

Proposed McDonald and Point Grey Tidal Marsh Projects

PURPOSE

This Input Consideration Memo provides Port Metro Vancouver's response to input received as part of the public and stakeholder engagement for the proposed McDonald and Point Grey Tidal Marsh Projects, which took place from May 26 to June 8, 2014.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed projects are part of Port Metro Vancouver's Habitat Enhancement Program, an initiative focused on creating and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat in advance of any future port development.

The proposed **McDonald Tidal Marsh Project** is located on Sea Island, north of Vancouver International Airport (YVR) in Richmond and upstream from the mouth of the McDonald Slough. The proposed project would involve the conversion of approximately 5.2 hectares into high quality fish and wildlife habitat through the establishment of intertidal brackish marsh.

The proposed **Point Grey Tidal Marsh Project** is located along the eastern portion of the Point Grey Booming Grounds, near the mouth of the North Arm of the Fraser River. The proposed project would convert approximately 41 hectares of existing unvegetated intertidal mudflat into productive intertidal brackish marsh.

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW – HIGHLIGHTS

The engagement included:

- A Discussion Paper and Feedback Form, and an online version of the Feedback Form
- Open house meetings, which took place June 2 at the Delta Vancouver Airport in Richmond and June 4 at the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia

Engagement topics included:

- Potential incorporation of bird nest boxes within or adjacent to the proposed new marsh habitat
- Potential installation of educational signage
- Potential for educational opportunities about the value and function of tidal marsh habitat
- Ecological considerations

Notification included:

- An email to approximately 295 stakeholders in advance of the engagement period
- Follow-up calls and emails to approximately 40 stakeholders
- Two reminder emails to approximately 295 stakeholders during the engagement period
- Newspaper advertisements in the Richmond Review on May 23 and 28, in the Richmond News on May 21 and 30, and in the Vancouver Courier on May 23 and 30

INPUT CONSIDERATION AND PORT METRO VANCOUVER RESPONSES

Input received during the engagement period for the McDonald and Point Grey Tidal Marsh Projects was compiled in an Engagement Summary Report, available at www.PortTalk.ca/HabitatEnhancement. Port Metro Vancouver is working to consider and appropriately address the input provided through the public and stakeholder engagement process.

A total of 20 feedback forms, 9 open submissions and a petition with 2,072* signatures were returned as part of the engagement. (*Number of signatures received by Port Metro Vancouver as of consultation close, June 8, 2014.)

The following table provides a comprehensive response to input received through the engagement.

THEME	ENGAGEMENT INPUT	PMV RESPONSE AND ACTION
Proposed McDonald Tidal Marsh Project		
<i>Ecology of the McDonald Tidal Marsh Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not support use of dredged sediments; believe it may cause additional environmental damage. • Leave tidal marshes to naturally recover. They are currently recovering and/or supporting increased wildlife populations. • Work should include comprehensive environmental assessment; account for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design of the McDonald Tidal Marsh Project does not require the use of dredged sediments. Work includes the removal of historic fill to re-create the natural tidal marsh. • This project directly overlaps with an area of historic fill, which was first placed approximately 65 years ago over productive

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	<p>previous site activities; record baseline measures for current wildlife and vegetation; include anticipated impact of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about woody debris accumulation in the area should be addressed. • PMV should continue to consult with City of Richmond to ensure issues such as control of invasive species, YVR outfall and sedimentation are addressed by the project. 	<p>tidal marsh habitats that previously lined the north-side of Sea Island. Creation of tidal marsh at this site should be considered restoration, given the resultant re-creation of tidal marsh habitat at this historically impacted site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Ecological Conditions Report, which describes existing ecological values and species present at the proposed McDonald Tidal Marsh Project, has been completed. This report also includes an assessment of expected post-enhancement conditions. • A debris screen has been incorporated into the proposed design to restrict the amount of floating debris that can enter the site. • PMV has and will continue to engage with City of Richmond on this proposed project.
<i>Installation of bird nesting features</i>	<p>Approximately 56% of respondents to this question agreed with the installation of bird nesting features; approximately 44% disagreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern the project would bias some bird species over others. Would like to see a balance of bird species accommodated. • Other concerns regarding nest boxes (e.g. cost, maintenance, location of boxes, unable to compensate for loss of habitat). • Mudflats already provide habitat for multiple species; man-made boxes are not needed. • Concern about environmentally sensitive area; nest boxes may cause additional environmental damage. • Baseline studies should be conducted that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMV will continue to evaluate the benefits of installing bird nesting features at the proposed McDonald Tidal Marsh Project site. • Nesting features suggested for installation within the proposed McDonald Tidal Marsh Project will enhance habitat for the benefit of a broader range of bird species. • Should bird nesting features be installed, PMV will ensure that a maintenance strategy is in place. • The McDonald Tidal Marsh Project site has limited nesting opportunities for small, non-flocking cavity-nesting songbirds. The proposed nesting features would enhance habitat for these bird species by providing nesting opportunities where few currently

