



# CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

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## NOTICE OF MOTION

**From:** Councillor Ken Armour

**Introduced:** Council Meeting – March 4, 2019

**Subject:** **Deer Management in Esquimalt**

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**WHEREAS:** A 2016 survey of Esquimalt residents conducted by Brian Nyberg for the Township of Esquimalt found that 62 percent of residents are concerned about the presence of deer, 52 percent had spent money to deal with or prevent deer damage to their plants and 13 percent reported experiencing aggressive behavior by a deer,

**WHEREAS:** Culls and translocation have proven to be both inhumane and ineffective approaches to reducing deer numbers (the latter because the remaining population expands to fill the void),

**WHEREAS:** Immuno-contraception (as being piloted in Oak Bay) is showing promise as a humane and effective approach to managing and gradually reducing deer numbers,

**WHEREAS:** Esquimalt, through the Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society (UWSS), has undertaken two comprehensive deer population estimate surveys over the last two years that provide robust data on numbers and primary locations,

**WHEREAS:** DND, through Hemmera Environchem, recently analyzed the deer population at CFB Esquimalt based on surveys from 2003, 2016 (twice) and 2017 and generated data on density and population and provided evidence that deer do travel between DND lands and Esquimalt,

**WHEREAS:** Deer management is most effective when undertaken on a regional basis (otherwise neighbouring deer populations will move in to fill newly-created voids),

**AND WHEREAS:** The BC government has jurisdiction for deer management and has only approved immuno-contraception in Oak Bay and only as part of a research project,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Township seek BC government approval to develop and implement, working with the UWSS and drawing upon the Oak Bay approach, an immuno-contraception strategy to manage and gradually reduce the deer population in Esquimalt,

**AND THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Township seek DND agreement to design and implement an immuno-contraception strategy that would complement and align with the Township's approach,

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**AND THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Township advocate with the Capital Regional District for the development and implementation of a region-wide (or sub-region-wide, e.g., Esquimalt, Victoria, View Royal, Saanich and Oak Bay) deer management strategy based on, in part, immuno-contraception.

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**STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:**

This approach is consistent with the Township's Strategic Priorities.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Oak Bay will be spending approximately \$35,000 this year to support continued monitoring and research and to support the first round of immuno-contraception in the summer of 2019 (up to 80 does will be inoculated, which should capture almost all the female deer). The BC government is also providing \$35,000 to the project this year.

**BACKGROUND:**

Key documents:

- Esquimalt Deer Survey 2018 Report – February 2019
- Black-tailed Deer Population Projections and Evaluation of Contraception Options (for DND re CFB Esquimalt) – September 2018
- Urban Deer in Esquimalt: Resident Experiences and Opinions – December 2016
- BC Government Fact Sheet: Urban Deer Management in BC – February 2016

Definition:

- Immuno-contraception refers to the use of an animal's immune system to prevent it from fertilizing offspring. It involves the administration of a vaccine that induces an adaptive immune response which causes an animal to become infertile.

Related Article:

**Oak Bay moves closer to 'fixing' deer quagmire with birth-control program**

*Lindsay Kines, Times Colonist*

*February 20, 2019*

Oak Bay has moved a step closer to "fixing" its deer problem.

A new report that estimates the size of the district's black-tailed deer population paves the way for a birth-control program to get underway this summer.

Mayor Kevin Murdoch said the census was required by the provincial government as part of an agreement to administer a contraceptive vaccine to as many as 80 does between the fawning and rutting seasons this year.

“We’ve already committed to doing immunocontraception,” Murdoch said. “We have permit in hand and we’re scheduling the actual work — the immunocontraception — to happen in the summer when the fawning season is over.”

The population count was conducted by an independent team in co-operation with the district, the provincial government and the Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society.

Researchers collected data on population density and distribution by putting radio collars on 20 does last year and setting up 39 remote cameras on private and public properties across Oak Bay.

The deer were detected more frequently at cameras across south Oak Bay and around golf courses.

Murdoch said the total number of deer was likely lower than a lot of people expected.

“We’ve scheduled for up to 80 does to be inoculated, and, in the wild, there’s typically about a 60-40 doe-to-buck split,” he said.

“So if we’re something similar in Oak Bay, the 80 [inoculations] should be enough to apply contraception to all the female deer — at least close to it.”

Murdoch said Oak Bay and the province are spending about \$35,000 each on the project this year.

“It’s about a \$70,000 project, so that includes both the study as well as the immunocontraception,” he said.

The district and the province spent \$40,000 each year over the past two years, bringing the total cost for the project to about \$150,000 over three years.

“There was really a concerted effort made at the end of last year by everybody to get the permits in hand and get this report done and get all the pieces in place so that we don’t have any reasons not to do the work,” Murdoch said. “

“That’s been kind of a driving goal of our council, to make sure that in 2019 we’re actually applying contraception to as many deer as we can.”

Oak Bay has been struggling for years to deal with a growing deer population and dozens of deer dying on its roads each year. In 2015, the district approved a cull that killed about 11 deer over two years, but that program prompted a backlash by animal rights activists and others.