



Corporate Report

NO: R086

COUNCIL DATE: APRIL 30, 2007

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: April 25, 2007
FROM: General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture; General Manager, Engineering; General Manager, Finance and Technology FILE: 6280-01
SUBJECT: City Beautification

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Endorse the 2007 City Beautification Program as outlined within this report.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to inform Council about current beautification initiatives and to gain Council support for a program of new initiatives for City Beautification, to be carried out in 2007.

BACKGROUND

In July 2006, Council endorsed the formation of a staff Beautification Task Force, made up of senior staff from across the corporation, to continue the highly successful work of the Whalley Enhancement Team and to build on existing corporate beautification initiatives, but on a broader City scale. The Task Force was to evaluate initiatives that would provide the greatest improvements to the City, to initiate activities that could be achieved within existing resources, and to bring forward initiatives that require new resources.

As part of the Five-year Financial Plan, the 2007 City budget provided new resources for City Beautification. These resources were comprised of \$250,000 in operating funds and \$250,000 in capital for new efforts. In addition, the City was able to secure a one-time allocation of \$108,000 from the Union of BC Municipalities for new entrance sign features.

The Task Force reviewed current beautification efforts and developed new opportunities for beautifying the City. These new opportunities were established on the basis of the new funding made available by Council, and were prioritized on their capacity for creating positive visual impacts within the City. Additional feedback was obtained from the Mayor's 2010 Committee on proposed initiatives.

DISCUSSION

Existing Programs and Initiatives

It is clear that current initiatives are having a significant positive impact on the City's image and visual appeal. While some initiatives are managed solely by the City, other initiatives have emerged as the result of partnerships and community-involvement programs. Some examples of these recent initiatives are:

- Partnerships with BIA's – Several partnerships have been developed with area BIA's, resulting in new banners being put up, flower baskets being hung, and litter/graffiti clean-up programs having been put into place in key town centre areas.
- New Medians on Arterial Streets – Lovely new medians have been constructed as part of arterial road widening projects throughout the City. In the past two years, these medians have included coloured, stamped asphalt, and approximately 30,000 square meters of flower and shrub beds.
- Street Trees – New subdivisions, older subdivisions, and new medians and boulevards on arterials have been planted with street trees. In the past two years alone, an additional 7,940 street trees have been planted to beautify our City streets, due in part to the rollout of the new *Green City Program*. In March 2007, Surrey was given the prestigious title of a *Green Streets Canada 2007 City* by the Tree Foundation Canada; Surrey is the only three-time winner of this title in the country.
- Clean Sweep Week – Thousands of school children, residents and service clubs participated in a week-long cleanup event that resulted in thousands of pieces of refuse and litter removed from streets and City parks. Through this effort, many new permanent volunteers were brought into the *Adopt-A-Street Program* and the *Partners-In-Parks Program*, allowing a more sustained year-round effort in City Beautification.
- By-law Enforcement – The By-law Enforcement and Licensing Section continues to work proactively on enforcing the Sign By-law, cleaning up unsightly premises, removing derelict houses and working in partnership with multi-family housing groups to clean up their areas to make them more attractive and safe.
- New Developments – The Planning & Development Department is working closely with developers to ensure that new developments are designed and constructed to high standards, resulting in pleasing commercial and residential areas. Holland Park in Whalley is being transformed into the City's first truly urban park, and is presently scheduled for opening in September of this year, presenting very attractive features at the south end of our City Centre.

- Community Beautification Initiatives - *Bulbs For Beauty, Arbor Day, ReLeaf Days, and Maple Leaf Day* all continue as community-based beautification, with more trees and bulbs planted every year. At Earth Day 2007, a partnership with a local company resulted in 2,600 seedlings being planted to augment our growing urban forest.

Proposed 2007 City Beautification Program

The Task Force reviewed and ranked many initiatives and opportunities for the proposed **2007 City Beautification Program**. Some initiatives are within the scope of existing City operations, and as such will be dealt with as part of the City's ongoing commitment to beautification. An example of this is the Sign By-law Action Program of the By-law Enforcement and Licensing Section, as outlined to Council recently in Corporate Report R070.

The Task Force considered many new or expanded initiatives. In the first year of the beautification program, a substantial amount of the funding would go towards one-time capital costs. In subsequent years, larger portions of the available funding would go towards sustaining the attractiveness of the new features through appropriate levels of operating and maintenance of visually important features.

