Village of Belcarra Interface Wildfire Development Permit Area Policy
Opportunity for Public Consultation – Comments and Questions; Open House

Recent studies completed by the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction have shown that the ultimate root of the wildland-urban interface (WUI) wildfire issue is the vulnerability of structures to ignition during wildfire events, in particular their vulnerability to embers. Although wildfire conditions pass quickly in a wildland setting (approximately 60 seconds), homes will burn independently of the wildfire event, and for a long time. Wildfire then moving through an urban community most often becomes a structure-to-structure ignition and burning event – once initial homes are on fire, they then transfer fire to other structures, and so on. This creates an urban conflagration which quickly overwhelms emergency response.

The Village of Belcarra's 2021 Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP) provides an analysis of wildfire threat to the community and recommendations to reduce it. The wildfire threat analysis conducted, shown below on Map 1, identifies most of the public land within the municipality's wildland-urban interface as having a moderate or high wildfire risk, which will likely only increase in the future due to the predicted environmental changes associated with climate change. Although wildfire risk was not analyzed on private land as part of the CWRP analysis (due to project funding requirements), it is expected, and was qualitatively recorded, that the private land threat profile is similar to the wildfire threat on adjacent public land. One of the key challenges highlighted in the CWRP is managing wildfire risk on private land, recognizing that the structures and associated vegetation are part of the overall community's wildfire environment. The central recommendation for reducing wildfire risk on private land is the establishment of a new Interface Wildfire Development Permit Area (DPA). Interface Wildfire DPAs are an effective tool for municipalities and governments to enact to manage development (both single lot and subdivision) through a FireSmart™ lens. An Interface Wildfire DPA uses development regulations available to the municipality under the Local Government Act to introduce design guidelines to both exteriors of structures and surrounding landscaping/vegetation that will reduce wildfire hazard to, and on, the subject property. Over time, the Wildfire DPA results in a reduction in wildfire hazard to the community as new developments implement the DPA policies.

The Village has retained B.A. Blackwell & Associates Ltd. to develop Interface Wildfire DPA policy and associated mapping for the municipality. The process undertaken in the development of the Interface Wildfire DPA policy involved a combination of research and engagement in coordination with Village of Belcarra staff and its elected Council. The resulting Interface Wildfire DPA policy is based on the context of the neighbourhoods within the municipality and their unique challenges relating to wildfire threat and emergency access and egress.

Public engagement is now requested to give residents and stakeholders in the community a chance to participate in the process. Engagement is an integral and ongoing element of the process – it allows for information to flow giving residents a better understanding of the proposed policy and how it affects them, as well as giving Council a gauge on the level of support for implementing the Interface Wildfire DPA Guidelines.

Engagement is available as follows:

- ➢ Please take the time to review the prosed draft guidelines by clicking on this **link**.
- ➢ Questions and comments can be emailed to **belcarra@belcarra.ca** and will be received from Tuesday, June 6 to Friday, June 23, 2023.
- ➢ An open house will be taking place on Wednesday, July 5, 2023 at 6:00 pm at the Village Hall and will include Interface Wildfire DPA policy development professionals from B.A. Blackwell & Associates Ltd.

Map 1: Village of Belcarra Forest Interface and Wildfire Threat Analysis