the City) of these untreated high hazard fuels contributes to the City’s wildfire risk.

The CWPP planning process has established a number of fuel treatment units in and adjacent City WUI fire protection units with fuel treatment recommendations provided – See **Figure 4-2 - Unit Fuel Treatment Summary**. Fuel treatment work is required over a relatively small area. Nonetheless, completion of required fuel treatments may require a number of years and units have been prioritized for planning purposes.

Hazard reduction fuel treatment units have been sub-divided into 2 categories:

Category 1 - Residential Fuel Block –RFB: Private residential land within City boundary - Treatment with landowner resources.

Category 2 - Non-Residential Fuel Block – NRFB: Private non-residential (unoccupied) or Crown / institutional land within City boundary - Treatment with landowner resources or City / Crown resources.

Map 2 - WUI Fire Protection Units – shows the location of Category 1 and 2 fuel treatment units.

Figure 4-2 - Unit Fuel Treatment Summary – summarizes a variety of fuel treatment unit information. Hazard reduction fuel treatment units have been prioritized in two categories:

- Residential land – non-shaded table section with regular font.
- Non-residential or provincial land - shaded table section with **bold font**.



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Figure 4-2 - Unit Fuel Treatment Summary

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Property Type</i>	<i>Unit Location / Name</i>	<i>Number of Properties</i>	<i>Fuel Treatment Required in Priority Zone</i>	<i>Size (ha's)</i>	<i>Fire Danger Zone</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1	RFB 1-1	Core NW	~208	1/2	na	1	
1	NRFB 1-1	City Works Yard	1	2/3	0.52	1	1
	Ownership	City of Rossland					
1	NRFB 1-2	Monashee	1	2/3	0.07	1	2
	Ownership	Private					
1	NRFB 1-3	Planer	1	2/3	0.20	1	3
	Ownership	City of Rossland					
1	NRFB 1-4	Esling	1	2/3	0.28	1	4
	Ownership	City of Rossland					
1	NRFB 1-5	Nickelplate West	1	2/3	0.38	1	5
	Ownership	City of Rossland					
		Unit 1 Total NRFB hectares			1.45		
2	RFB 2-1	Core NE	~242	1/2	na	3	
3	RFB 3-1	Core SE	~213	1/2	na	3	
4	RFB 4-1	Core SW	~310	1/2	na	3	
5	RFB 5-1	Macleod North	~29	1/2	na	1	
5	NRFB 5-1	Kirkup South	1	2/3	0.26	1	3
	Ownership	Private					
5	NRFB 5-2	Kirkup West	1	2/3	6.06	1	2
	Ownership	Private					
5	NRFB 5-3	Kirkup East	1	2/3	7.29	1	4
	Ownership	Private, City of Rossland					



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5	NRFB 5-4	Iron Colt East	1	2/3	2.17	1	5
	Ownership	City of Rossland					
5	NRFB 5-5	Iron Colt South	1	2/3	4.57	1	6
	Ownership	Private					
5	NRFB 5-6	Centennial West	1	2/3	0.98	1	1
	Ownership	Private					
		Unit 5 Total NRFB hectares			21.33		
6	RFB 6-1	Happy Valley	~9	1/2	na	2	
7	RFB 7-1	Pinewood	16	1/2	na	2	
7	NRFB 7-1	Maple South	1	2/3	0.34	2	2
	Ownership	Private, RoW					
7	NRFB 7-2	Pinewood South	1	2/3	4.41	2	3
	Ownership	Private					
7	NRFB 7-3	Pinewood North	1	2/3	3.13	2	1
	Ownership	Private					
		Unit 7 Total NRFB hectares			7.88		
8	RFB 8-1	Golf Course	0	1/2	na	2	
9	RFB 9-1	South Belt	~26	1/2	na	2	
9	NRFB 9-1	Spokane South Belt	1	2/3	0.72	2	3
	Ownership	Private					
9	NRFB 9-2	Davis South Belt	1	2/3	1.62	2	4
	Ownership	Private					
9	NRFB 9-3	Davis Right of Way	1	2/3	1.19	2	2
	Ownership	Private, City of Rossland, RoW					
9	NRFB 9-4	Earl South Belt	1	2/3	0.40	2	1
	Ownership	Private					
		Unit 9 Total NRFB hectares			3.93		