Based on budget availability, achievability and the ability to leverage partnerships to increase project scope, the large list of initiatives was further refined to form the proposed 2007 program:

1. **Banner Program** – A standing amount of funding would be set aside for design, development and placement of banners in key town centre areas. Banner projects lend themselves to partnerships (e.g., BIA's, Educational Institutions, Festival Organizers), provide immediate visual appeal, and are changed frequently enough to ensure that the positive aesthetics remain fresh. (\$50,000 would provide for development and placement of approximately 500 banners, with opportunity to increase this number with partnership funding. Additional hardware would need to be purchased on a one-time basis at a cost of \$50,000 for 350 brackets. The total commitment towards banners would be \$100,000)
2. **Decorative Twinkle Lights in Trees** – It is proposed that decorative lights be added to selected trees in City Centre on a pilot basis. Approximately two hundred trees would be targeted in the first year for bringing in underground wiring and installing tree lighting, and the program would be expanded as new developments take place in the City Centre, and in subsequent years in the other Town Centres. (\$100,000)
3. **Median Redevelopment, King George Highway in City Centre** – Older medians on the King George Highway between 104 Avenue and 108 Avenue are unsightly due to landscaping and too much hard surface, some of which is heaving. The hard surface could be cut out and planted with attractive shrub-beds and trees. Additional funds under the City Beautification Program would be combined with an allocation from the *Green City Program* to undertake some key sections of this visually important area of the City. (\$100,000)

4. **Entrance to Surrey Signs** – A review of the ten City of Surrey entrance signs indicates that many of the signs are structurally in very poor shape. Furthermore, almost all entrance signs incorporate images of the Surrey Beaver, which is under review as part of the City's corporate logo project. It is proposed to phase the replacement of these key entrance signs, complete with flag-poles, landscaping or other attractive elements, starting with the entrance off of the Pattullo Bridge and at Pacific Highway between the border and 8 Avenue. Signs at additional locations will be replaced as funding permits, and in subsequent years of the beautification program. Also, new signs will be added to eleven high volume traffic locations over time (e.g. 88 Avenue at Nordel Way; 72 Avenue at 120 Street; Hwy. No. 1 off-ramp at 192 Avenue) where no welcome signs presently exist. Timing will be dependent on the completion of the corporate logo program, but several sites will likely be completed before the end of the year. (\$200,000)
5. **Public Art** – Above ground utility boxes have been the target for severe graffiti vandalism over the last few years. Wraps of decorative film can be applied to these boxes to discourage graffiti and to enhance their appearance. Based on Surrey's *Ahead of the Game 2010* theme and on more traditional community art approaches, the boxes could display both sport and other art important to local communities. Efforts will be made to engage the utility companies to assist as partners in this program, because management of these above ground boxes is not directly under the City's purview. Also, the City proposes to work in partnership with private oil companies on brownfield art projects. What is proposed is that the fences of several high visibility former gas station sites that have sat vacant for years while environmental remediation takes place would be decorated with community art, utilizing the decorative wrap technologies available from local prominent Surrey companies. It is proposed that these projects using decorative wraps be run on a pilot project basis in City Centre. (\$33,000)
6. **City Beautification Coordinator** – This is proposed as a one-year pilot project where the position would take responsibility for coordinating beautification efforts. Some examples of responsibilities of the position would include: working with Transit to beautify and revitalize transit shelters and transit loops; working with business owners and commercial area managers to maintain and beautify commercial landscaped areas, business facades and public spaces adjacent to the businesses; coordinating community-based beautification contests, working with businesses to provide contest sponsorships and other incentives; forming partnerships with groups to develop banners; coordinating a City-operated graffiti hot-line, liaising with the various City departments, utilities and outside agencies that manage and maintain infrastructures within the City that is commonly targeted with graffiti vandalism. (\$75,000 includes salary, benefits and vehicle)

CONCLUSION

Building on highly successful initiatives such as Council's *Green City Program*, the *Whalley Enhancement Strategy*, the *2010 Plan*, and community-based clean-up programs such as *Clean Sweep Week*, a draft 2007 City Beautification Program has been developed for Council's endorsement.

The Program will be built on partnerships and community engagement, with some direct delivery by the City. In its first year, the Program will focus on banners in town centres, decorative twinkle lights in trees in key areas of City Centre, greening King George Highway medians in Whalley, removal and replacement of aging *Welcome to Surrey* signs, and development of decorative wraps with community art and sport motifs on utility boxes and other key areas in City Centre. The Program will also initiate a staff position on a one-year pilot project basis to build partnerships, coordinate the efforts to remove graffiti, clean up private and commercial landscapes, and bring together residents and local businesses in beautification efforts.

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