**1.	FOREST RENEWAL PROGRAM FOR OTTAWA-CARLETON**

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council approve:

1.	**That the Plant for Tomorrow program be reinitiated in the Fall of 1999 which provides one tree per property owner available on a first come, first served basis; that a media campaign be developed for October, 1999; and that the number of trees distributed be determined by suitable plant material availability to an upset limit of $300,000;**

2.	**That a complete "Tree Kit" be provided which shall include one bag of compost and one bag of woodchip mulch, detailed information on tree installation and maintenance and advice as to the benefit of how tree cover and greenspace fulfils other Regional programs and goals;**

3.	**That the Region of Ottawa-Carleton, the three local Conservation Authorities and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources develop a program that would provide assistance to rural plantation owners for the provision of tree seedlings. The program would be undertaken as a pilot project for a period of two years with an estimated annual cost of $90,000.**

DOCUMENTATION

1.	Environment and Transportation Commissioner report dated 12 August 1999 is immediately attached.

REGION OF OTTAWA CARLETON	REPORT
RÉGION D'OTTAWA CARLETON	RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.	**50** 68-99-0001
DATE	12 August 1999
TO/DEST.	Co-ordinator Transportation Committee
FROM/EXP.	Environment and Transportation Commissioner
SUBJECT/OBJET	**FOREST RENEWAL PROGRAM FOR OTTAWA-CARLETON**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That Transportation Committee recommend Council approve:

1. **That the Plant for Tomorrow program be reinitiated in the Fall of 1999 which provides one tree per property owner available on a first come, first served basis; that a media campaign be developed for October, 1999; and that the number of trees distributed be determined by suitable plant material availability to an upset limit of $300,000;**

2. **That a complete "Tree Kit" be provided which shall include one bag of compost and one bag of woodchip mulch, detailed information on tree installation and maintenance and advice as to the benefit of how tree cover and greenspace fulfils other Regional programs and goals;**

3. **That the Region of Ottawa-Carleton, the three local Conservation Authorities and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources develop a program that would provide assistance to rural plantation owners for the provision of tree seedlings. The program would be undertaken as a pilot project for a period of two years with an estimated annual cost of $90,000.**

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 provided a one inch diameter tree for anywhere on their 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. In the Fall 1998 campaign (17 October to 01 December) 7,000 property owners took the pledge to receive and maintain a tree.

Rural Community Forest Restoration Projects were initiated by the Region's Forestry Services as self-directed tree planting projects that would assist community associations and interest groups in rural Ottawa-Carleton to restore their cultural landscapes lost due to the Ice Storm. To date, 58 rural communities have been contacted with nine actively participating in 1999 by facilitating the distribution of trees through the Plant for Tomorrow program.

Community Partnership Tree Planting Projects identified through the office of the Regional Forester, assisted urban interest groups with tree planting projects with commitment obtained by the Region's partners to assist with financial and/or in-kind resources. To date, 30 interest groups have been contacted with 16 actively participating in 1999.

To date the following projects have been implemented:

	Total trees planted
Plant for Tomorrow (urban)	5,920 trees

Rural Community Forest Restoration Projects:

Plant for Tomorrow (rural) (Cumberland, Osgoode, Rideau)	1,080
March Community Association (Kanata)	3,300

Community Partnership Tree Planting Projects:

Scouts Canada (Region wide)	35,000
Sutton Place Condominium C.C.C. #25 (Gloucester)	99
Bronson Ave Landscaping (South Ottawa Community Association)	6,105
Hunt Club Interchange (Ottawa)	262
Russell C.C.C. #7 (Cumberland)	11
Alta Vista Public School (Ottawa)	6
Prince of Peace Catholic School (Ottawa)	1
Faircrest Heights Community Association (Ottawa)	38
C.C.C. #144 (Ottawa)	12
Carleton C.C.C. #37 (Nepean)	12
Chateau Vanier (Vanier)	10
St. Martin de Porres School (Kanata)	14
Glashan Public School (Ottawa)	4
Centennial Public School (Ottawa)	4
Cambridge School (Ottawa)	4
Bethany Baptist Church (Nepean)	70
Spring 1999 TOTALS	51,952 trees

Works Currently In Progress:

- Millennium Tree Planting Project

  2000 sugar maple trees along Regional Roadways throughout Ottawa-Carleton in 2000.

