

NO: R079

COUNCIL DATE: April 12, 2010

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **April 1, 2010**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation
and Culture
General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Planning and
Development**

FILE: **6300 - 01**

SUBJECT: **Update on the Surrey Green City Program**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information about the Green City Program and other city tree planting and management initiatives.

BACKGROUND

The *Green City* Program that was initiated in 2006 is a sustainable tree planting and tree management program intended to expand the City's tree inventory. The works undertaken through this program include the planting of street trees, renovating older medians, community tree planting celebrations, street landscaping and tree planting in parks and other city-managed natural areas.

The Green City Program is funded from an allocation of 2% of all building permit revenues received by the City.

The program results in enhanced aesthetics of City streets and parks, cleaner air, new habitat for songbirds and reduced storm run-off into local fish-bearing streams. The Green City Program initiatives augment beautification efforts carried out in other City beautification programs.

DISCUSSION

2009 Green City Program Results

The following is a list of the key initiatives carried out under the Green City Program in 2009:

- **Bridgeview Tree Planting** – Approximately 500 street trees were planted in the Bridgeview area on Scott Road north of 104th Avenue and on the King George Boulevard between the Pattullo Bridge and 108th Avenue.
- **Street Trees in Residential Neighbourhoods** – approximately 250 street trees were planted in older residential areas where tree planting was not required at the time of development.
- **Landscaping on Highway 10 Sound walls** – Climbing vines were planted at the base of every second post on the sound walls along Hwy 10 that will over time cover these walls.
- **Forest Edge Tree Planting** – The program supported the removal and replacement of several hundred native trees and shrubs along forest edges in City parks to ensure the long term integrity of these forests.
- **Community Tree Planting** – Tree planting on Arbor Day, Maple Leaf Day, ReLeaf Days and other community tree planting events was funded from the Program. These events not only act to add green to the City, they have the added benefit of educating children and youth about the value of trees in the environment.
- **Tree Education** – A brochure and newspaper supplements were developed to educate the public about tree preservation, tree care and tree planting.
- **Large Tree Preservation** – The Program provided funding to assist in preserving large trees when engineering service connections to lots are changed in established areas.
- **Graffiti Mitigation** – Evergreen trees were planted on several sections of City streets in front of private wooden fences that had been repeated targets by graffiti vandals. The trees will act to mitigate the on-going graffiti problem and act to add green to the City's streets.

Other City Tree Planting Programs

Street Trees – Street trees are planted to improve the appearance of city streets. Street trees are planted:

- i) When new medians are installed;
- ii) When arterial road widening projects include plantable boulevards;
- iii) In new single family residential subdivisions; and

- iv) As part of an ongoing program to plant trees in existing residential neighbourhoods that do not have trees on the street boulevards.

On average, approximately **3,000** street trees are planted each year. There is a current inventory of approximately **60,000** street trees across the City.

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

- i) when new parks are constructed; and
- ii) through various programs aimed at restoring natural area sites to increase park site environmental values and habitat quality for fish, deer, small mammals, birds and other wildlife.

On average, approximately **2,000** new trees and shrubs are planted in parks each year. Presently, there are approximately **16,000** shade trees in parks that complement the several thousand acres of natural area forests in the City's park inventory.

Tree Management - Street trees, shade trees in parks, and heritage trees on City property are actively managed through the City's Specimen Tree Management Program to ensure that they remain structurally sound and healthy. Trees and other vegetation 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 and tree grates;
- tree watering and fertilization;
- cabling & bracing;
- root pruning; and
- pest management.

2010 Green City Program

Approximately \$600,000 is budgeted for tree initiatives in the 2010 Green City program. The following initiatives are presently being planned for 2010:

- **City Centre** – City Centre will be a focus for street tree planting this year. Approximately half of the funding available from Green City will be used to carry out infill planting both in City Centre and on King George Boulevard. The new trees will assist in providing aesthetically pleasing views for passengers on Skytrain and for motorists.
- **Community Tree Planting** – Bridgeview Park will host the 2010 Arbor Day celebrations, and other events will take place throughout the City for the other community tree planting events.

- **156th Street Screen** – Trees will be planted as a screen and sound barrier on 156 Street in the vicinity of the Highway No. 1 underpass into Fraser Heights.
- **Shade Trees in Parks** – 350 trees will be planted in neighbourhood parks throughout the City to provide shade and environmental benefits.
- **Forest Edges** – Hazardous trees that have been removed from forested areas will be re-planted at a three trees for each tree that was removed. This will result in several hundred native trees being planted along the edge of urban forests in the City.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Tree planting initiatives under the Green City program assists in meeting the Sustainability Charter's Environmental Goal 1 (b) through increasing canopy coverage, Goal 2 (f) by improving natural riparian systems and Goal 3 (a) by improving local air quality. The involvement of residents in community tree planting events will assist in meeting Socio-Cultural Goal 8, in which citizens are involved and connected to their communities.

CONCLUSION

The Green City Program has been in place since 2006 and has resulted in thousands of new trees being planted in the City. The 2010 program has significant funding for additional tree planting throughout the City including street trees, shade trees in parks and enhancement of natural areas and urban forests.

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