

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 24, 2014

Item 6, Report No. 8, of the Finance, Administration and Audit Committee, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 24, 2014.

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2013 ICE STORM STATUS UPDATE

The Finance, Administration and Audit Committee recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works and the Commissioner of Finance and City Treasurer, dated June 16, 2014:

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works and the Commissioner of Finance and City Treasurer, recommend:

1. That the 2013 Ice Storm Status Update Report be received.

Contribution to Sustainability

The report on the impact of the ice storm on the City is intended to provide Council with an overview of the operations to date and the financial impact of these operations.

This report is consistent with the Green Directions Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan, specifically, Goal 2, Objective 2.2: "To develop Vaughan as a City with maximum green space and an urban form that supports our expected population growth by providing strategies for achieving our urban forest targets which include; planning, maintenance, species and planting recommendations."

Economic Impact

The total financial impact associated with the December 2013 ice storm is estimated at \$18.1 million

The estimate of costs relating to the 2013 Ice Storm is \$18.1M. This includes the initial emergency response, the ongoing clean-up of damage to City property and the future tree canopy replacement. Almost all City departments were involved in the Ice Storm response, with the largest financial impact seen in the Parks and Forestry Operations area (\$17.1M) followed by PW Winter Control (\$597K). There were also Ice Storm related costs in Building and Facilities, Fleet, Fire Services, Emergency Management, Recreation, By-law & Compliance and other.

Nearly \$1.0M of Ice Storm related costs were included in the City's 2013 financial results. In order to mitigate the impact on the overall City's financial position, \$0.7M of funding was taken from the City's Winterization reserve in 2013 to cover winter operations related activity.

A special meeting of Council was held on January 14, during which a presentation was made regarding damage and financial impacts of the December Ice Storm and the Ontario Disaster Relief Program requirements for funding under the Ice Storm Fund. As a result of the presentation, Council approved the following:

1. By-Law 001-2014, to direct and authorize staff to undertake all actions necessary to meet the fund requirements, be enacted and
2. A Resolution requesting the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing declare the City of Vaughan a Disaster Area per the Ice Storm Fund requirements.

Staff have confirmed with the Ministry that the aforementioned documents, along with the City's Signing By-Law 78-2010, meet the program requirements to move the process forward without

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the need for further Council resolutions or approvals. Next steps include staff preparing the Expression of Interest (EOI) for submission by the June 16, 2014 deadline and submitting the Claims for partial cost recovery by October 31, 2014.

While provincial funding is expected to offset some of the initial storm response and cleanup costs, that funding will not cover the full costs, or “missed opportunity” costs. Provincial funding is focused solely on the initial response and clean-up efforts. Overtime and contractor costs are recoverable under the current funding proposal, but capital tree replacement costs, and staff labour costs, outside of overtime, are not eligible for funding under the Ontario Ice Storm Assistance Program.

Tree replacement costs, which are not included in the provincial funding package, are estimated to be \$7.2 million. Replacements are normally funded through taxation, with a nominal contribution from reserve. Staff is researching additional grant opportunities to leverage funding where available to assist with the non-eligible costs tree canopy replacement. Other “missed opportunity” costs which are not incorporated include: delays to regularly scheduled tree maintenance, administrative costs and lieu time accumulation.

Communications Plan

Over the next few years, annual reports will be provided to Council, outlining the progress of the tree replacement plans throughout the City

Currently, information about the clean-up operation is being delivered to the residents throughout the City of Vaughan through the City's website, as well as via Public Works' Spring/Summer Newsletters and mobile signage. In addition, Corporate Communications is assisting with social media updates, PSA's and responses.

The City's website hosts the online tool, which is designed to provide details on past activities, and will provide detailed information with respect to the future replanting plans. It also has the most up to date question and answer section of the website in order to satisfy resident inquiries and concerns.

Purpose

To provide Council with a financial update report of the impact of the 2013 Ice Storm.

