

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - SEPTEMBER 5, 2006

FREE MULCH GIVEAWAYS

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Parks recommends:

1. That staff and resources be allocated to support three free mulch giveaways, two within the Asian Long-horned beetle regulated zone on September 23rd, 2006 and one in the fall of 2007 as well as one in the non-regulated zone in the spring of 2007.
2. That the cost of \$1,500 be absorbed within the 2006 Parks and Forestry Department Operating budget and the other two events will be budgeted for in the 2007 budget.

Economic Impact

There is no economical impact as it is anticipated that the \$1,500 will be absorbed in the current approved 2006 operating budget and staff will budget for the remaining two events through the 2007 budget process.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the feasibility of hosting one free mulch giveaway and to obtain Council's approval to host the event.

Background - Analysis and Options

On November 20, 2004, and October 29th, 2005, The Parks and Forestry Department held a free mulch giveaway days at Woodbridge Yard within the Asian Long-horned Beetle regulated area and another on May 14th, 2005 at the Joint Operations Centre located outside of the regulated area. The event was very successful and staff received very positive feedback from the residents. The City of Vaughan Parks and Forestry section have an extensive mulching program and supports this initiative as there are many benefits to mulching which includes:

- Increased moisture retention around trees
- Lessens trunk damage from grass cutting mowers and weed eaters
- Recycles woody brush instead of paying for unnecessary disposal
- Improves soil fertility
- Controls weeds around the base of trees
- Enhances the appearance of trees

Parks and Forestry Staff recommends that a free mulch giveaway day, within the regulated zone, be held on **Saturday, September 23, 2006**. The event will be held at the Woodbridge yard located on Langstaff Road, between Pine Valley Drive and Islington Avenue, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Staff further recommends that the City continue the program for 2007, hosting a Spring and a Fall Free-mulch Giveaway, one of which will be in the regulated area and the other in the non-regulated area.

To advertise free mulch giveaway day, staff will ensure that notices are posted at the local community centres, as well as mobile signage to advertise the event. The events will be advertised on the City of Vaughan's City Page, as well as the corporate web site ad at the community centres.

Equipment for loading mulch, containers (donated bags) for transporting, the mulch material, staff time, and advertising costs are required to run these events will cost approximately \$1,500.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

Providing free-mulch and educating the public on the benefits of tree mulching has direct impact on safeguarding our environment.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have not been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

With the devastation to our trees due to the Asian Long-horned Beetle in Vaughan, this is one example that our urban forest has been significantly impacted. The longevity and health of our trees can be greatly improved by the application of mulch. This is another example of Vaughan's commitment to protecting the environment through responsible leadership, practices and education.

Attachments

None

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Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner of Community Services