

Date: 2021-04-14

Subject: Request for Budget Amendment: Brampton One Million Trees Program Update

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Report Number: Public Works & Engineering-2021-371

Recommendations:

1. That the report titled: **Request for Budget Amendment: Brampton One Million Trees Program Update** to the Committee of Council meeting of April 14, 2021, be received;
2. That a budget amendment of \$50,000 be approved and a new capital project be established with funding to be transferred from the Reserve Fund #18 - Tree Canopy Account to facilitate the establishment of a Residential Tree Planting Program; and
3. That Council designate September as Brampton Tree Month.

Overview:

- The *Brampton One Million Trees Program* is a catalytic action in the *Brampton 2040 Vision: Living the Mosaic* and contributes to the Term of Council “Brampton is a Green City” Priority - “*Implement a Green Framework*” and “Brampton is a Mosaic” Priority - “*Innovative Engagement*” through maintaining and enhancing the City’s urban forest.
- As part of this program, staff is proposing the development and implementation of a Residential Tree Planting Program to help achieve the City’s target of one million trees planted by 2040.
- To facilitate this initiative as per the *Brampton One Million Trees Program’s* Five Year Action Plan, funds will need to be drawn from the City’s Reserve 18 - Tree Canopy Account. These funds are received as cash-in-lieu

compensation from the development industry when healthy trees are removed during construction.

- **This report also proposes that Council consider designating the month of September as Brampton Tree Month. This aligns with the Strategy's Five Year Action Plan, the majority of the City's tree planting events, National Forest Week and National Tree Day.**
- **Canadian National Railway (CN) has been secured as the first sponsor for the *Brampton One Million Trees Program*.**

Background:

The City of Brampton is a strong leader in the stewardship of its natural heritage, urban forest and trees. Along with its many partners, including the Conservation Authorities, the development industry and the general public, the City plants an average of 43,000 trees per year. Strong stewardship of the urban forest by the community has resulted in Brampton's urban forest accounting for 18% of land cover in Brampton.

The *Brampton One Million Trees Program*, approved by Council in January 2020, is a plan to achieve one million trees planted in Brampton by 2040. To meet the one million trees target by 2040, 50,000 trees on average need to be planted across Brampton each year for the next 20 years.

The City has a number of tools in place to support Brampton's urban forest and maintain it in the long-term. For example, the City requires all healthy tableland trees removed for new development to be replaced with new tree plantings in accordance with the replacement ratios outlined by the City's Tableland Tree Assessment Guidelines. In circumstances where compensation by planting is not achievable on the development site, the City accepts cash-in-lieu, which is used to fund tree planting initiatives in other locations across Brampton. These funds are placed in the City's Reserve 18 – Tree Canopy Account. This report is requesting the withdrawal of funds from this Reserve Account to assist with the establishment of the first stage of the Residential Tree Planting Program.

Current Situation:

In 2020, 24,200 trees were planted in Brampton, including 6,100 planted by the City of Brampton. The last year was challenging for tree planting programs in Brampton due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of community planting events usually held by the City and Conservation Authorities were cancelled or significantly reduced. City and Conservation Authority staff were able to recoup some planting activity in the fall and winter of 2020.

It is expected that community plantings will continue to be impacted by COVID-19 restrictions this year; however, staff is further developing strategies to help improve tree planting numbers as well as to continue to engage the community and build stewardship of Brampton's trees and urban forest. This includes significant tree plantings in parklands and valleylands, and the initiation of new tree planting initiatives, such as a Residential Tree Planting Program.

In addition to planting trees, the following actions have been completed as part of the *Brampton One Million Trees Program* since the Program's approval in January 2020.

- Initiation of the "Green City Working Group" that includes Environmental Planning, Forestry, Parks Planning and Development, Parks Maintenance and (Parks) Community Programs.
- Launching of a new tree webpage at www.brampton.ca/trees.
- Development of a public interactive Tree Planting Tracker map to promote and track the progress of the *Brampton One Million Trees Program*.
- Production of a tree brochure that outlines the benefits of trees, as well as tree planting and maintenance tips.
- Continued encouragement of residents and businesses to plant and care for trees on their own property, through online resources, videos and social media.
- Collaboration with other City initiatives (e.g. Nurturing Neighbourhoods Program, SNAPS, Eco Park) to leverage resources and help identify priority planting locations.
- Development of a parks tree planting program for existing parks.
- Integration of tableland tree planting projects into the City's Naturalization Program.
- Acquisition of Canadian National Railway (CN) as the *Brampton One Million Trees Program's* first sponsor.

Brampton's Urban Forest Management Plan

Staff from Urban Forestry and Environmental Planning have been working with Urban Forest Innovations Inc. in developing Brampton's first *Urban Forest Management Plan* since 2019. A background review and analysis informed engagement activities with internal and external stakeholders that were completed in January 2021. The final deliverable will be an *Urban Forest Management Plan* in early 2022.