Background - Analysis and Options

On December 22, 2013 the City of Vaughan was impacted by one of the worst ice storms documented in Ontario. Staff in many departments, together with contracted crews, went into action immediately, dealing with fallen trees and the related full road blockages, salting and clearing of roads and pathways, staffing of emergency warming centres etc.

The financial impact associated with the December 2013 ice storm is estimated at \$18.1M

The City's emergency operations for the clean-up are based on a four phase approach. The estimated costs associated with each phase are noted below.

Phases 1 & 2:	Emergency Response, Initial clean-up and removal of dangerous trees/branches	\$5.5 million
Phase 3:	Clean-up of large tree branches	
	(a) First Rotation	\$3.5 million
	(b) Second Rotation	\$0.6 million
	(c) Stump Removal	\$1.3 million

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Phase 4:	Re-planting of Trees City Wide* (Residential, Industrial, Commercial and Arterial) Note: Ineligible for Ice Storm Assistance Program	\$7.2 million
Total		\$18.1 million
(*includes pruning and tree planting)		

Although the storm took place over 5 months ago, the clean-up work continues to this day. The following details the urban forest and street tree work in the four stage approach taken in response to the ice storm:

Phase 1 (December 21 – December 28, 2013) focused on emergency work, such as providing emergency access to roads and driveways that were completely blocked with trees or branches. Streets were cleared to provide one lane of traffic to allow access for emergency vehicles and residents. Emergency warming centres were operational in response to power outages.

Phase 2 (December 28, 2013 – March 31, 2014) focused on storm clean-up operations. Streets were prioritized based on hazards, blockages and access to roads, driveways and sidewalks. As part of the clean-up operation, staff and contractors also removed Emerald Ash Borer infested trees which had been previously identified for removal. Trees in parks, woodlots and open spaces were assessed and hazards were addressed.

Phase 3 (April 1 – approx. June 15) is focusing on large tree limb collection, and is partnered with the City's Leaf & Yard Waste collection program. Within this phase, Forestry operations includes pruning and removal work in parks, woodlots and open spaces, and flush cutting the larger tree trunks on City boulevards to grade.

Phase 4 (commencing approx. June 15 and ongoing) will include regular street tree pruning, tree maintenance, regular tree replacement program, as well as City-wide stump removals. The annual budget for Tree planting (including the Emerald Ash Borer program) is \$1.0M as included in the 2014-17 Budget and Financial Plan. Note that this amount is for regular tree replacement. Tree replacement related to the ice storm will be over and above the current budgeted amount.

Due to the late arrival of spring, contractors will provide two passes of the City to collect both public and private tree branches and debris

Residents were requested to bring their tree branches to the curb for pickup by March 31, 2014 with the intent of having a single pass through the City to collect all the tree branches. Approximately 61 crews started on April 2, collecting the large branches. Due to the later than normal arrival of spring weather, many residents were unable to access their yards by the March 31 deadline. As such, a second pass is required, and was scheduled to commence May 12. As was previously noted, this phase coincides with the City's Leaf & Yard Waste weekly collection program in order to provide residents with multiple opportunities to dispose of their tree branches.

Removal of tree stumps is expected to start in late June

As a result of the vast number of tree removals that have occurred, a large number of tree stumps remain throughout the City. Forestry is preparing a large contract for stump removals to start in 2014. Tree stumps fronting residential properties will be given priority. In past practice, stumps were left to serve as a means of locating an area for re-planting. As the replanting plan is proposed to be a multi-year project, it is in the City's best interest to remove the stumps prior to replanting in order to avoid safety issues and improve aesthetics. It is anticipated that stump removal will commence by the end of June and continue throughout the summer/fall. The stumped locations will be top dressed with topsoil and seeded.

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The number of tree removals and pruning activities has created a significant amount of woodchips (mulch) that will be available for City and public use

As a result of the number of tree removals and pruning activities, approximately 11 years of woodchips has been produced. In Phase 2 of the clean-up operation, five storage locations were established throughout the City. City staff are working to move, process, and store this material.

