

NO: R112

COUNCIL DATE: May 29, 2017

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **May 8, 2017**
FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture** FILE: **6300-01**
SUBJECT: **Surrey's Urban Forestry Program Receives SMA Accreditation**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to advise Council that the City has received Society of Municipal Arborists (SMA) Accreditation for its urban forestry program.

BACKGROUND

The Society of Municipal Arborists is a not-for-profit international organization of municipal arborists, urban and community foresters and municipal officials who are involved in the professional management of trees in cities worldwide. SMA leads the world in building the confidence, competence, and camaraderie of the family of professionals who create and sustain community forests.

The SMA has in place a peer-reviewed program for accreditation that formally recognizes urban and community forestry programs for implementing excellent and comprehensive management practices.

In autumn of 2016, the Urban Forestry Section of the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department submitted an application to the SMA Accreditation program.

DISCUSSION

The Parks Division's Urban Forestry Section manages more than 80,000 inventoried street trees, tens of thousands of naturally growing native trees along its streets and more than 22,000 shade trees in its parks and on public lands. In addition, the Urban Forestry Section manages more than 1,600 hectares (4,000 acres) of natural areas, primarily forests, within its parks.

The City's progressive, overarching policies (*Sustainability Charter*, *Official Community Plan*, and *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy*) provide the overall framework within which the City's urban forest is managed. The City's *Tree Protection Bylaw, 2006, No. 16100* and *Tree Cutting Bylaw, 1979, No. 5835* provide important regulatory and enforcement protections for the City's urban forest. In addition, the *Shade Tree Management Plan* and *Natural Area Management Plan* provide specific direction for sustainable management of the City's public property shade trees and natural forests.

Results

On March 1, 2017, Urban Forestry staff received notification that the City has been accredited by the Society of Municipal Arborists.

The City's urban forestry program is only the second accredited program outside of the USA. This is an honor and an accomplishment. This places the City of Surrey's urban forestry program among an elite list of municipalities in the world that are accredited by the SMA.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The City's urban forest represents a significant green infrastructure investment. Well-managed trees and forests beautify the City, provide habitat, mitigate storm water run-off, off-set carbon emissions, filter other pollutants, mitigate heating and cooling costs, and are linked to improved health for people. Specifically, the recommendations contained within this report support the following Desired Outcomes (DO) and Strategic Directions (SD) identified in the Sustainability Charter:

- Built Environments and Neighbourhoods DO5: Trees, green spaces and natural areas are integrated into all neighbourhoods.
 - SD5: Integrate natural areas, ecosystems, and green areas in all neighbourhoods.
- Ecosystems DO1: Parks, natural areas, urban forests and habitat corridors are interconnected throughout Surrey and the region, creating healthy places for people and wildlife.
- Ecosystems DO2: Surrey actively protects, enhances and restores its natural environment and habitats.
- Ecosystems DO3: All development enhances, or minimizes the impacts on Surrey's lush tree canopy and natural environment, and avoids encroachment into natural areas, habitat features and parks.
 - SD5: Increase tree canopy coverage across the city.
- Ecosystems DO4: Surrey residents support biodiversity conservation and are stewards of natural areas and urban forests on both public and private lands.
 - SD1: Increase public awareness of biodiversity issues through a comprehensive education program.
- Ecosystems DO12: Surrey protects ecosystem services and manages natural assets in order to create resiliency in order to adapt and thrive in a changing climate.
- Health and Wellness DO7: Residents enjoy a high level of physical, social, and mental wellness.
 - SD6: Provide opportunities for all residents, especially children, to interact with green spaces and trees.

- Infrastructure DO1: All infrastructure systems are well managed, adaptable and long lasting, and are effectively integrated into regional systems.
- Infrastructure DO4: Ecosystems and natural assets are an essential part of the community's infrastructure system.
 - SD3: Develop and manage the green infrastructure network to continue to deliver ecosystem services.

CONCLUSION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

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