

NO: R184

COUNCIL DATE: November 20, 2023

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **November 15, 2023**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture** FILE: **0350-01**
General Manager, Engineering

SUBJECT: **Our City - 2023 Campaign Summary**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department and Engineering Department recommend that Council receive this report for information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on the first year of the 'Our City' campaign (the "Our City") that ran from May to September in 2023.

BACKGROUND

Our City is an initiative to inspire and empower residents to take an active role in enhancing their neighbourhoods and engaging in activities and projects that improve livability, cleanliness, foster pride and encourage community connections. Our City focuses on involving the community to take care of places important to them through placemaking projects, community clean-ups, community volunteerism and beautification projects.

Our City is a citywide campaign that aims to build broad civic pride in Surrey through encouraging and celebrating the actions of people at the neighbourhood and community level. With over 600,000 residents and rapid growth in Surrey, Our City aims to mobilize this energy and encourage residents to get involved in creating the community life and neighbourhoods they want to experience in Surrey.

DISCUSSION

Our City promoted tools, resources, and opportunities for residents to improve their neighbourhoods. This resulted in the successful completion of over 80 small neighbourhood-led improvement projects, cleanups, and events. These diverse projects encompassed a wide range of activities, including cleanups, litter pickups, invasive species removal, fence art, street banners, tree plantings, community gardens, block parties, beautification projects, audio tours and more.

Highlights

Some of the key highlights of Our City in 2023 include:

- The number of grant applications received through the Neighbourhood Grants program increased from 25 in 2022 to 58 over the same period in 2023.
- 7 grant information workshops held with over 100 participants.
- 385 hours contributed by Our City Volunteers to supporting at events, cleaning up litter, and beautification activities.
- Four neighbourhood cleanup events held with 89 participants.
- Two placemaking workshops.
- 48 clean up kits requested by community members, block watches and schools.
- Promotional presence at 5 major City events.
- Over 9,000 residents visited the Disposal Days event delivering over 1,600 tonnes of waste and recycling items of which 32% was sent for recycling.
- Over 26,500 items were collected as part of the large item pickup program keeping these items off of city streets, parks and other property.
- City staff and contractors cleaned up over 208 kilometres of Surrey roads weekly during the campaign period collecting over 7,120 garbage bags of litter;
- 3,079 illegal dumping sites were cleaned up throughout the campaign.

A strategic Our City communications campaign ran from May-August. This campaign led to:

- 5,253 social media engagements
- 4,780 pageviews, with 4,136 unique pageviews
- 790 link clicks on eNews

As well, Our City won a MarCom Platinum Award recognizing excellence in marketing and communication.

The grants, clean up kits and other resources promoted through Our City are still available throughout the year, but active promotion of specific campaign programs and workshops will begin again in May 2024 once there is more community demand. Appendix "I" provides a full overview of the components and activities of Our City.

CONCLUSION

Our City aims to inspire and empower surrey residents to take care of and improve their neighbourhoods. Surrey is a vibrant and growing city, and Our City aims to provide residents with the tools and resources to make Surrey more vibrant, clean, and exciting. The accomplishments achieved through the 2023 Our City campaign demonstrate our residents' commitment to make Surrey a better place to live, work and play.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Scott Neuman, P.Eng.
General Manager,
Engineering

Appendix "I": Our City Campaign Summary

<https://surreybc.sharepoint.com/sites/prcadmistration/corporate-reports-regular/2023/our-city-2023-cr-wrap-up-report.docx>

Our City Campaign Summary

Our City is a beautification, placemaking and civic pride campaign. The campaign engages the community to take care of places important to them through placemaking, community clean-ups, community volunteerism and beautification projects.

PLACEMAKING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Placemaking and Grant Workshops

Our City hosts online and in person grant workshops to help people come up with project ideas, and learn how to apply for the Neighbourhood Enhancement Grants.

Resource Promotion

The City of Surrey provides a number of resources that residents can take advantage of to make their neighbourhoods more vibrant places. Programs that are promoted through Our City include:

- Neighbourhood Enhancement Grants
- Neighbourhood Cleanup Kit
- Neighbourhood Event Kit
- Block Parties and how to host events
- Murals and Placemaking
- Façade Grants
- Community Banners
- Community Picnics
- Nature Work Parties
- Block Watch
- Active Playces

Placemaking Speaker Series

Our City brings in experts in placemaking and community projects to do training and workshops with groups and individuals interested in making their communities more connected, engaged and vibrant.

CLEANING UP AND LITTER

Neighbourhood Clean Up Kit

Community members can request a Clean Up Kit that includes, bags, litter pickers and City of Surrey support with picking up bulky items. Clean ups can be registered on the campaign website. This service is available all year round, and also provides a one-stop-registration portal for all cleanup activities across departments – making it easier for people to take care of their communities.

Our City Volunteer Program

The Our City Volunteer Program provides volunteers opportunities to take part in community beautification initiatives. This includes City organized neighbourhood clean ups, a self-directed litter clean up program, beautification projects, and event outreach opportunities.

Business Engagement

Businesses are engaged in Our City through the Community Enhancement Partnership (CEP) Program that offers grants to businesses to beautify their façade and enhance streetscapes. The campaign works with Business Improvement Associations to disseminate information and organize local clean-up and placemaking activities.

Block Watch Engagement

The Our City campaign works with the Block Watch Program to encourage block watch groups to get involved in making safe and vibrant neighbourhoods. A community clean up contest and targeted campaign takes place as part of the Our City campaign.

City-wide Clean-Up Mobilization

City staff, along with contractors, are mobilized to complete enhanced litter picking and cleaning-up of garbage in each town centre.

School Engagement

Our City resources are promoted to schools in April, May, September and October.

Disposal Day Event

Residents and businesses are encouraged to participate at the Disposal Day event to help keep neighborhoods clean and free of dumped items. The event provides free drop-off to dispose of unwanted material at both Central Surrey and North Surrey recycling and waste centres.

Large Item Pickup Program

Residents are encouraged to make use of the large item pickup program (LIPU). The LIPU service is a free disposal option for residents to get rid of their unwanted items throughout the year which will help these items off city streets, parks, and other property.

SHARING STORIES AND INSPIRATION

Communications Campaign

A robust communications strategy both encourages and celebrates individual and group contributions to a more vibrant and cleaner Surrey. The communications campaign draws attention to the resources available through telling stories about how residents have used them to improve their community. The campaign uses existing digital channels like social media and eNews to elevate storytelling opportunities and key messaging that will resonate to channel-specific audiences.

Our City Webpage

The Our City campaign landing page is a hub of information for how residents can improve their communities. The webpage links to the variety of programs and resources available to residents and businesses.

Our City Project Map

Surrey is full of amazing things that residents have created that make communities unique and special; from block parties and community festivals to small beautification projects. A GIS story map is used to document and showcase neighbourhood enhancement projects to help celebrate and inspire others.