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10	RFB 10-1	Mine Museum	1	1/2	na	1	
10	NRFB 10-1	Mine Museum West	1	2/3	2.43	1	1
	Ownership	Private					
10	NRFB 10-2	Mine Museum East	1	2/3	2.40	1	2
	Ownership	Private					
10	NRFB 10-3	Highway 3B West	1	2/3	8.98	1	3
	Ownership	Private, City of Rossland, Crown, MoT, MoE, RoW					
10	NRFB 10-4	Highway 3B North	1	2/3	1.10	1	4
	Ownership	Private					
		Unit 10 Total NRFB hectares			14.91		
11	RFB 11-1	Black Bear	~92	1/2	na	1	
11	NRFB 11-1a	Monte Vista West	1	2/3	0.80	1	1
	Ownership	Private					
11	NRFB 11-1b	Monte Vista Southwest	1	2/3	0.51	1	3
	Ownership	City of Rossland					
11	NRFB 11-1c	Monte Vista South	1	2/3	1.23	1	2
	Ownership	Private					
11	NRFB 11-2	Lions Access	1	2/3	0.14	1	10
	Ownership	Private					
11	NRFB 11-3	Lions North	1	2/3	0.99	1	11
	Ownership	Private					
11	NRFB 11-4	Black Bear	1	2/3	0.31	1	4
	Ownership	Private					
11	NRFB 11-5a	Black Bear Cul de Sac	1	2/3	0.26	1	5
	Ownership	Private					
11	NRFB 11-5b	Black Bear South	1	2/3	1.64	1	6
	Ownership	Private					



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11	NRFB 11-6	Black Bear Powerline	1	2/3	0.52	1	12
	Ownership	Private					
11	NRFB 11-7	Treadwell	1	2/3	0.26	1	13
	Ownership	City of Rossland					
11	NRFB 11-8	Davis West	1	2/3	0.52	1	9
	Ownership	Private					
11	NRFB 11-9	Nevada Sub North	1	2/3	0.16	1	14
	Ownership	Private					
11	NRFB 11-10	Nevada Sub South	1	2/3	0.53	1	7
	Ownership	Private					
11	NRFB 11-11	Dunn	1	2/3	0.24	1	8
	Ownership	Private					
		Unit 11 Total NRFB hectares			8.11		
12	RFB 12-1	Reservoir	1	1/2	na	2	
12	NRFB 12-1	Reservoir West	1	2/3	22.94	2	1
	Ownership	Private, City of Rossland, Crown, RoW					
12	NRFB 12-2	Reservoir East	1	2/3	4.22	2	2
	Ownership	City of Rossland, Crown					
		Unit 12 Total NRFB hectares			27.16		
13	RFB 13-1	Back Road	6	1/2	na	2	
14	RFB 14-1	Red Resort	~30	1/2	na	1	
14	NRFB 14-1	Telemark North	1	2/3	0.28	1	1
	Ownership	Private					
14	NRFB 14-2	Telemark South	1	2/3	0.27	1	
	Ownership	Private					



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14	NRFB 14-3	3B Access	1	2/3	0.32	1	
	Ownership	Private					
		Unit 14 Total NRFB hectares			0.87		
15	RFB 15-1	Topping	1	2/3	na	1	
15	NRFB 15-1	Rock Cut North	1	2/3	1.09	1	
	Ownership	Private					
		Unit 15 Total NRFB hectares			1.09		
Total Area (ha's)					86.73		

Recommendation 4.7.1 The City should commence a hazard notification / mitigation recommendation program targeting property owners in Category 1 fuel treatment areas on a priority basis. While hazard reduction fuel treatments on private residential land within City boundaries remains the responsibility of property owners - City officials should facilitate the required fuel treatments to the greatest extent possible. Notification of residential property owners with property located in a high / extreme wildfire hazard area as identified during the recent City CWPP planning process is recommended. Further provision of FireSmart Homeowner's manual hazard assessment and mitigation information (including contact information for local fuel management contractor's) is recommended.

