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DATE 22 September 2000

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator, Transportation Committee

FROM/EXP. Director, Infrastructure Maintenance Division
 Environment and Transportation Department

SUBJECT/OBJET **FOREST RENEWAL PROGRAM FOR OTTAWA-CARLETON**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

That Transportation Committee receive this report for information and recommend Regional Council endorse and the new City of Ottawa Council approve:

- 1. That all obtainable *Plant for Tomorrow* tree stock be reserved as replacement trees, available on a first-come first-served basis, for previous applicants to the *Plant for Tomorrow* program who were unsuccessful in establishing previously distributed trees;**
- 2. That the \$250,000 identified in the Region of Ottawa-Carleton's Forest Renewal Capital Budget for the 2001 *Plant for Tomorrow* program be directed to initiate a new City of Ottawa Street Tree planting program that will expand the scope of the existing tree programs offered by the current municipalities;**
- 3. That the new Street Tree Program be subject to the criteria in Annex A and that new tree planting locations be solicited through an annual campaign which would offer, on a first come first served basis, one street tree per residential municipal road allowance in partnership with the adjacent homeowner throughout the new City of Ottawa;**
- 4. That except as noted in Annex A, trees under the new City of Ottawa Street Tree planting program shall be installed on municipal road allowances by City staff until such time as the new City Council confirms the appropriate service standards for street tree planting;**
- 5. That information on tree maintenance and the benefits of how tree cover and greenspace fulfils the new City's objectives in the areas of water quality, healthy communities and environmental protection be part of the new City of Ottawa Street Tree planting program;**

6. That the new City of Ottawa continue the *Community Partnership Tree Planting Projects* and the *Green Acres* rural reforestation program subject to the availability of funding and a partnership commitment from local interest groups, communities and government agencies.

BACKGROUND

In September 1998, Regional Council approved three initiatives under the Forest Renewal Program that involved community participation in tree planting. The spring of 1999 was the first phase of a multi-year plan that would restore the forest cover lost in Ottawa-Carleton as a result of the Ice Storm.

Plant for Tomorrow is a private property owner partnership program that provides a small diameter tree for anywhere on his or her property. Technical information on how to properly plant and grow the tree is provided and the property owner commits to the plant's establishment and long-term maintenance. Between 1998 and 2000 over 12,000 property owners took the pledge to receive and maintain a tree.

Community Partnership Tree Planting Projects were initiated by the Region's Forestry Services section as self-directed tree planting projects that assist community associations and other interest groups throughout Ottawa-Carleton to help restore cultural landscapes lost due to the Ice Storm. Over the previous year, nine *Community Partnership Tree Planting Projects* have been referrals from the *Community Environmental Projects Grants Program* (CEPGP) when requests were received for tree planting assistance. The CEPGP Allocations Panel has now been able to successfully integrate these two Regional programs through the implementation of tree planting initiatives.

Green Acres - Rural Reforestation Program is a two year pilot project which partners with the Mississippi Valley, Rideau Valley and South Nation Conservation Authorities and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to provide assistance to rural plantation owners through the provision of tree seedlings. For every dollar the Region provides, the landowner is required to provide an additional two dollars.

Ice Storm Assistance Program (ISAP) is an initiative of the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced in 1999. The Tree Replacement and Management Strategy for public authorities is a three year initiative to reinvest provincial funding in eastern Ontario's rural and urban trees and forests. Funding assistance is for replacement and maintenance of trees on municipal property lost or damaged due to the Ice Storm.

Regional staff made an application under this program seeking funding to recover costs from 1999 Forest Renewal Program activities and for future life cycle maintenance and tree replacement costs on all Regional road allowances and properties in 2000 and 2001. In March 2000, staff was informed that the Region's application was approved with a total project budget of \$1.15 million. The sum of \$895,000.00, representing 75 per cent of the total budget, has now been transferred to the Region. The 25 per cent regional share of \$298,000.00 has been identified in the Forest Renewal Program Capital budget.

