Municipal Forest Reserve Review

Round 2 Engagement Summary



MUNICIPALITY OF
NORTH
Cowichan

Agenda

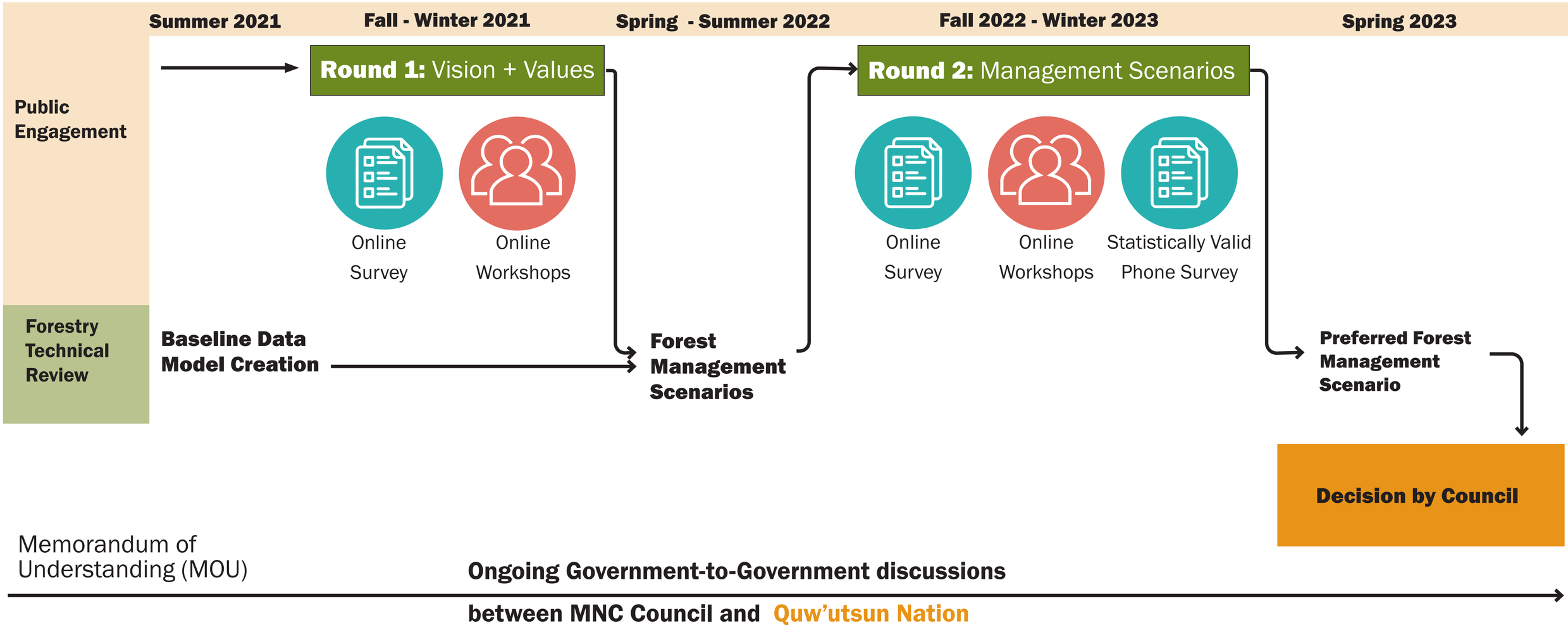
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- Project and Engagement Overview
- Workshops Summary
- Community Survey Results
- Key Takeaways
- Next Steps



Project + Engagement Overview

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Purpose of Round 2 Engagement

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The feedback from Round 1 Engagement establish community values to help UBC Partnership Group to develop **four potential forest management scenarios**.

The purpose of Round 2 Engagement was to determine a **preferred scenario**. The summary report will help inform decisions on next steps.



What We Did

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Participation

There were a total of **2,357 public interactions** during Round 2 of engagement on the Future Management of the Municipal Forest Reserve.

