

NO: R059

COUNCIL DATE: March 28, 2022

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **March 22, 2022**

FROM: **General Manager, Engineering**

FILE: **D-14930**

SUBJECT: **2022 Salmon Habitat Restoration Program**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Engineering Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information;
2. Award Contract No. 1220-030-2021-064A to Dillon Consulting Limited in the amount of \$132,825.00 (including GST) for the management of the 2022 Salmon Habitat Restoration Program (“SHaRP”);
3. Set the expenditure authorization limit for Contract No. 1220-030-2021-064A at \$139,466.25 (including GST and contingency);
4. Award Contract No. 1220-030-2021-064B to Dillon Consulting Limited in the amount of \$335,299.65 (including GST), for the student salary component of the 2022 SHaRP program;
5. Set the expenditure authorization limit for Contract No. 1220-030-2021-064B at \$352,064.63 (including applicable taxes and contingencies);
6. Authorize the General Manager, Engineering to execute Contract No. 1220-030-2021-064A and Contract No. 1220-030-2021-064B; and
7. Authorize the extension of Contract No. 1220-030-2021-064A and Contract No. 1220-030-2021-064B for four additional one-year terms subject to the satisfactory performance of the services by Dillon Consulting Limited and any other relevant considerations.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the 2022 SHaRP program (the “Program”), and to obtain Council approval to award two contracts in support of the delivery of the 2022 Program.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City championed an open drainage policy early in the City's development which preserved a vast network of over 1,400 km of open channels and rivers with associated riparian habitats throughout the City. Surrey's growth and development places added importance on the enhancement and preservation of these natural assets throughout the City.

Since 1996, the City has offered an innovative approach toward watershed management through the development of a student team, trained and supported by a recognized environmental consultant team, that works in and about streams to restore and enhance high-value salmon habitat. In 1995, the inaugural year of SHaRP provided summer employment for eight youth and completed habitat restoration projects in two creek systems within the City. From these successful beginnings, the program is now in its 27<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. The program has grown in scope over the years and has extended works to include summer and fall seasons. Through an on-going commitment to career-oriented leadership training for local youth, SHaRP has provided employment opportunities for almost 700 students to date. The program has also evolved into a more integrated approach to watershed sustainability that involves field restoration work, as well as community and industrial awareness campaigns.

## **DISCUSSION**

Projects that are completed through the Program achieve enhancement and preservation goals through removing invasive plants, replanting trees and plants in riparian areas, installing instream complexing features in waterways, and informing the public on pollution prevention techniques. By employing youth to complete these projects, the Program not only achieves their restoration and outreach goals, but also provides the youth with exposure to the dynamic and growing professional sector of environmental protection and management. Through an on-going commitment to career-oriented leadership training for local youth, SHaRP has provided employment opportunities for almost 700 students to date.

### **Overview of the 2021 SHaRP Program**

Despite the health and safety challenges the COVID-19 pandemic continued to present in 2021, SHaRP employed a condensed team of 14 student employees.

These students were divided into 2 teams: the Riparian Enhancement Team and the Environmental Outreach Team. The Riparian Enhancement Team worked within the stream habitats to actively protect, enhance and restore the natural environment through watershed projects and agricultural stewardship objectives.

The Environmental Outreach Team led community engagement activities to encourage residents to become stewards of their local watersheds and developed campaigns that promoted the efforts of the Program through media platforms. While large community outreach events were not conducted in 2021 due to the limitations associated with the ongoing pandemic, the team was able to conduct informal pop-up activities stationed in community parks and engage with residents. The team also supported the City's "Storm Drain Marking Challenge" by preparing kits for residents to participate in the challenge and delivered them throughout Surrey.

New projects for the 2021 SHaRP program included opportunities for the team to work alongside the Fisheries and Oceans Canada ("DFO") Community Advisor and Community Engagement Coordinator to conduct fish presence assessments within Surrey creeks. This information assists DFO staff in better understanding the stressors on urban streams and supports local stewardship groups in developing enhancement plans for the creeks. The SHaRP team members used this opportunity to learn how assessment programs are developed to collect critical data to make informed decisions.