Tree Planting Projects

In the year 2000 the following projects will have been implemented by year's end:

Plant for Tomorrow 6,100 trees

Community Partnership Tree Planting Projects

Schools

St. Patrick School	(Nepean)	12
Stephen Leacock School	(Kanata)	21
Agincourt Road School	(Ottawa)	8
Broadview Avenue PS	(Ottawa)	13
Blessed Kateri School	(Gloucester)	7
Fitzroy Centennial School	(West Carleton)	15
St. Rita Catholic School	(Nepean)	11
St. Catherine Catholic School	(Osgoode)	7
Maple Ridge Elementary School	(Cumberland)	12
Hillcrest High School	(Ottawa)	5
Ecole Laurier-Carrière	(Nepean)	2
Featherston Public School	(Ottawa)	2
Ecole Parsifal	(Ottawa)	10
Dunning Foubert Elementary School	(Cumberland)	14

Community Groups

Centretown Comm. Assoc.	(Ottawa)	26
Orchard Estates	(Nepean)	65
Glebe Comm. Assoc.	(Ottawa)	29
North Gower Horticultural Society	(Rideau)	1
Friends for a Greener Vernon	(Osgoode)	49
Metcalf	(Osgoode)	25
Navan	(Cumberland)	25
Kenmore	(Osgoode)	10
Greely	(Osgoode)	25

Vars	(Cumberland)	15
Sarsfield	(Cumberland)	20
Turtlehead Garden & Trail	(Gloucester)	8
March Rural Comm. Assoc.	(Kanata)	400
Rideau Glen Ratepayers' Assoc.	(Nepean)	50
Lakeland Estates	(Osgoode)	50
Dale Park Development Comm.	(Ottawa)	10
Woodlea CCC #51	(Nepean)	18
The Classics CCC #533	(Ottawa)	53
Rideau Christian Centre	(Rideau)	36
Bayridge Homeowners Assoc.	(Ottawa)	10
The Interfaith Celebration Comm.	(Ottawa)	50
Taiga Non-Profit Housing Corp.	(Ottawa)	32
Citizens for Restoring Osgoode Parks	(Osgoode)	22

Interest Groups

Ottawa Health Sciences Centre	(Ottawa)	50
Scouts Canada	(Region wide)	5,000
Pinecrest Cemetery	(Nepean)	10
Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club	(Ottawa)	204
Canotek Business Park	(Gloucester)	40
Co-op Housing Federation of Canada	(Gloucester)	5
OPP	(Kanata)	7

Total Community Partnership Tree Planting Projects 6,484 trees

Green Acres - Rural Reforestation Program 87,000 trees

TOTAL 2000 PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS: 99,584 trees

Works Currently In Progress:

Millennium Tree Planting Project

This Council approved Millennium initiative saw trees planted throughout the western section of the Region in Spring 2000 with the remaining trees to be planted throughout Cumberland, Osgoode and Gloucester this Fall.

Waterlinks

Waterlinks is a water quality initiative which promotes water wise practices. Naturalizing with trees and shrubs on private property in partnership with area residents increases the urban canopy. Leaves

intercept rainfall as well as releasing oxygen through photosynthesis and transpiring water vapour, all of which help maintain the city's ecological balance, and in the case of *Waterlinks*, helps reduce the amount of stormwater runoff from individual lots. In spring 2001, the Forest Renewal Program will be providing approximately 350 plants for the *Waterlinks* project.

Core Area Restoration and Urban Tree Island (UTI) Program

To date, 250 trees have been planted along road allowances throughout the core area. Both the Glebe and Dalhousie Community Associations have also partnered with the Region by taking an active role in promoting the *UTI* program with representatives soliciting community participation for tree planting.

Capital Projects

	<u>Total trees planted</u>
Conroy Road	662
Kent Street	42
Transitway Station (Dominion Street)	34

Tree Replacement Program on Regional Roads and Properties

Spring 2000	67
Fall 2000	171

Global Positioning System (GPS) Tree Inventory

A compatible database with the Region's *Geographic Information System (GIS)* has been created and the mapping of all trees has been completed. Currently the total inventory of 27,691 roadside trees with an additional linear length of 219 km of hedgerows (a contiguous line of trees >25 metres in length) is identified in the inventory.

