

DATE OF MEETING APRIL 22, 2024

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SUBJECT TREE DONATION PROGRAM PILOT (2024)

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide Council with an update on the Tree Donation Program Pilot (the “Program”) due to launch on Friday, 2024-APR-26.

BACKGROUND

City Plan identifies the urban forest as fundamental to the City’s infrastructure. The urban forest contributes many ecological, physiological and economic benefits to the City, including providing wildlife habitat; shade provision and heat mitigation; storm water management; air and water quality improvements and providing our community with a connection to nature.

Section C1.3 of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) sets the plan for urban trees stating that the City of Nanaimo (the “City”) will continue to plant trees in public spaces including parks, greenways, and streets and that the City will market the benefits of trees and vegetation, and opportunities to encourage tree planting.

The Program provides an opportunity to work towards the IAP goals by increasing the City’s urban tree canopy, encouraging planting and keeping Nanaimo green and full of beauty. Simultaneously, the program provides an opportunity for individuals, organizations or service clubs to give back to the community, acknowledge the service of someone special, remember or honour a family member or friend, or celebrate the birth of a child.

The Program will be launched on 2024-APR-26 |

DISCUSSION

The Program (2024) will see the planting of a maximum of 30 trees in Beaufort Park. For the pilot year, the number of trees available for donation will be limited to ensure that the trees will have the greatest possible success rate and will allow staff to determine the optimal terms for the Program. If successful, the Program could become an annual program.

Key facts about the Tree Donation Program Pilot

- Members of the public may apply to donate a tree on a first come first served basis.
- The cost of a tree donation will be \$1500.
- Applications can be made on-line and in-person and will be accepted 2024-APR-26 to 2024-JUL-26

- Dedication information will be added to an honour board at the planting site and included on the City's website.

Beaufort Park is the planting location identified for the 2024 pilot year, this park is the home of one of the City's local food forests and an ideal location to continue improving the urban tree canopy. A Certified Horticulturalist will help with tree selection, taking into consideration available stock and the conditions of the planting location. The City will maintain the donated trees for ten years or until they are fully established. Trees will be inventoried and mapped, and added to the City's NanaimoMap program.

Should the Program progress beyond a pilot, a new planting location for donated trees will be selected each year based on where they are going to provide the greatest benefit to the City's environment and our community and where staff can easily monitor, water and care for the trees, ensuring they will have the best opportunity to grow and thrive.

The Park Bench Donation Program Policy effective 2005-NOV-28 was subsequently discontinued that year, and it was identified that there should be a Tree Donation Program in the future. Staff anticipate that this will be a popular program given that the Parks Operations section receives regular enquiries about donation benches. At present there are no alternatives to the bench program. The Program will be a more sustainable way of filling that niche.

The Program compliments two existing tree programs in the City; the Tree Voucher Program and the Boulevard Tree Program.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The \$1,500 fee for the program is intended to cover the purchase of the tree, its planting and maintenance (including watering, pruning and weeding) for the first three years of the tree's life, and all administrative work associated with the Program. For comparison, the Bench Donation Program that ended in 2005 cost \$1,000 for a pipe leg bench and \$2,000 for a cast iron bench. The pilot program is an opportunity to understand the true costs associated with the work and as such, the fee may be changed should this program be extended.

Annual maintenance costs after the first three years will be incorporated into the Parks Operations annual operating budget. It is anticipated that there will be some additional minor costs associated with the Program that will also be covered by existing operating budget; these include production of print materials and signage.

CONCLUSION

The Program will increase the number and quality of trees throughout the City, expanding the City's tree canopy and promoting programs and incentives for the retention and planting of trees on public land throughout the City. It is anticipated that the Program will be popular, and assuming its success, staff will endeavour to make this an annual program with the cost of the tree donation amount reviewed annually prior to the application period.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The Program has been developed to increase the City's urban forest canopy, keeping Nanaimo green and full of beauty.
- There are many reasons why individuals, organizations and service clubs would like to participate in a Tree Donation Program: to give back to the community, acknowledge the service of someone special, remember or honour a family member or friend, or celebrate the birth of a child.
- The Program will be launched on 2024-APR-26 with a limited number of trees available for donation.
- It is anticipated that the Program will be a popular replacement for the discontinued Bench Donation Program.

ATTACHMENTS

- ATTACHMENT A:** Tree Donation Program FAQs
ATTACHMENT B: Tree Donation Poster
ATTACHMENT C: Tree Donation Brochure
ATTACHMENT D: Tree Programs Rack Card |

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