- Core Area Restoration and Urban Tree Island (UTI) Program

  750 trees planted to date through the service agreement with the City of Ottawa and another 500 planned in 2000.

- St. Joseph Blvd. Revitalization

  150 trees identified for St. Joseph Blvd. (Reg. Rd. 34) in the year 2000 in partnership with private property owners and the City of Gloucester.

- Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club

  Joint development of a life cycle management plan for trees bordering Hunt Club Road and Riverside Drive to retain and enhance the roadside vegetative screen.

- Capital Projects

Elgin Street	41 trees
Plaza Bridge	40 trees
Conroy Road	35 trees
March Road	60 trees

- Tree Replacement Program on Regional Roads and Properties

Spring 1999	26 trees
Fall 1999	150 trees

- Global Positioning System (GPS) Tree Inventory

  Development of a compatible database with the Region's Geographic Information System (GIS) with the mapping of all Green Assets is expected to be completed by the end of 1999.

DISCUSSION

Plant for Tomorrow

A primary focus in 1999 has been the Plant for Tomorrow program. Trees were distributed over four Saturdays in April and May with April 24th reserved for rural Ottawa-Carleton. A total of 1,080 one inch diameter trees were distributed on that date through nine rural partnerships.

The distribution of the 5,920 remaining trees took place at five separate locations across the Region on 01 May 1999. All the trees were to be loaded on the 29th and 30th of April at the Ferguson Forest Station in Kemptville, where they were being held for maintenance. However, the loading of the trees was delayed until the 30th and early on the 1st of May. The size of the trees and the total number of trees both contributed to the loading time given the space requirements for the two foot diameter rootball and the height of the trees. The last load of trees for the Hunt Club Facility was delayed which resulted in significant traffic congestion at that site. Of the remaining four sites, three reported traffic congestion and minor delays.

Although all trees were available for pick-up at the five sites on 1 May two alternative distribution dates were also made available to the public. On the 8th and the 15th of May a total of 562 trees were distributed at the Ferguson Forest Station in Kemptville to property owners who could not make the main distribution date. With the rapid advancement of the summer season the remaining trees were then distributed until the 21st to property owners on a reserve list kept of individuals who signed up for a tree after the deadline or were planted at the nursery and will be used in future plantings along Regional roadways and properties.

A review of the tree species chosen in 1998 has revealed strong interest in species such as sugar maple and Japanese lilac and only passing interest in hackberry. There is an anticipated supply shortage of caliper sized stock due to the on-going high demand for trees in Ontario, in part as a result of the Ice Storm and the nursery industry has indicated that this will remain the case for the next several years. It is recommended that the tree species, their size and overall numbers be determined by stock availability for the proposed 2000 program.

An analysis of the surveys received at the time of distribution confirms significant support for the program. Overall, 92% of the respondents indicated their intention to participate in any future phases of the program. In addition, 90% of respondents indicated support for providing payment for the tree (an average of $12.27) although this was not universal. Some recipients clearly indicated their role in the long-term maintenance of the tree and in costs that they will incur in the future for watering, fertilizing and pruning as sufficient to justify no charge for the tree. The provision of a limited number of free trees with no guarantee for replacement differs from the standard nursery or gardening centre policy of replacing a dead trees after up to two years and therefore avoids the issue of competition with the private sector.

Recommendation #1

That the Plant for Tomorrow program be reinitiated in the Fall of 1999 which provides one tree per property owner available on a first come, first served basis; that a media campaign be developed for October, 1999 and that the number of trees distributed be determined by suitable plant material availability to an upset limit of $300,000.

The program also provides the Region of Ottawa-Carleton the ability to provide a direct message that outlines the Region's role in other areas. Trees play a role in the provision of water quality, healthy communities, vegetative screening and environmental protection and are key in attaining a number of goals through the Official Plan. For this reason it is proposed that educational material in these areas be provided when the trees are distributed.