Marlborough Forest

In 1999, the provincial government announced that they were forgiving the debt on all Agreement Forests in the province. This has led the way to the downloading of responsibility of the management of the forest to the owner municipalities. A termination agreement and bylaw is currently being drafted that would formalize this process, but the day-to-day management activities were transferred to the Region in summer 2000. To date, essential activities have included flood control and clearing of fire access roads, but much more work needs to be done.

A complete management report on the forest, as well as the two other forests that will fall under the ownership of the new City, the Torbolton Forest (174 ha.) in West Carleton and the Cumberland Forest (598 ha.) in Cumberland, is being co-ordinated by Regional staff. Total affected land mass in the Region's inventory is 9,500 hectares.

DISCUSSION

Plant for Tomorrow

In the spring of 2000, the *Plant for Tomorrow* program distributed 6,100 trees from five different locations across Ottawa-Carleton from 22 April to 6 May. Each recipient received an instruction sheet on proper planting and maintenance practices as well as one bag each of compost and woodchip mulch. Applicants from the 1999 campaign were eligible to reapply in 2000 and anyone requesting a replacement tree during the distribution period was able to do so at any of the distribution sites.

All trees were inspected at the nurseries prior to purchase and again upon delivery. Over the two years of the program it has become apparent that with a delivery of this size some trees do not survive and grow as intended under the program. Factors contributing to the demise of these trees appear to be related to digging, storage, delivery and the relative instability of newly potted stock. Retail garden centres sell trees with higher survival rates because they deal with stock that has been container grown for a full year at source. This combined with quality aftercare yields better results for the critical establishment period.

All recipients who were unsuccessful in establishing their tree and who called after the distribution was completed have been told that the trees are not guaranteed, but that they would be eligible to apply in any future tree distribution programs. In all cases, it was suggested that individuals should contact the Region in November when staff would have received a Council decision on any future tree programs.

Staff initiated a contract in the summer of 2000 for a third phase of the *Plant for Tomorrow* program to procure sufficient tree stock of an acceptable size and quality for a program in 2001. Stock availability and Council approval would be the next steps leading to a sign-up campaign envisioned for late 2000.

Following the closing of the tender, staff examined the available trees at source as stipulated in the contract. This inspection concluded that the availability of a sufficient number of acceptable trees for the next campaign had become a concern. Of the tendered quantity of 5,000 trees, only 1,000 Japanese lilacs met the requirements of the tree specification and the standard for the *Plant for Tomorrow* program whose goal it is to ensure that every recipient takes home a viable tree.

This unavailability of sufficient tree stock for a full scale private property owner tree distribution program next year does however create two new opportunities.

It is known that some individuals who missed the May distribution deadline were unsuccessful in establishing their tree but remain interested in receiving a tree under this program. Regardless of the reason why someone has lost a tree, it is recommended that the 1,000 available trees be offered to these previous *Plant for Tomorrow* supporters.

Recommendation #1: “That all obtainable *Plant for Tomorrow* tree stock be reserved as replacement trees, available on a first-come first-served basis, for previous applicants to the *Plant for Tomorrow* program who were unsuccessful in establishing previously distributed trees.”

One final distribution available on a first-come first-served basis to previous applicants would provide a positive conclusion of this phase of the *Plant for Tomorrow* program and then lead directly into the formation a new program for 2001.

It is conceivable that a new tree program could approximate the success of the Region’s *Plant for Tomorrow* program’s public participation philosophy while expanding the scope of the Street Tree planting programs currently offered by only some of the municipalities.

Both the Region and the City of Ottawa offer Street Tree programs that plant trees on road allowances in front of private residences. Since not all municipalities currently have Street Tree planting programs, the requirement to modify any existing programs will become an issue for the new City Council.

The implementation process for the new City’s tree programs is yet to be finalized, but in the interim, a public campaign that solicits potential locations through public participation deserves consideration. Locations could be matched to tree planting criteria (Annex A) that meet the anticipated requirements of the new City’s environmental programs. Staff inspections would ensure that newly planted trees are placed in locations where they will remain viable over the long-term while building aftercare partnerships directly with the private property owners.