Partnership projects with regional stewardship organizations, such as Ducks Unlimited Canada and Surrey's local salmon hatcheries and stewardship groups, were also continued in 2021. Collaboration projects occurred between SHaRP and the Surrey Natural Areas Partnership ("SNAP") teams, as these youth-driven teams both complete projects with the objective of enhancing the City's biodiversity while increasing community stewardship opportunities. The two teams connected through a joint project at Hyland Creek Park where local residents were able to witness the effect of the habitat enhancing efforts and they were further emphasized through informational signage displayed at the site throughout the enhancement period.

Funding for the Program originated primarily from the City's Engineering Utilities Section and was supported through external funding awarded through Eco Canada. This external funding support translated into offsetting over 25 percent of the student labour costs of the Program in 2021.

### **Proposed 2022 SHaRP Program**

In 2022, SHaRP will be in its 27<sup>th</sup> consecutive year with the overarching goal to enhance and protect Surrey's salmon habitat and to involve local youth in career orientated experiences. The 2022 Program will involve teams of post-secondary and Surrey secondary students to complete the restoration and outreach objectives. In 2022, the Program will return back to pre-COVID staffing levels; however, the consultant will monitor provincial guidelines and will adjust numbers if required.

A more detailed description of each of the components of the proposed 2022 Program is provided in Appendix "I".

### **2022 Consultant Assignment**

Engineering Department staff will administer the 2022 SHaRP program, with the day-to-day management of the Program contracted to a consultant.

In January 2022, a Request for Proposals ("RFP") was issued to retain a consultant to provide program management and student labour services for the 2022 SHaRP program. The contract has

an option to extend for up to four additional one-year terms, subject to the satisfactory performance of the services and other relevant considerations.

In response to the RFP, the City received one submission from Dillon Consulting Limited (“Dillon”). Dillon has managed all previous 26 years of the Program’s existence and performed the work very effectively.

Dillon quoted a price to provide program management services at a comparable cost to the quote for the 2021 Program. The quoted prices for the optional Contract extension years of 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 also reflect comparable cost estimates. Over the years, Dillon’s program management costs have not changed significantly. Dillon has developed a comprehensive training program for the students and is very familiar with the community events and stewardship groups with which SHaRP works each year.

Dillon quoted a rate for the student labour component at a comparable cost to the rate in 2021, with any increases in overall cost being directly attributable to the student wage increase to keep pace with the BC general minimum wage standards. The fee for the optional Contract extension years of 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 also reflect comparable cost estimates. Dillon has also been successful in securing funding on the City’s behalf through Human Resources Development Canada in previous years, as well as more recently funding through the United Nations Association in Canada (UNA-Canada) and Eco Canada.

It is recommended that Dillon be awarded the agreements to provide program management and student labour services for the SHaRP Program in 2022 given their experience with the Program. Their efficiency and knowledge of the Program has led to good value for the City. Subject to the satisfactory performance of the services by Dillon and any other relevant considerations, it is recommended that staff be authorized to evaluate extensions of the agreements for four additional one-year terms in 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026.

## **FUNDING**

Funding is available within Drainage Utility budget and external funding.

## **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The work completed through the SHaRP program supports the City’s Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this Program supports the Sustainability Charter 2.0 theme of Ecosystems. Specifically, SHaRP supports the following Desired Outcomes (“DOs”) and Strategic Direction (“SD”):

- Natural Areas, Biodiversity and Urban Forest DO<sub>2</sub>: Surrey actively protects, enhances and restores its natural environments and habitats;
- Natural Areas, Biodiversity and Urban Forest DO<sub>5</sub>: Surrey takes pride in its rich biodiversity, including fish bearing streams, marine habitat and natural areas such as forests, meadows and wetlands;
- Green Infrastructure DO<sub>12</sub>: Surrey protects ecosystem services and manages natural assets in order to build resilience and adapt and thrive in a changing climate; and
- Natural Areas, Biodiversity and Urban Forest SD<sub>3</sub>: Aggressively control or eliminate invasive species.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council approve the award of the management of the 2022 SHaRP program and the student salary component of the 2022 SHaRP program to Dillon Consulting Limited and authorize the extension of these contracts for four additional one-year terms subject to the satisfactory performance of the services by Dillon Consulting Limited and any other relevant considerations.