The forest management scenario options were summarized in a **Discussion Guide** with supporting information on **Connect North Cowichan.**



2 Engagement Working Group Meetings (7 total)



196 participants in **2** online workshops and

1 in-person workshop



1,922 online survey responses



215 statistically valid survey responses

What We Did

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Outreach

This project included significant community outreach including:



4 print ads in Cowichan Valley Citizen and Chemainus Valley Courier, and **1** ad in the Valley Voice

7 updates to project email list

9 social media posts and ads on Facebook and Instagram

9 posts on North Cowichan's Twitter account

92 questions answered through Connect North Cowichan

Information posters at trail-heads and community bulletin boards

Workshops Summary

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Participation

110 participants attended the in-person workshop on November 30, 2022.

96 participants attended the online workshops on December 6 and 12, 2022.



Workshops Summary

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Overview

- Presentation about the four draft forest management scenario options.
- The virtual workshops has small group discussions with a facilitator. Feedback was collected using a digital whiteboard.
- The in-person workshop had a Q&A session after the presentation. Feedback was collected on display boards for each scenario.

Workshops Summary

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Key Takeaways - Scenario 1: Status Quo

- Many were concerned that continued harvesting would worsen the impacts of climate change.
- Many participants emphasized importance of protecting watersheds and habitats, as well as fostering old growth forests for future generations.
- Some participants requested more information about financial and employment implications of moving away from Scenario 1.

Workshops Summary

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Key Takeaways - Scenario 2: Reduced Harvesting

- Few participants spoke in favour of this scenario, but some participants expressed appreciation for the current forest management practices and a desire for local use of timber.

Workshops Summary

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Key Takeaways - Scenario 3: Active Conservation

- Many participants expressed support for this scenario over the others.
- Many comments emphasized importance of improving ecological health of forest through active management.
- Some participants were concerned that the municipality or logging interests may revert to past management practices.
- Some comments suggested the importance of invasive species management.

Workshops Summary

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Key Takeaways - Scenario 4: Passive Conservation

- Some participants expressed support for selling carbon credits, promoting ecotourism, and emphasizing recreation over timber harvesting.

- Some comments indicated the importance of the ‘rights of nature’ and support for minimal human intervention.

Survey Results Summary

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Open Link Survey

1,922 respondents took the online survey from Nov 28, 2022 - Jan 31, 2023. **63%** were North Cowichan residents.

Statistically Valid Survey

215 North Cowichan residents were randomly recruited by telephone by the Mustel Group. Efforts were made to match the demographics of the community (age/gender).

