

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JUNE 16, 2008

FIVE YEAR PLAN TO INCREASE THE PLANTING OF TREES IN THE CITY OF VAUGHAN **Greening Vaughan – Urban Forest Project**

Councillor Shefman recommends:

In light of the irrefutable evidence that planting trees in urban areas has a substantial positive impact on the environment, and,

In light of the recognition that many parts of the City have very sparse tree coverage as a result of the methods used to develop sub-divisions that has taken place over the years, and,

In light of the positive impact that trees have on creating a positive, enjoyable urban environment for residents of the city, and,

In recognition that the City has taken a number of very significant steps over the years to preserve trees in the City through woodlot preservation and the Trim/Planting and Removal of City/Private Trees By-law 258-83.

1. That staff prepare a five year plan to incrementally increase the quantity of trees planted on both public and private property in the City.
2. That funds be budgeted for 2009 fiscal year to begin this process of increasing the number of trees planted
3. That the tree planting plan focus on planting native trees.
4. That the five year plan include ways to involve both residents and the private sectors in this initiative.
5. That community groups and individual residents be given the opportunity to suggest locations where trees should be planted

Economic Impact

1. Funds should be proposed in the 2009 departmental budget to accommodate the first year of this program and that in the plan to be brought forward, funding projections for the five year program be included
2. Staff should review funding sources such as Tree Canada and especially the Green Streets program (http://www.treecanada.ca/index_e.htm), the Ministry of Natural Resources. See attached news release found at: (http://www.web2.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/csb/news/2007/aug22bg_07.html) and Evergreen (<http://www.evergreen.ca/en/>) to investigate whether financial support may be available for this program.

Communications Plan

Included in the five year plan should be a communications strategy developed by corporate communications including a kick-off event and various media information pieces

Purpose

To develop a five year urban tree project to greatly expand the number of trees planted in the City of Vaughan.

Background - Analysis and Options

It has become increasingly evident that a substantial tree cover in urban areas addresses a variety of environmental issues, especially those related to air quality and greenhouse gases. Tree planting is a significant way to mitigate our impact on the environment. Trees help combat harmful carbon dioxide production because they feed on carbon dioxide and produce oxygen.

In the past the City has initiated a number of projects and bylaws to preserve and protect existing trees.

At the same time traditional methods of land development whereby substantial areas of land are clear cut and top soil removed has had a detrimental impact on reestablishing trees in our communities

While we have had a tree planting program for many years to plant trees in new subdivisions and replace trees in older areas, it is time to take the next step in developing a much more aggressive approach to providing tree cover in our city.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

To lead and promote Environmental Sustainability – To preserve, protect and enhance Vaughan's natural and built environment through responsible leadership and innovative policies, practices and education.

Regional Implications

As part of the plan, it would be appropriate and most helpful to have the support and involvement of the Region increasing their tree planting program in their areas of jurisdiction.

Conclusion

A five year plan to create an expanded urban forest in the City of Vaughan is reflective of our strategic plan, the concepts driving the development of our Environmental Master Plan and our commitments made at the recent Toronto Smog Summit.

Attachments

1. Ministry of Natural Resources media release

Report prepared by:

Debi Traub, Council Executive Assistant

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Shefman
Councillor, Ward 5



Location: [Government of Ontario Home](#) > [CNW Group - Ontario Newsroom](#)

Ministry of Natural Resources

Ontario Government Helps Cities Plant Trees To Fight Climate Change

Cleaner Air And Water, Energy Conservation Among Benefits

LONDON, ON, Aug. 22 /CNW/ - The planting of native trees in urban areas means cleaner, healthier cities that are fighting the effects of climate change, Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay announced today.

"Trees clean the air and water, provide shade and wind protection, supply habitat for birds and wildlife and make our cities beautiful," said Ramsay. "Supporting tree planting on publicly accessible land will expand our urban forests and reduce the effects of climate change on Ontario's cities."

The province is investing \$1 million over two years in a partnership with Evergreen, a national non-profit environmental organization that works with people to create and sustain healthy, natural outdoor spaces in cities. The province-wide program will support the planting of 100,000 trees in urban areas such as parklands, conservation areas, publicly accessible corporate lands and industrial parks, university campuses, hospital grounds, road allowances, boulevards and medians.

