

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 23, 2015

Item 12, Report No. 26, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 23, 2015.

**12 FORESTRY OPERATIONS TREE REPLACEMENT STRATEGY
ALL WARDS**

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Transportation Services, Parks and Forestry Operations, dated June 16, 2015:

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Transportation Services, Parks and Forestry Operations, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Communications, recommend:

1. That this report be received for information purpose.

Contribution to Sustainability

The City's tree replacement strategy will provide Council with an outline of considerations and the decision process to be implemented in the 2015 operating season.

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

There are no immediate budgetary impacts resulting from the adoption of this report.

Communications Plan

Working in collaboration with the Corporate Communications department, a communications plan will be developed to create awareness and provide citizens with information about the City's tree replacement strategy.

Tactics will include a write-up in the printed Public Works newsletter delivered to every household in June, website content (including information on the tree replacement plan, FAQs, streets receiving trees this year, and information on EAB and planting your own tree), ongoing social media posts, eNewsletter and City Page Online content, messages for Councillor eNewsletters, and media outreach.

Purpose

To provide Council with an information report outlining the strategy chosen for prioritizing the existing City-wide planting locations for the 2015 season and future operating seasons.

Background - Analysis and Options

The awarded tender T15-111 reduced the average cost of planting a tree by 15.32%, resulting in a cost saving of \$ 775,954.00.

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On May 19, 2015, Council awarded the 2015 tree planting contract for 3,840 trees, at a total cost of \$ 2,100,988.00 (including HST, contingency, and administrative recovery). The contract costs which represent substantially better pricing than in past years resulted in a remaining balance of \$775,954.00 in the City's 2015 budget tree replanting accounts.

The existing planting program will allow for approximately 40% of all residential trees to be replaced.

At the April 1, 2015 Committee of the Whole meeting, a report was presented outlining funding options for replacing the estimated 16,500 boulevard trees lost due to the ice storm, the EAB infestation and existing residential back-log. The 2015 tree replacement program includes funding for an estimated 3,840 trees from four funding programs plus carryover funding from prior year projects.

Residential areas are the highest priority.

The 2015 strategy focuses the City's replanting program on residential areas as its highest priority. Boulevard trees in commercial and industrial areas and trees in parks and open spaces will be focused on in future years, once the needs in residential areas are addressed. The criteria for the tree species selection for each site will also remain the same, acknowledging physical restrictions and diversification requirements.

The planting strategy prioritizes entire streets rather than single addresses. Completing the tree replacement and stumping work in one season will help to minimize disruption to the neighborhood.

In previous years, trees were replaced based on a "*First Come First Serve*" basis for individual residential locations. The new strategy of "*Do it Once*" will select entire streets and replace all trees and stumps within it. This approach will help to minimize disruption within a neighborhood while expediting the re-establishment of the neighborhood canopy.

The planting strategy is a reflection of the existing conditions of all plantable locations City-wide, taking into consideration tree loss severity and geographic distribution.

The 2015 planting strategy considers all neighborhoods equally, ensuring that the severity of tree losses is the key consideration while ensuring that all residential areas of the City that have been affected are being represented. The prioritization of streets is based on the following principles:

- Tree Loss Severity of Groups of Streets
- Geographic Distribution by Street Length
- Tree Loss Severity of Individual Streets

An existing program offers residents the opportunity to plant their own tree on City boulevards at their expense in order to expedite the replacement of their tree.

As previously noted, it is anticipated that even with an accelerated planting strategy, it will take several years for the City to replace all of the residential street boulevard trees.

Some residents may prefer not to wait for the City to replace the tree and may want to plant their own tree. Similarly, residents may prefer to plant a larger caliper tree in the boulevard. To accommodate these requests, a process has been established to allow residents to replace their own trees, based on meeting certain criteria, as follows:

- The location must be approved and prepared by City staff
- Species is selected in accordance with the City's current diversification mandate

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- The resident is responsible for co-ordination, planting and all associated costs
- The normal 12 month warrantee on the tree must be signed over to the City

Although this program has been in place for a number of years, the number of requests has increased substantially since the ice storm.

Future annual planting lists will reflect updated tree loss information and the extent of previous neighborhood replanting.

The City will continue to experience increased tree mortality through the EAB infestation as well as from other natural causes, adding to the existing list. Conversely, the previous year's planting program will have resulted in establishment of tree canopies in neighborhoods. Annual strategies will continually reflect these changes while continuing to prioritize on the basis of entire streets and equitable neighborhood distributions.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 20/20, the actions to date and the long-term tree replacement strategy will 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 – delivering 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.

Conclusion

The City will endeavor to plant about two and a half times the traditional number of trees in 2015, maintaining residential areas as the highest priority. The 2015 planting plan considers tree loss severity while recognizing fair geographic distribution. The City also provides a program for residents to plant a tree on the boulevard as an option to expediting the replacement process.

Attachments

1. Map outlining all residential tree removal locations.
2. Map outlining 2015 planting locations.

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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.)