Recommendation #2 “That the \$250,000 identified in the Region of Ottawa-Carleton’s Forest Renewal Capital Budget for the 2001 *Plant for Tomorrow* program be directed to initiate a new City of Ottawa Street Tree planting program that will expand the scope of the existing tree programs offered by the current municipalities.”

The standard Street Tree planting size is from 50-70mm (1.5-2 in.) in diameter, a size which has proven to be the most effective to contribute immediately to a streetscape’s appearance while surviving the stresses of transport and transplant. It is estimated that the available funding under this new program would be able to offer 800 new trees in 2001, an achievable number from the logistical perspective for tendering and planting in the available planting windows. Following a registration program in late winter, staff would initiate a home visit to rate a potential location against the tree planting criteria in Annex A.

Any locations identified after the sign-up campaign has reached its deadline or program capacity for the current season would be moved to the next available planting window.

Recommendation #3: “That the new Street Tree Program be subject to the criteria in Annex A and that new tree planting locations be solicited through an annual campaign which would offer, on a first come first served basis, one street tree per residential municipal road allowance in partnership with the adjacent homeowner throughout the new City of Ottawa.”

Both the Region and the City of Ottawa have provisions in their existing Street Tree planting programs that allow the placement of trees on the adjacent private property when municipal property does not offer enough space to sustain a tree. The Region’s *Urban Tree Island (UTI) Program*, since its inception in 1996, has planted over 42 trees in partnership with private property owners. The program was developed for core urban areas where municipal road allowances offered no greenspace other than that owned by the adjacent property owner.

UTIs assist in overcoming the three reasons related to the short life span of urban street trees:

- damage from equipment during construction and operational activities
- damage from environmental pollutants
- lack of root space and soil permeability

Under the *UTI* program, the property owner must commit, in writing, to maintaining the tree in its planted location. It is likely that in a new Street Tree program locations will be identified that fit this urban core profile but which are situated along suburban streets and rural roadways. However one argument raised in some municipalities for the placement of trees only on municipal road allowances is to ensure their retention in the landscape which retains ownership and control of the tree.

Pending public input into this issue and to avoid confusion until service standards are harmonized across the new City, it is recommended that the proposed new program offer trees for 2001 on road allowances only except in the core area as defined in Annex A.

Recommendation #4: “That except as noted in Annex A, trees under the new City of Ottawa Street Tree planting program shall be installed on municipal road allowances by City staff until such time as the new City Council confirms the appropriate service standards for street tree planting.”

Any tree program will provide the new City an opportunity to disseminate a direct message that outlines the new Council’s role in other areas. Trees play a role in the provision of water quality, healthy communities, aesthetic enhancement and environmental protection, and are key in attaining a number of goals detailed by many of the existing municipal Official Plans. For this reason it is proposed that educational material in these areas be provided when the trees are distributed.

Recommendation #5: “That information on tree maintenance and the benefits of how tree cover and greenspace fulfils the new City’s objectives in the areas of water quality, healthy communities and environmental protection be part of the new City of Ottawa Street Tree planting program.”

Community Partnership Tree Planting Projects

The Region’s Forestry Services section continues to work to promote community involvement and empowerment as part of the Forest Renewal Program. Since 1998, with an annual budget of \$50,000, the Region has worked with 24 schools, 12 rural communities and 26 interest groups in greening projects across Ottawa-Carleton.

Empowerment and active community participation was the original intent of the program, with the Region playing a facilitation role until such time that the community or group could take the lead in their own environmental endeavours. A good example of the latter is the “Friends for a Greener Vernon”, a group created in 1998 as their own response to the first *Plant for Tomorrow* campaign, and who over the last two years have facilitated the installation of new trees throughout their community. They have also independently procured additional funding to purchase such amenities as park benches and now have the ability and the connections to continue without an active Regional participation.

Planning is now underway for 2001 with eight new groups who have now contacted the Region for assistance.

Green Acres - Rural Reforestation Program

In 2000, the first year of the two year pilot program, 130 landowner contacts were made by staff. A total of 85,000 trees were ordered and planted in partnership with 87 landowners at a program cost of \$75,000. The program has proven to be extremely popular across Ottawa-Carleton and orders are already being taken for 2001.

