



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Environmental Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	January 18, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Local Tree Planting Initiatives (PW23006) (Ward 12) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Ward 12
PREPARED BY:	Robyn Pollard (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3919
SUBMITTED BY:	Cynthia Graham Acting Director, Environmental Services Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That Council approve the acceptance of the 2 Billion Trees funding through Green Communities Canada, CanPlant, and Canadian Geographic which will fund in part the participation of the City of Hamilton in the National Mini-Forest Project and that the General Manager, Public Works Department be authorized to enter into and execute an Agreement and any necessary agreements and ancillary documents required to give effect thereto, all in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor; and
- (b) That staff accept the grant in the amount of \$10,000 as well as the possible additional grant funds of \$4,000 which may be accessed for tree planting within publicly owned Greenbelt lands, to be deposited into the existing Tree Planting project ID 4450053001.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current urban tree canopy coverage for the City of Hamilton is approximately 21%. As per the Public Tree By-law No. 15-125, the current tree canopy goal is to increase coverage to over 35%. Significant increases in tree planting over the next several years is critical to increase the tree canopy coverage and to meet or exceed the goal of 35%.

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.

Increases to tree planting will require considerable increases in funding and resources, therefore partnering with Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and pursuing applications for grants are good options to increase plantings without impacting current funding and staff resources.

In February 2022, the City of Hamilton Forestry and Horticulture section provided a letter of support to Green Communities Canada, CanPlant, and Canadian Geographic to aide in their application within the capacity building stream of the Federal Government's 2 Billion Tree (2BT) initiative. The letter of support is found in Appendix "A" to Report PW23006. The National Mini-Forest Project application has been approved and funding is to be used for the installation of Miyawaki mini forests on publicly accessible lands in collaboration with various municipalities including Hamilton.

Report PW23006 recommends that staff be directed to participate in the National Mini-Forest Project led by Green Communities Canada, CanPlant, and Canadian Geographic and to accept the funding through the 2 Billion Trees initiative.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 4

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The core grant associated with the National Mini-Forest Project is \$10,000 for each participating community, additional funds of \$4,000 may be accessed for tree planting within publicly owned Greenbelt lands.

The overall cost of the project is not yet finalized; however, the estimated cost of the project is less than \$25,000; participation in the project ensures funding of \$10,000 will be secured through the 2 Billion Trees grant and staff will pursue the additional funds of \$4,000 for planting within the Greenbelt. As the \$4,000 grant is not guaranteed at this time, the total cost to the City is estimated to be \$15,000 plus in-kind contribution of staff time to plan and execute the project. The Tree Planting Program project ID 4450053001 will be used to fund the City's expenses.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: Legal Services will review the National Mini-Forest Project Delivery Agreement and included the terms and conditions.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The National Mini-Forest Project is based on the Miyawaki Forest method. The method includes the planting of young, native trees with a diverse mix of species, in a densely

spaced urban area. Mini forests are well suited to size-constrained urban afforestation plots. The intent is not to produce a traditional forest ecosystem. The dense spacing encourages overall plant competition and therefore increases plant growth; mini forests grow up to 10 times faster, become 30 times denser and are 100 times more diverse than traditional forests. CanPlant has developed many resources to date, including this short video https://m.facebook.com/networkofnature/videos/2150732831731646/?_rdr as well as a suite of resources found on their website <https://can-plant.ca>

In 2021 and 2022, staff planted mini-forest plots at Windemere Basin Park and Lake Avenue Park in Ward 5 and Morton Park in Ward 13 in collaboration with CanPlant and the environmental education not-for-profit organization Green Venture through the Community Tree Planting program. The installation of these plots has been successful to date.

In February 2022, staff were approached by representatives from Green Communities Canada, CanPlant, and Canadian Geographic requesting support for an application within the capacity building stream of the Federal Government's 2 Billion Tree (2BT) initiative. A letter of support was provided outlining the willingness to participate in a mini-forest tree planting initiative.

At the General Issues Committee on February 16, 2022, staff were directed to investigate Federal Funding opportunities related to the 2 Billion Trees program. Staff had already submitted the letter of support to the application, found in Appendix "A" to Report PW23006.

The application was approved, and the project is set to commence in January 2023 with completion by November 31, 2023.

The overall objectives of the National Mini-Forest Project are as follows:

1. Equip community organisations and municipalities with knowledge, skills and tools on the planting of mini-forests;
2. Mobilize volunteers to plant urban mini forest sites; and
3. Engage local media and community stakeholders to highlight the importance of forest planting within urban boundaries.

Staff will approach stakeholders, including local Indigenous communities, to invite them to participate in the program.

The project will include funding support outlined below as well as training support from Green Communities Canada to each participating municipality. These supports include coaching, online coordinator training, toolkits, templates and other resources.

Grant funding provided to each participating municipality is set at \$10,000 minimum, and there is an option to pursue an additional \$4,000 if the plots are installed within

publicly owned Greenbelt lands. Therefore, Report PW23006 recommendations propose that staff be directed to plant three mini-forest plots within Johnson Tew Park in Ward 12. This location meets the criteria of being publicly accessible, within the Greenbelt and will allow for increased public awareness around the intent of the park to be used as an Arboretum. This location will allow the City of Hamilton to request the additional \$4,000 through the program.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

N/A

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Legal and Risk Management Services and Financial Planning Administration and Policy were consulted and support the recommendations of Report PW23006.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Participation in the National Mini-Forest Project will provide an opportunity for staff to gain the knowledge and tools to implement the method and test its success within public lands. These new methods provide options tool to increase tree canopy and biodiversity within the urban environment.

The location at Johnson Tew Park is recommended because it will allow the City of Hamilton to access the additional \$4,000 through the program because of the location within the Greenbelt. As well, the project is compatible with the overall park mandate, which is an arboretum.

Public engagement tools will ensure the benefit and intent of program is well communicated within the community and to increase support for urban tree canopy preservation.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

The City of Hamilton could decide not to participate in the National Mini-Forest Project. Staff to not recommend this alternative as it would not leverage non-city funding to

increase tree planting and canopy cover in Hamilton. There are no financial, staffing, or legal implications for this alternative.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report PW23006 – Letter of Support 2BT CoH Forestry