

# Here for You

## Public Information Session #53

June 22, 2017: 6 to 8 p.m.

Here for You: St. Anne's School

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**Public Participation:** 27 Residents

**Internal Participation:** Wood Buffalo Recovery Task Force (RTF)

**Partner Participation:** Canadian Red Cross

### **Background:**

- On May 24, 2017, the RTF held a Here for You session at McMurray Experience about re-greening projects. During this event, several residents from the Timberlea neighbourhood asked if the task force could have a community specific information session about the Firebreak project.
- This session provided a detailed update for residents about all re-greening projects, including hazardous tree removal, firebreak rehabilitation, FireSmart, trail restoration and drainage improvement.

### **Feedback**

Residents asked questions and provided feedback about the following topics:

- Firebreak areas:
  - To ensure the firebreak areas remain in place to protect homes from a potential future wildfire, the Municipality is seeding grass within the first 30 metres of the firebreak areas. The seed being used is a fire resistant grass that has low growth and holds moisture well.
  - These grassy areas will be added to the Municipal mowing and maintenance program.
  - In the areas beyond the 30 metre firebreak, options are being discussed dependent on funding.
- Residents planting trees beyond their property:
  - The Municipality is responsible for planting trees on municipal land to ensure the right trees are planted in the right spaces. This is done in line with FireSmart principles. Residents should not plant trees beyond their property.
- Trail Restoration:
  - All trails damaged or destroyed during the wildfire will be restored to their pre-fire condition.
  - Priority for the work will be given to high use trails.
  - A contract is out for tender and the Municipality is currently awaiting bids. The contract is structured in such a way that the Municipality can hire more than one contractor to finish the work.



# Here for You

- Timelines
  - Work is scheduled to start in July 2017 with a portion of work completed by the end of October 2017. The remainder will be completed by August of 2018.
  - The Municipality is ensuring adequate planning and funding is in place before work commences.
- FireSmart:
  - FireSmart is a national program aimed at reducing the risk of wildfire to homes and neighbourhoods.
  - The Municipality is implementing a number of FireSmart preventative measures on municipally owned lands to mitigate the risk of future wildfires.
  - The neighbourhood of Parsons Creek was constructed as a FireSmart community and greatly benefited from having these mitigation measures in place during the 2016 Horse River Wildfire.
  - Funding for FireSmart is a commitment from the Government of Alberta and the program will be maintained by the Municipality.
- Some residents also expressed concerns about privacy within the firebreak areas and the increase in noise without the trees acting as a visual or sound barrier.
- Residents suggested the use of local ponds in neighbourhoods for helicopters to collect water when battling future wildfires.
- Off-highway vehicle (OHV) mitigation strategies include using fencing as well as asking residents to report illegal OHV use in the Urban Service Area by calling Bylaw Services.
- Overall feedback was positive from residents. They appreciated the RTF taking the time to explain the projects and answer questions.

## **Next Sessions:**

Here for You: Urban Market  
Saturday, July 1: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Topic: General Recovery Information

Here for You: Urban Market  
Wednesday, July 5: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Topic: General Recovery Information