Evergreen will grant funds to groups for the purchase of trees native to Ontario, facilitate tree plantings, and provide education and outreach to involve community volunteers and citizens in tree planting. As well, the program will work with existing provincial partners involved in tree planting and environmental initiatives such as stewardship councils for advice and support.

"Evergreen works with hundreds of communities and schools across Ontario to bring nature back to our cities," says Geoff Cape, executive director, Evergreen. "Evergreen focuses on educating people through direct participation: by planting a tree, individuals can see they are making a difference, which leads them to other ways they can improve their local environment. It's a sustainable model with long-term impact, which is why Evergreen is delighted to partner with the Province of Ontario to address climate change through individual and community action."

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Proposals to Evergreen for grants will be required to demonstrate:

- Good matching of tree species to the site, good care of trees after planting, and regular monitoring of planting sites
- Significant numbers of native trees planted
- Engagement of the community in tree planting, and
- For tree planting around buildings, a focus on improving energy conservation, where feasible, through the placement of trees and choice of species to provide shade in summer and sun penetration in winter.

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"The planting of urban trees is one more important element in our

government's overall plan to fight climate change," said Environment Minister Laurel Broten. "Urban trees capture carbon, improve air quality and help prevent cities from becoming heat islands. It's a simple, natural strategy, yet it benefits us in so many ways over the long term."

This is just one more example of how, working together, Ontarians are achieving results in ensuring a healthier natural environment and mitigating the effects of climate change. Other initiatives include:

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- Planting 50 million trees in southern Ontario by 2020
- Making \$220 million in loans and grants available to help municipalities reduce greenhouse gas emissions by improving and retrofitting buildings
- Setting ambitious but realistic targets to reduce greenhouse gases below 1990 levels - six per cent by 2014, 15 per cent by 2020 and an 80 per cent reduction by 2050.

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ontario.ca/mnr

Backgrounder

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE: URBAN TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

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The Ontario government is committed to fighting climate change and greening the province. While 80 per cent of Ontarians live in urban areas, our urban forests are under increasing stress from expanding development, climate change and air pollution.

Planting more native trees in Ontario cities will improve air and water quality, increase energy conservation, provide habitat for birds and wildlife, and moderate the urban climate and the stress of urban life.

The program will encourage people to plant trees in cities across the province. It will foster a healthier environment while building awareness of the important benefits that trees and the urban forest bring to our daily lives among individuals, families, school groups and community organizations.

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The Urban Tree Planting Program

Tree Planting

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- Over a two-year period - 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 - the Ministry of Natural Resources will invest \$1 million and partner with the organization Evergreen to enable 100,000 trees to be planted in Ontario's urban green spaces.
 - Evergreen is a national, not-for-profit charitable organization whose mission is to bring people and nature together for the benefit of both. Evergreen has distributed nearly \$2.5 million in direct grants, in addition to expert assistance, to help transform over 2,800 school grounds and public spaces across Canada.
 - Tree planting activities will be done on parklands, school grounds, conservation areas, corporate lands and industrial parks with public access, university campuses, hospital grounds, rooftops and road

allowances, boulevards and medians.

- Groups will be invited to submit proposals to Evergreen for funding to buy native trees. The trees will be about one metre tall to help ensure their survival in urban conditions.
- Proposals will be assessed using four main criteria:
 - commitment to good site-selection, post-planting care and site monitoring
 - number of native trees planted
 - level of community engagement, and
 - improving energy conservation, where feasible, through tree planting activities around buildings that provide shade in the summer and sun in the winter.
- All planting plans must be reviewed by a qualified forester, landscape architect or equivalent professional.
- The program will engage the province's existing partners, such as the Trees Ontario Foundation, and tie into existing provincial initiatives including stewardship councils and the Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program grants. Evergreen will work with partners to identify suitable native species and to find appropriate sites for urban planting.
- The program is designed to involve people of all ages and backgrounds in planting a tree native to their part of the province.

Education and Outreach

- Evergreen will host up to 50 workshops over the two-year period, to build the capacity of environmental stewardship groups, social service agencies, schools and others to plan, implement and steward successful community naturalization projects.
- Evergreen will support a province-wide media campaign to raise awareness and encourage broad participation.

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[Other news releases disseminated by this ministry](#)