

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 11, 2012

Item 2, Report No. 6, of the Priorities and Key Initiatives Committee, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on December 11, 2012.

2 EXPANDING THE URBAN FOREST: ONE TREE AT A TIME AN UPDATE TO PLANTING OUR FUTURE: A 5 YEAR PLAN TO EXPAND THE URBAN FOREST REPORT

The Priorities and Key Initiatives Committee recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Community Services, dated November 26, 2012, be approved;
- 2) That staff consider a strategy to optimize the removal/replacement process to reduce costs;
- 3) That a strategy to procure funding from senior levels of government be developed as part of the strategy;
- 4) That the Mayor or designate continue in the role of tree advocate; and
- 5) That C2, presentation material, be received.

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Parks and Forestry Operations, recommends:

That the staff report and presentation on Expanding the Urban Forest be received.

Contribution to Sustainability

This Report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan, Goal 2, Objective 2.2.4:

- To ensure that policies in the City's Official Plan protect all ecological features and functions as per current provincial and regional policies, and also include consideration for locally significant natural features and functions.

Economic Impact

Funding has been included in the 2013 budget submission for the maintenance and replacement of trees. Funding for new initiatives, as indicated in the Report, will be budgeted for in subsequent years.

Communications Plan

Information regarding the Report: *One TREE at a Time: Expanding the Urban Forest an Update to Planting Our Future: A 5 Year Plan to Expand the Urban Forest* will be made available to the public through; the city website, media releases, public information sessions, city page advertisements, brochures and tree maintenance door hangers. In addition, pamphlets are distributed to residents at community events such as Environmental Days, Emerald Ash Borer Information Sessions, Community Centers, the Civic Centre and the Joint Operations Centre.

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Purpose

The purpose of this Report is to provide Council with an update to the *5 Year Plan to Expand the Urban Forest*, identifying the current challenges and revised recommendations.

Background - Analysis and Options

On June 23rd, 2008, the Environmental Committee provided direction to staff to develop a 5 year plan to expand the urban forest which was then approved by Council in June 2009. The five year plan contained 13 recommendations / strategies focused on expanding the urban forest on both private and public lands.

The attached Report, *One TREE at a Time: Expanding the Urban Forest is an Update to Planting Our Future: A 5 Year Plan to Expand the Urban Forest*. It provides an update to the original Report including the 13 recommendations. The report also provide details highlighting the City's current tree replacement program; and outline the current challenges faced by the department in trying to increase the tree canopy.

The report also references the Urban Forest Effects Model referred to as *UFORE*, which provides analysis on the overall health of the trees in Vaughan and identifies a baseline for our current urban forest canopy. The UFORE study, a key recommendation in the 5 year plan was completed in December 2011 in partnership with The Regional Municipality of York, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The results of the assessment were helpful in identifying areas for additional plantings where there is insufficient tree coverage.

The report also addresses the strategy for dealing with the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) which was first discovered in Vaughan in 2008. It is anticipated that the EAB will destroy all ash trees if untreated within 10 years. Since the onslaught of EAB, 500 of the 14,000 ash trees on City boulevards have been removed. It is anticipated that a total of 13,000 Ash trees will have to be removed by 2022. In order to balance the available human and financial resources, the strategy to deal with the removals and replacement of ash trees was extended over 20 years.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the project will provide:

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

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

The UFORE study is in partnership with the Regional Municipality of York.

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Conclusion

The City of Vaughan recognizes the significant role that the urban forest plays in providing an improved quality of life. In order to maintain and protect the urban forest in the city of Vaughan,

Council, supported by the community, has provided leadership in the development, approval and implementation of approved policies and guidelines that will sustain and ultimately grow the urban forest. **The replacement value of trees in the city of Vaughan is estimated to be \$1.4 billion (UFORE 2012).**

In 2009, City of Vaughan Council approved *Planting Our Future: A 5-year Plan To Expand the Urban Forest*, a document that describes the benefits of a healthy urban forest and several key recommendations that included engaging the community, individual residents and the private business sector in order to increase the number of trees planted annually in the city of Vaughan. In recent years, as the City has experienced tremendous growth, the City of Vaughan Parks and Forestry Operations department has experienced budget constraints, and unforeseen pressures.

These pressures have already threatened the objectives of the Council approved 5 year Plan to Expand the Urban Forest, and the problem will only get worse if the tree management plan is not revised to ensure the following:

1. Adequate Resources for maintaining and protecting the urban forest.
2. Sustained funding for tree replanting to sustain the urban forest.
3. Enhanced community consultation and engagement to grow the urban forest.

The attached report provides a review and assessment of the strategy and recommendations approved in 2009, outlines the challenges and successes in expanding the urban forest and make recommendations to address the goals noted above.

Attachments

Attachment - Report: Expanding the Urban Forest: *One TREE at a Time*, An Update to *Planting Our Future: A 5 Year Plan to Expand the Urban Forest*.
(Will be made available prior to the meeting.)

Report prepared by:

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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.)