Engagement activities completed include an internal and external workshop as well as a public survey. Over 300 community members provided their input for the *Urban Forest*

Management Plan through the survey. Staff also launched a public art contest for the front cover of the Urban Forest Management Plan Framework. Community members submitted over 200 pieces of art for the contest (see Appendix 1).

Residential Tree Planting Program

A key recommendation in the *Brampton One Million Trees Program* is to provide tree planting incentives for planting on residential property. This year as part of Brampton Tree Month, the Green City Working Group is planning to launch the first stage of a Residential Tree Planting Program through the sale of subsidized trees to encourage Brampton residents to plant on their property. The launch of this stage will be subject to the COVID-19 restrictions in place at that time.

To undertake this initiative, staff is requesting approval of a budget amendment of \$50,000 and establishment of a new capital project, with funding to be transferred from the City's Reserve Fund #18 –Tree Canopy Account.

Brampton Tree Month

A short-term action identified in the *Brampton One Million Trees Program* is the designation of September as Brampton Tree Month. This designation would improve recognition of the City's existing tree planting initiatives and provide new opportunities to celebrate the City's leadership in enhancing and maintaining Brampton's urban forest. It would also complement National Tree Day and National Forest Week, both of which fall within the month of September. In the past, the City participated in celebrations of National Tree Day and National Forest Week by organizing a series of community planting events throughout September. In 2020, a social media tree campaign was conducted for the month of September with tree videos and additional resources for residents posted within the City's Tree webpages to celebrate these days. This campaign received significant support from residents and strong public participation and engagement.

Funding:

Cash in Lieu of Tableland Trees in New Development

The City requires all healthy tableland trees removed for new development to be compensated as outlined in the City's Tableland Tree Assessment Guidelines. When compensation by planting is not achievable on the development site, the City accepts cash-in-lieu of new trees planted, which is used to fund tree planting initiatives in other locations across Brampton.

The City established Reserve 18 - Tree Canopy Account (#650165) in 2017 to facilitate the tree compensation planting cash-in-lieu process. This report is requesting withdrawal from this reserve to assist with the Residential Tree Planting Program.

Additional Funding Opportunities

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of trees through its *2 Billion Trees Commitment*, whereas in 2020, they committed to planting 2 billion trees over the next 10 years to clean the air and make communities greener. The Federal Government is looking to support municipalities and community groups in their tree planting initiatives to help achieve this target and is providing funding opportunities through its *Growing Canada's Forests Program* to support municipal tree planting goals. The *Brampton One Million Trees Program* and its initiatives align with the Federal *2 Billion Trees Commitment* and staff will continue to pursue funding opportunities made available through this Federal initiative.

Additionally, the *Brampton One Million Trees Program* secured its first sponsor, Canadian National Railway (CN). Staff will continue to look for opportunities for private sponsorship of the *Brampton One Million Trees Program* initiatives.

Next Steps:

Upon approval of this report by Council, the City's Green City Working Group will:

- Finalize the Residential Tree Planting Program;
- Develop a communication and engagement strategy for 2021 Brampton Tree Month; and
- Identify funding opportunities through the *Growing Canada's Forests Program* and private sponsorships.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications

Subject to Council approval, a budget amendment will be required and a new capital project will need to be established in the amount of \$50,000 for the initiation of a Residential Tree Planting Program through a subsidized tree sale with funding to be transferred from Reserve # 18 - Future Construction (Tree Canopy receipt # 8237 (\$7,500) and receipt # 9311 (\$42,500)), which currently has sufficient funding.

Term of Council Priorities:

The development and implementation of the *Brampton One Million Trees Program* actions, including the development of a Residential Tree Program and the designation of Brampton Tree Month, contribute to the Term of Council “Green City” Priority – “*Implement a Green Framework*” through the promotion of individual and community tree plantings in Brampton and through providing the tools for residents to steward and care for Brampton’s urban forest.

In addition, the initiatives contribute to the “Mosaic” Priority – “*Innovative Engagement*” through engaging communities to take pride and care in their City’s landscape and participate in activities to celebrate and build awareness around the importance of trees and the City’s urban forest, including residential tree plantings, neighborhood tree plantings and community events with local organizations and community groups.

Conclusion:

The City of Brampton is a leader in the stewardship of trees and the city’s urban forest through the many programs and initiatives it has undertaken. Though 2020 tree planting numbers did not meet targets due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the City continues to make good progress on building a framework for future success and taking actions that will see Brampton achieve or exceed its goal of planting one million trees by 2040.

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Attachments:

Appendix 1 Finalists in the Urban Forest Art Contest