Recognizing that the City could not utilize all of the woodchips being produced, woodchip was transported to the Miller composting site throughout February. The remaining material is being stockpiled at the City's five (5) storage facilities, and will be utilized in the following ways:

- 5 Scheduled Environmental Days (April to September 2014);
- Additional Self-serve Mulch Give-a-ways at selected City facilities (May-October 2014, pending community response);
- Mulching of City trees and woodlot trails throughout the city;
- Mulching of City shrub beds (boulevards & parks); and
- Schools and/or Community Requests.

A Request for Proposal for the utilization of the logs and a portion of the wood chip will be developed to reduce shipping and processing costs. The proposal will target the removal of all of the material from the Dufferin Works Yard by October 1st, 2014. This will facilitate the space requirements for snow equipment for the upcoming winter operations.

To date, there are over 39,000 urban forest and street tree related work orders that require entry or updating into the JDE/CTS work order system as a result of the ice storm

City staff relies on the City's JDE/CTS work order system for all scheduled and routine forestry work. Recognizing the importance of accurate information for crews to be efficient, four (4) additional temporary administration staff were hired to assist with data entry and updating of all of the Forestry related work orders. The total cost of \$80K is included in the total Ice Storm related costs of \$18.1M. Due to the volume of work to be entered and/or updated, it is anticipated that it will take until late Fall, at minimum, for this database to be completed. Until this clerical function is complete, information and status updates concerning a specific property will not be available.

Provincial Ice Storm Assistance Program

In February 2014, the Province of Ontario announced \$190M of one-time funding to help 32 municipalities pay for the repair and clean-up of damage related to the ice storm through the Ice Storm Assistance Program. In April 2014, the province provided more detailed guidelines on the timing of the Program, the requirements for record keeping and reporting, and the eligibility and non-eligibility of specific cost categories.

The timing of the phases of the Provincial are:

- May 2014: Release of Program Guidelines. This will include detailed instructions, expression of interest forms and claim forms.
- June 16, 2014: Deadline for Expression of Interest Submissions. Municipalities are required to provide an expression of interest along with proof of damage, Council motions, media reports, weather data etc.
- Eligible costs incurred up June 22, thereafter will be considered on a case by case basis,
- October 31, 2014: Deadline for Claims Submission. Municipalities are required to submit details of all costs along with supporting documentation.

Attachments #1 and #2 show the Ice Storm Factsheet and FAQ, respectively, as provided by the Provincial Government.

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It should be noted, that depending on the results of the Ontario Provincial Election in June 2014, the timing and components of the Provincial Ice Storm Assistance Program may change.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the actions to date provide:

- **STRATEGIC GOAL:**
Service Excellence – Providing service excellence to citizens.
- **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**
Pursue Excellence in Service Delivery, Enhance and Ensure Community Safety and Health and Wellness – To deliver high quality services and to promote health and wellness through design and program.

Regional Implications

The Region is responsible for all trees planted within the Region's road allowance. As such, there are no implications on trees maintained by the Region as a result of this report.

City staff continues to work with the Region to create strategies, and look at shared resource opportunities wherever possible to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. Other municipalities impacted by the ice storm are also experiencing similar challenges regarding funding and timing of tree replacement.

Conclusion

The December 2013 ice storm created significant pressure on winter operations and significant damage to the City's tree canopy, and has resulted in an additional 39,000 forestry related work orders to date in addition to initial emergency response operations that impacted almost all City departments.

Clean-up operations are still underway, and will continue for a number of months.

The Ministry has confirmed that the City's By-Laws 001-2014 and 78-2010 as well as the Council Resolution requesting the City be designated a Disaster Area, meet the fund's requirements to move the process forward and obtain grant funds to partially cover the costs of the damage relating to the ice storm. Further, staff is researching additional grant opportunities to leverage funding where available to assist with the non-eligible costs under this program, such as tree canopy replacement.

Attachments

Attachment #1: Ontario Ice Storm Assistance Factsheet

Attachment #2: Provincial Ice Storm Assistance Program – Frequently Asked Questions

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)