Recommendation 4.7.2 The City should commence a hazard notification / mitigation recommendation program targeting property owners in Category 2 fuel treatment areas on a priority basis. Hazard reduction fuel treatments on land outside of City boundaries may involve cooperative fuel reduction initiatives using City of Rossland / Ministry of Forest and Range or leaseholder resources. City officials should facilitate the required fuel treatments to the greatest extent possible. Notification of non-residential property owners (Crown agencies or private landowners) with property located in a high / extreme wildfire hazard area as identified during the recent City CWPP planning process is recommended. Cooperative arrangements in support of fuel treatment actions should be considered to reduce the existing wildfire hazard to the City.



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4.8 - Maintenance of Fuel Treated Areas - The effectiveness of fuel treated areas tends to decrease over time. After the initial fuel treatments, trees will continue to grow, usually at a faster rate. The increased light on the forest floor encourages heavy grass and brush growth where, in many cases, nothing grew before. Site disturbance exposes mineral soil, which creates a seed bed for new trees. This in turn leads to new opportunity for fire. Some species of trees are easily felled by winds that penetrate the forest cover more easily after the original clearing and thinning has been done.

Fuel treated areas require ongoing treatment to maintain low fuel loadings. Maintenance fuel treatment requirements will depend on the type of vegetation ingrowth requiring treatment – a site specific schedule can be developed and may involve prescribed understory burning of fuels, handcrew pile and burn or mechanical treatments. Designation of fuel breaks as permitted community firewood areas can provide low cost maintenance alternatives.

Recommendation 4.8.1 The City should commit to performing required maintenance on fuel treated areas within its jurisdiction. Cooperative arrangements in support of required maintenance should be considered for fuel treated areas outside City jurisdiction.

4.9 - Pilot Projects - Pilot projects are undertaken by communities that, in the process of completing a CWPP, have identified one or more priority interface fire protection issues. Pilot projects are small scale initiatives principally focus on projects designed to investigate the effectiveness and viability of various fuel management methodologies. By extension, pilot projects may incorporate structural and infrastructural modification elements and public education or legislation initiatives.

The City CWPP has identified a number of recommendations with the potential for development as fuel management pilot projects.

Section 4.6- Existing and Proposed Landscape Fuelbreak Units - identifies a requirement for completion of a variety of fuel treatments on forested land, trail networks and infrastructural rights of way adjacent the City perimeter. These fuel treatments are identified although not site specified.

Section 4.7 – Fuel Treatment Unit Summary - identifies and prioritizes the requirement for fuel treatments on and adjacent City WUI fire protection units – fuel treatment recommendations are provided.

Section 4.8 – Maintenance of Fuel Treated Areas - identifies the requirement for maintenance of all fuel treated areas.

By extension, elements of the City CWPP, specifically **Section 5 – Prevention** and **Section 6 - Legislation** will form a component of any fuel management pilot project that the City chooses to commence.

Recommendation 4.9.1 The City should commit to the use of the existing Fuel Management – Pilot Project program to assist with completion of many of the key fuel management and associated interface fire protection initiative recommendations tabled under the City’s recent CWPP. The City should consider establishment of a FireSmart sub-committee of Council and proceed to submit a letter of interest to the UBCM evaluation committee. In the event that the pilot project proposal is of interest to the evaluation committee a more detailed proposal will be requested.



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