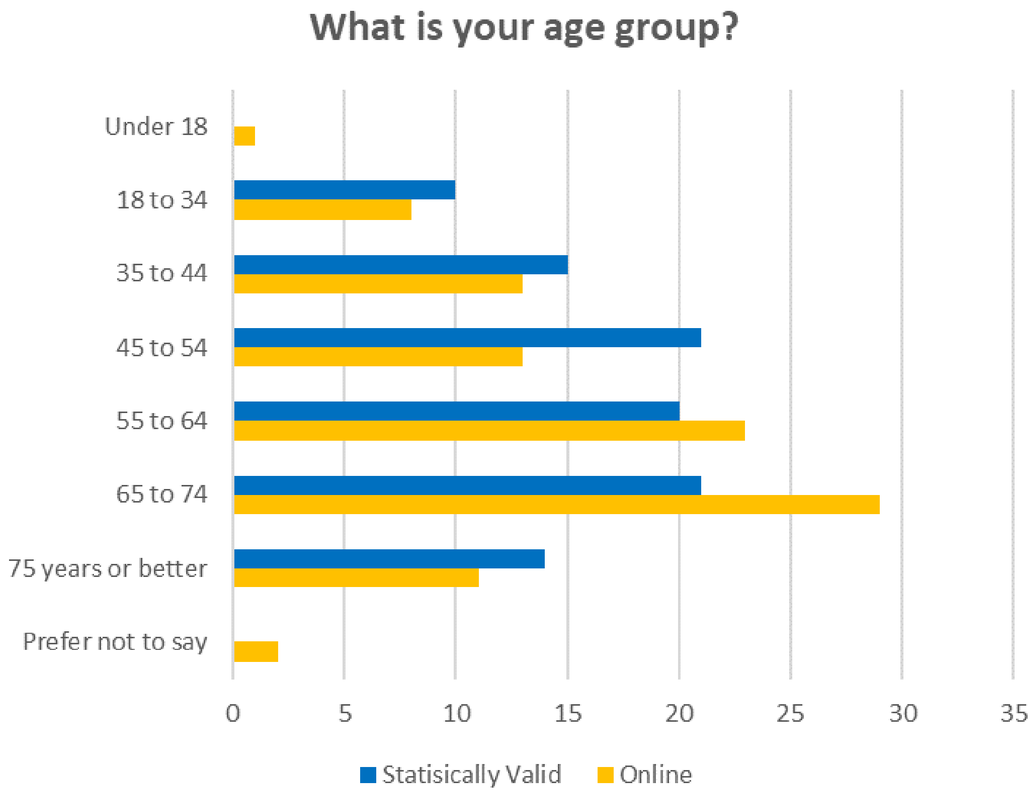
Survey Results Summary

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Participation

Those who answered the online survey tended to be older, with most aged 55-74.

15% of statistically valid survey and **48%** of open link survey respondents had been involved in **Round 1 of the public engagement**.



Survey Results Summary

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The public was asked to rank the four draft forest management scenario options from most preferred to least preferred.

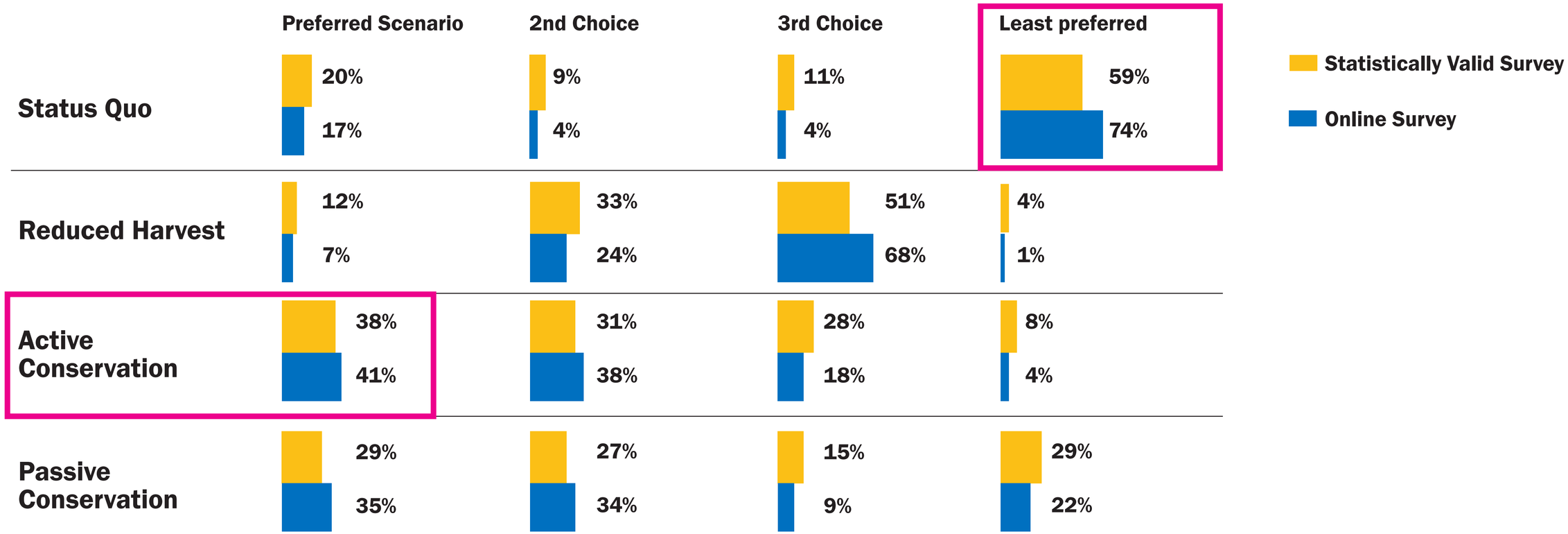
What We Heard:

- Scenario 3: Active Conservation was the highest ranking option in both surveys.
- Scenario 4: Passive Conservation ranked a close second.
- Scenario 1: Status Quo was the least preferred option.
- Environmental benefits (including harvesting for improved forest health, increased biodiversity, and less erosion) were the key reasons for choosing Scenario 3: Active Conservation.

Survey Results Summary

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Question 2: Please rank order the four scenario options, starting with the one that is closest to the future forest management you would like to see.



Survey Results Summary

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Question 3: Why did you choose [#1 CHOICE] as your preferred scenario?

1 Status Quo

1. The current management of the Municipal Forest Reserve is fine as it is.
2. This scenario allows for sustainable harvesting.
3. This scenario creates jobs/ security.
4. I disliked the other scenario descriptions.
5. The community economy is dependent on the forestry industry.

2 Reduced Harvesting

1. This scenario allows for sustainable harvesting.
2. This scenario is a balanced approach.
3. This scenario aligns with my beliefs.
4. This scenario reduces wildfire risk.
5. This scenario reduces ecological damage/ restoration of forests.

Survey Results Summary

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Question 3: Why did you choose [#1 CHOICE] as your preferred scenario?

3 Active Conservation

1. This scenario allows for targeted harvesting for ecosystem and forest health benefits.
2. This scenario aligns with my beliefs.
3. The environmental benefits associated with this scenario are important to me.
4. This scenario reduces the ecological damage to the forest.
5. This scenario is a balanced approach.

4 Passive Conservation

1. Is it important to leave forests alone/ preserve for future generations.
2. This scenario aligns with my beliefs.
3. The environmental benefits associated with this scenario are important to me.
4. The economic benefits associated with this scenario are important to me.
5. This scenario moves away from old forestry practices/ clear cutting.

Survey Results Summary

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Question 5: Do you feel you had enough information to answer the questions in this survey?

Over 90% of respondents felt they had enough information to answer the questions in the survey.

The most common information requests were for more details on the scenarios including **harvesting data, economic projections, and carbon credits**.

Types of Information Requested	Statistically Valid Survey	Online Survey
Provide scenario analysis details (i.e., definitions, prior harvest area yields/ sales, full data)	24	23
Misc. issues with survey/ consultation process (i.e., why were these options chosen, difficult to complete, lack of maps, etc.)	23	22
How were economic projections calculated/ distrust numbers provided	25	21
Carbon credit explanation (i.e. how do they work, value)	22	14
Which groups/ organizations were involved in process/ sources of information	4	6
Active harvesting details (i.e., companies, methods)	5	5
Recreation details	4	5
First Nations involvement details	-	5
Details regarding current forestry operations	3	3
No questions stated	30	19

Key Takeaways

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- Many participants expressed that ecological values should be prioritized in future forest management.
- Strong emphasis was placed on the importance of MFR as a community asset.
- The importance of protecting biodiversity, watersheds, old growth forest, and habitats was a key theme.
- The importance of managing invasive species, ecotourism, recreation, and the rights of nature was also a key theme.
- There was a desire for Indigenous inclusion in the management process and more transparency regarding how the Municipality is engaging with First Nations.

Key Takeaways

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- Scenario 3: Active Conservation and Scenario 4: Passive Conservation received significant support in both workshops and surveys.
- Scenario 1: Status Quo received the least support. Some participants expressed concern that continued harvesting within MFR will worsen impacts of climate change.
- The most common suggestions for improvements were related to conservation management issues.
- The most common questions posed throughout the workshops and surveys were related to how economic projections were calculated and explanations of carbon credits.

Next Steps

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The UBC Partnership Group will share a presentation to Council on the preferred scenario.



Thank you!