Scott Neuman, P.Eng.  
General Manager, Engineering

Appendix "I": Proposed 2022 SHaRP Program Components

[https://surreybc.sharepoint.com/sites/eng.administration/wp\\_docs/2022/admin/cr/final/march 28/2022 salmon habitat restration program.docx](https://surreybc.sharepoint.com/sites/eng.administration/wp_docs/2022/admin/cr/final/march%28/2022%20salmon%20habitat%20restoration%20program.docx)  
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## Proposed 2022 SHaRP Program Components

The work areas described in the following paragraphs were selected as the focus for the 2022 SHaRP Program on the basis of their contribution to enhancing existing City projects, restoring and enhancing creeks and streams and providing benefits to the general public through outreach and engagement. The students in the Program will generally be divided into two teams but still have the opportunity to participate in projects surrounding both the watershed enhancements and the community outreach themes to maximize student learning opportunities.

### Riparian Enhancement Team

The Riparian Enhancement Team’s focus will be to complete in-stream enhancement work, invasive plant removal and native plantings that complement ongoing City projects. The team will work extensively to complete riparian restoration works that are required as part of the City’s commitment to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (“DFO”) authorizations, as well as the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (“MFLNRORD”) approvals associated with capital work projects. By linking the needs of Surrey capital and operational works projects and the abilities of the SHaRP team, the City achieves overall better value.

The team will also continue to undertake stabilization of low risk erosion sites identified in the City’s biennial ravine stability assessments, and complete restoration works at riparian sites identified by the general public and stewardship groups via service requests. Salmonid rearing and spawning habitat will be improved through gravel placement to re-introduce substrates within channels, and by improved creek complexity by placing in-stream weirs, boulders and large woody debris on sites. Fish access will be improved through completion of projects that remove barriers to fish migration to upstream habitats. The team is forecasted to complete works at seven in-stream work sites that will provide the team members with direct experience in various instream habitat enhancement techniques.



As many fish-bearing watercourses pass through agricultural lands within the City, the Team will support on-farm stewardship projects and provide information to the local farm community on property stewardship opportunities. Agricultural stewardship campaigns will encourage residents to participate in practices on farms which will encourage diversity of native plants, mitigate soil erosion of arable land and may help mitigate water quality concerns arising within local creeks that may be a concern for livestock and other aquatic species.

The Program supports partnerships and capacity building of local stream keeper and stewardship groups and each year more opportunities are added to the Program to improve connectivity of the SHaRP students to their local community efforts. The team will offer support toward habitat enhancements at both of Surrey’s hatcheries as well as with the Cougar Creek Streamkeepers.

Estuarine habitats will be improved through a partnership project with Ducks Unlimited Canada to map and remove invasive *Spartina anglica* cordgrass and giving SHaRP students a unique opportunity to understand the full lifecycle requirements of salmonids and the benefits that tidal zones provide. Opportunities for the team to work alongside the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (“DFO”) Community Advisor and Community Engagement Coordinator to conduct fish presence assessments with Surrey creeks will be included in the scope of the 2022 Program. These assessments will determine effectiveness of instream habitat structures to provide increased spawning habitat within Eugene Creek and also determine if operational works are required within Archibald Creek to support salmonid migration to upstream habitats currently believed to be blocked off by instream debris.



### **Environmental Outreach Team**

The focus for the Environmental Outreach Team will be directed at raising public awareness of natural areas and fish habitat within Surrey that will encourage Surrey residents to take pride in the city’s rich biodiversity. This team’s goals are accomplished through community education programming, as well as through media campaigns that spread the reach of the Program’s messaging to a wider audience.

As the COVID-19 pandemic is on-going in 2022, this team will direct their efforts on developing engaging outreach programming through online messaging across media platforms and via educational displays at sites where the team is completing watercourse enhancements. Social media channels, such as Facebook and Instagram, facilitated through the Program as well as the City’s Marketing Department, will be used to provide event updates where the general public can meet the SHaRP teams around the City, provide content on projects the teams are working on, and information about the many program partners and funders that have enabled the team to work effectively in the community over the years.

Similar to 2021, the team will host pop-up informational booths in community parks throughout the City to engage with community members in physically distanced, safe and engaging activities. The team will also be integral to the facilitation of the City’s “Storm Drain Marking Challenge” by preparing kits for residents to participate in the challenge and delivering them throughout Surrey.



Media & communications campaigns will be developed and delivered by the team to search for opportunities of media coverage to highlight the environmental initiatives accomplished by Surrey through various Program initiatives and encourage resident participation.