



Report
Staff Report
The Corporation of the City of Brampton
4/23/2025

Date: 2025-03-31

Subject: **Expansion of the Leaf Vacuum Program RM 83/2024**

Contact: Sam Mattina, Manager, Contracts, Program Planning and Projects,
Road Maintenance, Operations and Fleet Division

Report number: Public Works & Engineering-2025-293

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report from Sam Mattina, Manager Contracts, Program Planning and Projects, Road Maintenance, Operations and Fleet Division to the Committee of Council Meeting of April 23, 2025 re: **Expansion of the Leaf Vacuum Program RM 83/2024**, be received; and
2. That Council approve proceeding with option one maintaining the current service levels.

OVERVIEW:

- **On November 27, 2024, a public delegation was conducted before City Council and a request was made for the expansion of the leaf vacuum program beyond its current limits.**
- **This report provides three (3) options for Council's consideration;**
 - I. Maintaining the limits of the existing service area**
 - II. Expanded Area based on Service Request Data (Wards 1 & 3)**
 - III. "Mature" Areas 25+ Years Old (All Wards)**
- **The Leaf Vacuum Program is active in the Downtown and Churchville areas. The majority of Downtown and Churchville are located within the floodplain, making them significantly more vulnerable to flooding. These areas also feature aging infrastructure and a mature tree canopy which is why they require additional preventative measures such as the Leaf Vacuum Program.**

- **The Leaf Vacuum program ensures that high risk areas like Downtown and Churchville are not impacted further by a clogged drainage system during high intensity rain events.**
- **The Churchville area was added to the service area in 2022, after flooding in the area. The Leaf Vacuum Program was expanded to assist in mitigating the chances of any future flooding.**

BACKGROUND:

The City of Brampton, Public Works and Engineering Department, provides a Leaf Collection Program to specific city streets of the Downtown core and the residential area of the city known as Churchville. The remainder of the city is serviced by the Region of Peel's Waste Collection Program.

Since 2006, the program has been delivered through a contracted service. Prior to that, it was managed in-house. The transition to contracted services was made to reduce costs associated with purchasing and maintaining the specialized equipment needed for the leaf collection program.

Property owners gather fallen leaves and place them along the roadside boulevard in front of their homes. The leaves are subsequently mechanically collected via vacuum units from the boulevard. The vacuum unit places the collected leaves into the back of an accompanying receptacle vehicle.

Leaves that may fall onto the roadway are not collected through the leaf vacuum program, rather they are swept up by street sweeping machines through the City's Street sweeping program, which is intended to remove debris and potential blockages from storm catch basins.

After the flooding event in 2022, the Churchville area was added to the Leaf Vacuum Program to assist in mitigating any future flooding that may occur by ensuring that our stormwater system is able to function at its full capacity without any blockages.

The current areas of Downtown and Churchville are included in the program for a number of technical factors.

- I. The areas are part of the Brampton floodplain and are at higher risk of flooding;
- II. The areas have aged infrastructure; and
- III. The areas have a significant mature tree canopy.

It should be noted that it is the combination of these factors that makes the Leaf Vacuum Program essential for these particular areas of the City.

The 2024 Leaf Collection Program covers approximately 65 kms of curb line and collected and recycled approximately 275 tons of leaves between late October and early December. The current map outline of the Leaf Collection Program is shown in Attachment 1.

CURRENT SITUATION:

On November 27, 2024, a public delegation appeared before City Council and requested consideration of being added to the Program through expansion of the current limits. Staff are presenting three (3) options for Council to consider. Costing to add mature areas in all Wards have been provided. All Options indicate the expanded service area and additional costs, over and above the existing costs and service area.

Option	Description	Curb-Line Length	Contracted Cost (Estimated)	Total In-House Cost (Estimated)	Total Revenue from Region of Peel (Estimated)
1	Current Service Area	TOTAL = 65 km	TOTAL = \$170K	~\$730K (upfront Capital equipment costs) + ~\$170K/year in Operating costs (fuel, parts, and labour*)	\$50K
2	Expanded Area based on Service Request Data (Wards 1 & 3)	Current ~65 km + Additional ~145 km TOTAL = 210 km	Current \$170K + Additional ~\$380K TOTAL = \$550K	~\$2.4M (upfront Capital equipment costs) + ~\$550K/year in Operating costs (fuel, parts, and labour*)	\$50K
3	“Mature” Areas 25+ Years Old (All Wards) **See Attachment 5 for individual Ward breakdowns	Current ~65 km + Additional ~1,385 km TOTAL = 1450 km	Current \$170K + Additional ~\$3.6M TOTAL = \$3.8M	~\$16.3M (upfront Capital equipment costs) + ~\$3.8M/year in Operating costs (fuel, parts, and labour*)	\$1.0M

*Would have to bring in seasonal staffing to run program each year

All Options have potential recovery savings, should the Region of Peel be able to continue to reimburse the City for recycling leaves collected. The Regions' ability to reimburse the City may be affected by future downloaded services or capacity to recycle additional tonnage from any expanded services.

