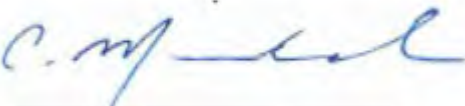




## COMMUNICATION UPDATE

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members City Council
<b>DATE:</b>	May 14, 2021
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Growing Canada's Forests Program (ES21003) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Craig Murdoch Director, Environmental Services Public Works Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

This Communication Update is to inform the Mayor and Members of Council of the recently announced Growing Canada's Forests Program (GCFP), and the City of Hamilton's (City) successful application for funding to support tree planting initiatives.

Natural Resources Canada is implementing the GCFP to increase the number of trees in the environment as a nature-based solution to support national climate change actions. GCFP was initially announced in 2019 by the federal government with a goal to plant 2 billion trees over 10 years, but without a specific plan or funding strategy. Since 2019, Natural Resources Canada has been working in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada as well as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to move the initiative forward.

In February 2021, Natural Resources Canada announced two initiatives to start the program and to gather information from organizations with immediate access to land or trees to collaborate on tree planting initiatives to help Canada reach its 10-year target. The success of the program relies on partnerships with various organizations such as municipalities, conservation authorities and non-governmental organizations with experience and capacity to implement tree planting programs.

The first initiative is called the Early Start Program. This program required organizations submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) applications to identify shovel-ready tree planting projects across Canada, to be started and completed in 2021. The City

---

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

**SUBJECT: Growing Canada's Forests Program  
(ES21003) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 3**

---

submitted and was successful in two separate EOI applications for programs in collaboration with local partner organizations such as Environment Hamilton, Green Venture, Hamilton Naturalists Club and Hamilton Conservation Authority. The two programs are detailed below:

1. Community Planting & Private Tree Giveaways – this application for funding is for the planting of 5,000 native trees in 2021. This will be done through community tree planting events and through City-wide private tree giveaways. Of the 5,000 total, the intent is to plant 1,000 trees through community planting events and distribute approximately 4,000 trees to residents to plant on private property. This will build on the existing Ward specific private tree giveaways and will allow for a City-wide program.
2. Naturalized Area Planting – The second successful application for funding is for the Forestry & Horticulture Section of the Environmental Services Division to complete the planting of 5,000 seedling trees on public property for naturalization purposes. A previous initiative by the province was the 50 Million Tree Program, which was cancelled by the provincial government in 2019, and reinstated in 2020 by the federal government. In 2020, the City was not successful in the 50 Million Tree Program grant application.

The Early Start Program is a cost sharing approach with a 50% cost sharing agreement between Natural Resources Canada and the City. For the two programs noted above, the total expected cost is \$125,000, with the City funding \$62,500 from existing budgets and the federal government providing the other \$62,500. The Early Start agreements are expected to be in place by late-May.

A second phase in the GCFP has been announced for the time period 2022 to 2030. Natural Resources Canada has issued a Request for Information (RFI) to help develop the future program. The intention is for the 2022 application to represent a multi-year commitment for additional tree planting. Staff will report back to Council on next steps in this process once more information is made available about how the City can participate.

Through increased tree planting initiatives on both public and private property, the City will be working towards meeting targets for the 30% urban tree canopy coverage, as set in the Council approved Draft Urban Forestry Strategy. Through additional tree planting and a subsequent increase in tree canopy coverage, the City will also be more resilient to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events. A large proportion for the proposed trees to be planted will be native species and will support local biodiversity.

**SUBJECT: Growing Canada's Forests Program  
(ES21003) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 3**

---

Please contact Sam Scarlett, Manager of Forestry and Horticulture at extension 3919 should you have any questions or concerns respecting the Growing Canada's Forests Program.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

N/A