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	<p>support the installation of nesting features.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with Canadian Wildlife Service is required. • Concern about potential aviation bird strikes. 	<p>exist, and would not impact the overall balance of bird species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Ecological Conditions Report, which describes existing ecological values and species present (including birds) at the proposed McDonald Tidal Marsh Project, has been completed. • PMV has and will continue to engage with CWS regarding all habitat enhancement projects. • PMV has and will continue to engage with YVR on an ongoing basis regarding its interest and considerations relating to PMV's Habitat Enhancement Program. Improving habitat for small, non-flocking cavity nesting songbirds is compatible with YVR objectives.
<i>Educational signage</i>	<p>Approximately 40% of respondents support the installation of educational signage; approximately 53% disagreed and one respondent was neutral.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about environmentally sensitive area; do not support public access to tidal marshes or mudflats, so educational signage unnecessary. • Support educational signage. • PMV should consult closely with the City of Richmond regarding public access to the site to ensure appropriate considerations for public use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on feedback to the proposed McDonald and Point Grey engagement, PMV will not pursue the installation of public signage at the proposed McDonald Tidal Marsh Project site at this time. • Any proposed signage would have to be installed at an already-public location, to avoid impacts on marsh habitat. • PMV has and will continue to engage with the City of Richmond regarding the Habitat Enhancement Program.
Proposed Point Grey Tidal Marsh Project		
<i>Ecology of the Point Grey Tidal Marsh Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tidal marshes should be left alone to naturally recover; they are currently recovering and/or supporting increased wildlife populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ecological Conditions Report for the proposed Point Grey Tidal Marsh Project has been completed. Additional bird surveys are being undertaken to supplement previous

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions to reference previous academic/ government environmental studies. Calls for detailed environmental assessment. • Suggest use of current baseline data (including hydrological) to better understand trade-off concerns between fish and birds. Consult with DFO to ensure the project is clear about the benefits to fish habitat in the area. 	<p>studies, as requested by interested stakeholders. Bird study reports will be posted on PortTalk.ca/HabitatEnhancement as they become available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site of the proposed project has been degraded by log booming operations. The proposed project will restore tidal marsh habitat within the North Arm of the Fraser River, where substantial losses to marsh habitat have occurred over the last 100 years. • The proposed Point Grey Tidal Marsh Project was designed by a multi-disciplinary team including tidal marsh ecologists, biologists and fluvial geomorphologists. A comprehensive literature review was completed as part of the Ecological Conditions Report for the proposed project. • DFO has been engaged as part of the project development process and is supportive of the proposed project. • PMV continues to meet with DFO monthly regarding this and other habitat enhancement projects.
<i>Installation of bird nesting features</i>	<p>Approximately 25% of respondents agreed with the installation of bird nesting features; approximately 56% disagreed and 19% were neutral.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features would provide safe nesting areas/ support more bird species in the area. • Concern nest boxes would favour certain bird species over others and change the natural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on feedback received during the engagement period for the proposed McDonald and Point Grey Tidal Marsh Projects, PMV will not pursue the installation of bird nesting features at the proposed Point Grey Tidal Marsh project site. • If other organizations express interest in future opportunities to pursue the