To enhance leaf vacuum services, staff have included additional street sweeping in vulnerable areas at the beginning and end of season to clear leaves and prevent catch basin blockages.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

The current Leaf Vacuum Program, which includes the Downtown and Churchville areas, is fully funded within the approved 2025 operating budget. The total budget of \$176,460 is supported through Reserve #46 – Stormwater Charge and is partially offset by an estimated \$46,200 recovery from the Region of Peel.

Staff recommend continuing the program at the current service level (Option 1 – Current Service Area), as it is supported by the rationale presented in the report and aligns with approved budget allocations.

While no changes to service levels are recommended currently, it is important to consider the financial implications of potential expansion options—particularly considering the current economic climate, including the impacts of international tariffs and the risk of a broader economic slowdown increasing the affordability challenges of residents. In this context, significant new investments in operating or capital budgets would not align with the City's sustainable property tax strategy, and would require reallocation of priorities within already constrained budgets.

Operating Budget Impact:

Expanded service would require increased annual operating funding, with estimates ranging from:

- Option 2 – Expanded Area (Wards 1 & 3): Estimated \$550,000 annually
- Option 3 – Mature Areas Citywide: Estimated \$3.8 million annually

The additional operating expenses could result in property tax impacts ranging from 0.03% (Option 2) to 0.26% (Option 3), depending on the chosen option and funding source. Additionally, the Expanded and Mature Area options may be eligible for cost recovery from the Region of Peel, which could help offset financial impacts. However, this recovery may be affected by potential service downloads in the future.

If expansion proceeds, adjustments to the 2026 and future operating budgets would be required to account for these ongoing costs.

Capital Budget Impact:

Expanding the program using in-house service delivery would require a substantial upfront capital investment in Year 1:

- Option 2: Approx. \$2.4 million
- Option 3: Approx. \$16.3 million

It is important to note that the 2025 Budget includes a fully allocated 5-year capital program and funding plan. Any decision to expand the Leaf Vacuum Program would require the re-prioritization of existing capital projects, potentially drawing on Reserve #4 – Asset R&R and/or Reserve #46 – Stormwater Charge.

Below is a summary of the estimated costs for each option outlined in this report:

Options	Total	In-House [\$]	In-House [\$]	In-House [\$]	Contract Out	Potential
	KM	Operating *	Capital	Total Cost (Year 1)	Annual Costs [\$]	Recovery (Region of Peel)
#1 - Current Service Area **	65	170,000	730,000	900,000	170,000	46,000
#2 - Expanded (Wards 1 & 3)	210	550,000	2,400,000	2,950,000	550,000	149,000
#3 - Mature Areas	1450	3,800,000	16,300,000	20,100,000	3,800,000	1,030,000

*In-house operating costs include fuel, parts and seasonal staffing

** City currently contracts out for existing level of service.

Purchasing Implications

There is a contract with an initial three (3) year period (From Oct 1, 2024 to December 31, 2026) with two (2) additional optional one (1) year periods. The City has completed the first year of this three-year contract T2024-261.

A Public procurement process will be conducted, and the lowest compliant bid will be eligible for Contract award.

Purchase approval shall be obtained in accordance with the Purchasing By-law.

All communication with bidders involved in the procurement must occur formally, through the contact person identified in the Bid call document.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

This report supports Brampton’s Transit and Connectivity Strategic Focus Area by ensuring that the City’s transportation infrastructure is maintained in a safe, reliable and sustainable manner.

CONCLUSION:

Staff have compiled three (3) potential options to address the request to expand the Leaf Collection Program. Each option has varying costs and areas serviced for Council’s consideration along with the associated financial implications. Staff recommend proceeding with option one “Current Service Area”, given that these areas are vulnerable to flooding as well as the absence of available funds in both the current operating and capital budgets to support expansion of the program at this time.

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Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Option #1 Current Service Area Map
- Attachment 2 - Option #2 Expanded Service Area Map
- Attachment 3 – Option #3 Mature Area (All Wards) Map
- Attachment 4 – Cost per Ward Table