



Corporate Report

NO: R102

COUNCIL DATE: May 29, 2006

REGULAR

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **May 23, 2006**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and
Culture; General Manger, Engineering**

FILE: **6300 - 01**

SUBJECT: **Green City Initiatives**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the 2006 **Green City** initiatives.

BACKGROUND

Conceived in the summer of 2005, the *Green City Program* is a sustainable tree planting and tree management program intended to provide additional emphasis on augmenting the City's tree inventory. As reported to Council's Finance Committee during the 2006 Budget process, the works undertaken through this program may include the planting of additional street trees, renovating older medians, other street landscaping efforts and tree planting in parks and other city-managed natural areas.

Residents and visitors to Surrey will see the benefits of these additional trees in enhanced aesthetics, the positive environmental benefits of cleaner air, new habitat for songbirds and reduced storm run-off into local fish-bearing streams. The Green City initiatives will significantly augment beautification efforts, but are not meant to replace any existing beautification programs. A corporate report relating to the City beautification initiatives will be forthcoming in the next few months.

Funding for the 2006 Green City Program

The Green City Program is funded through 2% of all building permit revenues, together with a one-time contribution of \$500,000 to this fund from 2005 corporate savings. The amount available for the 2006 program is approximately \$750,000.

Current City Tree Planting Programs Complimenting Green City

Street Trees – Street trees are planted to dramatically improve the appearance of our city streets. In addition to their aesthetic contributions, street trees also provide shade for our residents and produce benefits to the environment through storm water impact mitigation, increased oxygen production, and providing nesting sites for songbirds. Currently, street trees are planted:

- i) when medians are developed;
- ii) when arterial road widening results in plantable boulevards being constructed;
- iii) during the development of new subdivisions; and
- iv) as part of an ongoing program to plant trees in existing neighbourhoods that do not have street trees.

On average, approximately **3,000** street trees are planted each year, although this varies with the amount of new home development occurring in the City, and with the number of road widening projects underway. The current inventory of street trees is 47,000.

Trees in Parks - Although most existing parks already have shade trees and stands of native trees, additional trees are planted in parks:

- i) when new parks are constructed;
- ii) during community tree planting days (e.g. Releaf Days); and
- iii) through various programs aimed at restoring degraded natural area sites, to increase these site's environmental values and habitat quality for fish, deer, small mammals, birds and other wildlife.

On average, approximately **2,500** new trees and companion shrubs are planted in parks each year.

Tree Management - Street trees, shade trees in parks, and heritage trees on City property are actively managed to ensure that they are structurally sound and healthy, through the City's Specimen Tree Management Program. Trees and other components of natural area forests are managed under the auspices of the City's *Natural Areas Management Plan*. Tree management includes:

- tree hazard evaluation and mitigation works;
- corrective and cyclical pruning;
- staking;
- establishment and maintenance of tree wells;
- tree watering and fertilization;
- cabling & bracing;
- root pruning;
- pest management.

DISCUSSION

New Initiatives under the 2006 *Green City* program

The following initiatives of the 2006 Green City Program are intended to keep Surrey green and beautiful:

Median Renovation - There are several older medians that have large pine trees planted in pockets amongst large areas of asphalt. In most cases, the shrub material around the pines is very old and unattractive. Further, the asphalt is generally in poor repair, has cracked or been raised in humps by the roots of the pine trees. The median on the King George Highway between 108th and 104th Avenue is targeted for work in 2006, as is a median on 152nd Street north of 105th Avenue. These medians will benefit from having large planting pockets filled with trees and shrubs introduced into them. New hard edging will be installed, and the mature pines will be retained. This work will have a positive visual impact in Whalley.

Other older grassed medians and boulevard strips on key arterial streets will benefit from having attractive new shrub beds installed, providing colour along these busy routes. In addition, medians on several streets with existing trees will be infill-planted to achieve a higher density of trees.

Trees and Shrubs in New Medians – At least one new median will be landscaped using funding from this program; shade trees and shrub beds will be included to provide year round colour and interest.

New Horticulture at the Entrance to Whalley - The City will work in partnership with the Whalley BIA to improve the landscaping and trees at the prominent corner of 108th Avenue and King George Highway.

Stabilization of Forest Trees in Parks, Adjacent to New Development - Development next to forested parkland areas can have the unintended consequence of causing the decline of trees in the parkland, leading to tree failure in the 3-5 years following development. Funding will be put toward removing and replacing native trees in these park areas, so as to ensure strong green edges along parks.

Planting Trees in Parks - Many park areas will benefit from the planting of additional shade trees around picnic areas, parking lots, water spray parks and other areas where people will make use of the shade on hot days.

Enhanced Community Tree Planting Celebration – *Arbor Day* has been enlarged and enhanced, providing opportunity for the community to join in the planting of many trees, while learning about the importance of trees in an urban environment.

CONCLUSION

There are a number of exciting new greening initiatives that will be undertaken in 2006 under the **Green City** Program, complimenting existing city tree planting programs. These include the planting of street trees and park shade trees, renovating existing medians and other street landscaping, and the re-planting of forested areas of city parks that have been inadvertently impacted by development of adjacent properties. These initiatives will provide environmental benefits and augment existing beautification efforts.

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