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	<p>balance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other concerns regarding nest boxes (e.g. cost, maintenance, location of boxes, unable to compensate for loss of habitat). • Concern about attracting predators/ other wildlife to the area. • Mudflats already provide habitat for multiple species, man-made boxes are not needed. 	<p>installation of bird nesting features at the proposed Point Grey Tidal Marsh Project site, PMV will explore opportunities to support these initiatives</p>
<i>Public access</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not support public access to tidal marshes or mudflats. • Other areas of the mudflats are already accessible, so further access is unnecessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMV recognizes the sensitivity of the tidal marsh habitat, and the particular sensitivity of the proposed Point Grey Tidal Marsh Project site, and does not promote public access to tidal marsh habitat. The proposed work will not include features that promote public access.
<i>Dredging/ use of dredged sediments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not support use of dredged sediments; believe it may cause additional environmental damage/ impact important salmon breeding ground. • Suggest use of dredged material from other Fraser River locations to build habitat projects. • Concern that deposited dredged sediments would not stay at set locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary objective of the proposed project is the creation of tidal marsh habitat, which provides vital rearing habitat for juvenile salmon. Any dredged material proposed for beneficial use (i.e. to construct proposed tidal marsh) must meet regulatory standards specified by Environment Canada related to sediment quality and physical suitability. • The proposed project was designed with input from fluvial geomorphologists (sediment flow experts) retained by PMV, who have expertise in the creation of tidal marsh habitats through the beneficial use of dredged sediments. Project design and construction methodologies will ensure adequate placement of dredged sediments to meet design requirements.

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<i>Educational opportunities</i>	<p>Approximately 44% agreed with Port Metro Vancouver exploring/supporting educational opportunities; approximately 44% disagreed and the remainder were neutral.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of participants expressed support for educational efforts. • Some expressed concerns and questions about project or program rationale, or the success of working with local organizations. • Positive comments regarding consultation/ working with local organizations. • Do not support increased educational viewing platforms/ public access to tidal marshes or mudflats. • Suggestions for educational programs include live streaming video, on-site educational centre, selling items to fund project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a case-by-case basis, PMV will continue to explore opportunities to support local educational opportunities regarding the value of tidal marsh habitat. PMV invites interested organizations to submit proposals regarding potential educational opportunities. Please contact Habitat.Enhancement@portmetrovancover.com • As a result of feedback received during pre-engagement, recreational trails and viewing platforms were not considered during consultation on the proposed project sites, due to concerns about increased public access. Public access to tidal marsh habitat is not encouraged by Port Metro Vancouver and is not being considered for this project at this time.
<i>Other opportunities/ considerations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions for other areas for habitat enhancement projects include Lulu Island Wetlands, North Arm Fraser River – Cambie Street to Hudson Street, North Jetty of Iona Island. • Suggestion for improving recovery/ handling of log booms to reduce ecological damage. • Concern that DFO acceptance of Habitat Enhancement Program projects as offsetting for future development is not adequate. • Opposed to project/ question project or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site selection is a key component of PMV's Habitat Enhancement Program. PMV continues to welcome input on potential opportunities to enhance or restore habitat and will evaluate the viability of proposed projects. Please contact Habitat.Enhancement@portmetrovancover.com • DFO's engagement on site selection and development of habitat created as part of the Habitat Enhancement Program is an

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	<p>program rationale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive support for the program/ projects. 	<p>inherent component of the process. Further to this, port development projects that may use this habitat for offsetting would be subject to the regulatory guidelines of DFO as well as other regulators as necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Habitat Enhancement Program is a Port Metro Vancouver initiative focused on creating and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat. This program is a proactive measure intended to provide a balance between the overall health of the environment and any future development that may be required for port operations. PMV will continue to consult with stakeholders, the public and First Nations on this and future Habitat Enhancement Program projects.
<i>Further information needed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process should include references to previous academic, government or environmental studies. • Suggestion for detailed environmental assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ecological Conditions Reports for the proposed projects include a comprehensive review of all available literature. • PMV's Habitat Enhancement Program team will work with regulatory agencies as necessary to meet all applicable environmental standards.

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<i>Engagement/ Consultation process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about consultation process. Broader, more detailed consultation required. • Positive comments regarding consultation process. • PMV should continue to consult with Musqueam First Nation. • PMV should continue to consult with the City of Richmond. • PMV should continue to consult with YVR. • PMV should continue to consult with Canadian Wildlife Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMV engaged in extensive pre-engagement with key stakeholders to determine issues and considerations regarding the proposed McDonald and Point Grey Tidal Marsh Projects. • Port Metro Vancouver has received a letter of support from Musqueam First Nation regarding the proposed Point Grey Tidal Marsh Project. • Port Metro Vancouver engages with Vancouver International Airport Authority (YVR), City of Richmond and Canadian Wildlife Service regarding the Habitat Enhancement Program. • Port Metro Vancouver has been and will continue to consult with First Nations on projects within the Habitat Enhancement Program.