For 2001 *Green Acres* has been closely linked with another Regional initiative delivered with the CAs, the *Rural Clean Water Program* which makes grants of up to \$6,000 available for projects to forest steeply sloped and erosion-prone lands or establish buffer strips and windbreaks to decrease soil loss. To qualify, the proposed project must be located on lands adjacent to a waterway and be designed to reduce water pollutants from livestock, agricultural or land practices.

Support for both of these rurally based programs has been overwhelming across the region.

Recommendation #6: “That the new City of Ottawa continue the *Community Partnership Tree Planting Projects* and the *Green Acres* rural reforestation program subject to the availability of funding and a partnership commitment from local interest groups, communities and government agencies.”

Ice Storm Assistance Program

The acquisition and planting of large numbers of trees was not undertaken in 1998 since the priority at that time was to repair the damage to the existing tree inventory. This arboricultural work has continued to date. Both the original Ice Storm damage and the pruning of secondary dieback on older growth trees is complete. The requirement for ongoing tree pruning and removal work related to the Ice Storm will continue for another two years. With the approval of the Region’s application to ISAP, 75% of this \$250,000 budget can be recovered from the province.

Tree planting to replace trees on Regional property removed due to the Ice Storm was also approved, and over the same period a total of 2,900 trees will be planted and maintained with the remaining funds.

CONSULTATION

As partnerships have been developed and specific initiatives identified, all stakeholders have been informed and their input sought through the public consultation process.

EXPENDITURE JUSTIFICATION

Life cycle management of the Green Asset inventory is required to ensure its continued good health and to monitor for potential hazards to public, staff and property. Expansion of the Region’s forest cover, water quality, healthy communities and environmental protection are all key areas identified in the Region’s Official Plan. All initiatives are being co-ordinated through the office of the Regional Forester.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funds for this project are available in the 2000 Capital Budget, Order No. 900076, Ottawa-Carleton Forest Restoration Program, Reference Page No. 511.

Approved by
W.S. Beveridge, P. Eng.

**New City of Ottawa Street Tree Program
Evaluation Criteria Planting for Location Approval**

The following evaluation process for potential planting sites would be used by City staff to confirm viable sites for Street Tree planting.

- All applications would be accepted on a first come, first served basis through an annual campaign promoting the new City's Tree planting initiatives.
- Information on the City's environmental programs would be included in the campaign.
- Any applications meeting the criteria after the season's capacity has been reached would be held for the next planting season.
- Paved or hard surface sites will not be considered under this program.
- All planting sites meeting the program's criteria are subject to approvals through both a utility check and an on-site verification by a representative of the new City's Forestry section.

Potential planting sites for the new City Street Tree program must also meet all of the following requirements:

- be a minimum of 2 metres away from any curb or sidewalk edge to minimize conflict with snow and ice control measures.
- provide a minimum grass or open earth area of 9m² (100 ft²) of acceptable soil depth (1m) and quality which would support development of a healthy root system with adequate water infiltration.
- present no conflict with overhead utilities, building projections, etc. which would pose future maintenance problems or otherwise impede full development of a healthy canopy.
- be a minimum of 10 metres (30 ft) from the trunk of any existing tree.
- be an original planting site and not a replacement tree except in the case of disease or mortality as confirmed by a qualified arborist.

Until such time as the new City programs are harmonized this program would restrict tree planting to municipal road allowances only unless an application is received for:

- high density areas in the Urban core where typical urban street cross sections leave no room for planting in the road allowance AND suitable space exists on an adjacent property where the owner is willing to enter into an agreement (defer to UTI program).

NOTE: Urban core is defined as the area bounded by Preston Street and the Rideau Canal on the west, the Rideau River on the south and east and the Ottawa River on the north.

- adjacent land use which plays a significant and long-lasting role in the community (ex. Church, property with heritage designation, etc.) AND the tree would still provide benefit to a streetscape AND suitable space exists AND a partnership opportunity exists with a local community or interest group who are willing to enter into an agreement (defer to Community Partnership Tree Planting program)