

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE– NOVEMBER 5, 2013

2014 EARTH DAY TREE PLANTING

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with the Manager of Environmental Sustainability and the Manager of Parks Services recommend:

1. That the City of Vaughan partner with Scotiabank in a tree planting event on April 22, 2014 to mark Earth Day.

Contribution to Sustainability

Vaughan's participation in and promotion of the Earth Day tree planting event supports *Green Directions Vaughan*, Goal 5: To be leaders in advocacy and education on sustainability issues. The Earth Day event aligns well with the City's ongoing environmental outreach program with Vaughan businesses and the community.

Economic Impact

There are no additional economic impacts resulting from this report. Scotiabank has committed to securing the trees for this initiative. The City of Vaughan will provide in-kind support through provision of staff time to participate on the steering committee to coordinate the event, equipment to prepare the area for planting and mulch for the area being planted.

Communications Plan

The Corporate Communications Department will provide marketing and communication support, including media advisory, press release and social media updates. Information on the event will be posted on the Environmental Sustainability area of the City website. Vaughan's participation will also be highlighted in a broader marketing and communications strategy that will be coordinated by Scotiabank.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to obtain Committee approval for the City of Vaughan to partner with Scotiabank in a tree planting event on April 22, 2014 to mark Earth Day.

Background - Analysis and Options

Earth Day was founded in 1970 by then US Senator Gaylord Nelson who envisioned hosting a "national teach-in on the environment" that featured rallies across the US to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment. In 1990, Earth Day went global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries and raising the importance of environmental issues on the world stage. In 2013, Earth Day was celebrated by over a billion people in 192 countries and is recognized as largest, most celebrated environmental event worldwide.

In Canada, Earth Day is celebrated by over 6 million Canadians through participation in events and projects that focus on local environmental issues. For the past eight years, the City of Vaughan has coordinated the 20 Minute Makeover, a community wide clean-up event, to coincide with Earth Day.

The City of Vaughan has effectively used its Urban Forest comprised of Boulevard trees, Green Spaces, Parks, Natural Areas, and Woodlots to visually enhance outdoor spaces, creating inviting

spaces for visitors, businesses, and a source of civic pride. Strategic planting continues to be a key component of the five year plan to expand and diversify the Urban Forest.

Scotiabank has a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility. As a financial institution they recognize they have a role to play in raising environmental awareness among retail and corporate clients. By partnering to deliver a tree planting event in the City of Vaughan, Scotiabank will provide an opportunity for employees and customers to enhance the green space of their local community and help mitigate the impacts of climate change. Scotiabank has partnered with other municipalities in tree planting efforts as evidenced by their recent support of the City of London's Reforest London program.

For the Scotiabank 2014 Earth Day tree planting event, Vaughan Parks and Forestry Operations have identified several park locations in communities which have been greatly impacted by the Emerald ash borer. Chancellor District Park, York Hill District Park and Heatherton Parkette were identified as being conducive to an event.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and supports the City's strategic goal of service excellence with the specific objective of leading and promoting environmental sustainability. The Earth day tree planting leverages the strong environmental commitment of a corporate leader to improve the natural environment of the broader community.

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

Earth Day and the planned tree planting event encourage residents, students and businesses to take action in their community through environmental stewardship. The City's participation demonstrates environmental leadership and provides an effective vehicle for public education.

Attachments

N/A

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Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner of Strategic and Corporate Services