An opportunity also exists to provide two other Regional products, compost and wood mulch produced through the Trail Road landfill operation. These two by-products are still being produced as a direct result of the Ice Storm debris collected in 1998 and are commonly used in all tree plantings. A bagged quantity of each material should be provided with each tree sufficient to allow its successful installation.

Recommendation #2

That a complete "Tree Kit" be provided which shall include one bag of compost and one bag of woodchip mulch, detailed information on tree installation and maintenance and advice as to the benefit of how tree cover and greenspace fulfils other Regional programs and goals.

It cannot be understated, however, that even for people who were not successful in establishing their tree there was universal appeal for the program and strong feedback for its return. A bilingual survey form was used by the public to redeem their tree. The survey was collected at all pick-up points and total numbers resulted in a 55% return rate. The results of the survey are as follows:

1.   How did you find out about the program?

6.3%	Community meeting	1%	TV
36.4%	Word of mouth	13.5%	Radio
3.3%	Region's website	38%	Newspaper

2.   Do you think this program contributes to the re-greening of the communities of Ottawa-Carleton?

Yes   98.6%   No   1.4%

3.   Would you participate if the program was offered again?

Yes   92%   No   8%

4.   If we were to offer the program again and asked for a contribution, what is the maximum amount that you would be willing to contribute for a tree?

$5.00   18% $10.00 44%

$20.00 28%   Other   10%

5.   Comments (provided by 40% of respondents)

     Positive   93.6%
     Negative   6.4%

The most often cited amount for Question #4 in the Other category was for a free tree. Of the 10%, a total 9% of the respondents indicated that their ongoing maintenance for a tree is a sufficient contribution and justifies the free tree from the program. Respondents also indicated that their contribution would be based upon the size of the tree.

The distribution of letters and vouchers was conducted through Canada Post and delivery problems occurred at locations across the Region. In some cases, correct names and addresses in the central database were never delivered to the property owner's home address. Some of this confusion may be attributed to names being lost due to clerical errors, some reports were received where the information was mistaken for junk mail and discarded and some letters were found to have errors in the addresses such as no R.R. # or P.O. Box #.

To ensure that registration problems are minimized, a simpler registration system is proposed with advertisements placed in local newspapers during October 1999. Applicants will be registered in a central database and all applications will be channelled through one central office and telephone number. One central co-ordinating group with direct control over registration and distribution will reduce confusion on the numbers registered and the conveyance to the public of exact information on pick-up locations and dates. Distribution timing and locations are also being reviewed to reduce traffic congestion and allocate the trees in a timely manner.

Community Forest Restoration Projects

The Region's Forestry Services has also worked to promote community involvement and empowerment as part of the Forest Renewal program. Through Community Forest Restoration Projects in 1998 and 1999, the Region has worked with nine rural communities and 17 interest groups to plant trees across Ottawa-Carleton. In the case of at least two communities, active steps have recently been taken to develop their own tree planting initiatives on adjacent lands such as municipal parks.

This community participation process is the original intent of the program with the Region playing a facilitation role until such time that the community or group can take the lead in their own environmental endeavours. Planning is now underway with six new interest groups and communities who did not participate in 1999 but who have now contacted the Region for assistance.

Life Cycle Management

The acquisition and planting of large numbers of trees was not undertaken in 1998 since the focus last year was to repair the damage to the existing tree inventory and arboricultural work continued throughout the entire year. The original Ice Storm damage is now complete, however, secondary dieback on some older growth trees continues and will be part of the ongoing tree pruning and

removal work for an estimated three more years. The progress of this work is being monitored through the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) technology and an inventory system has been developed for all Green assets compatible with the Region's Geographic Information System (GIS).

Ice Storm Assistance Program

The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has recently announced that they will fund an additional component to the existing Ice Storm Assistance Program. The Tree Replacement and Management Strategy for public authorities is a three (3) year initiative to reinvest provincial funding in eastern Ontario's rural and urban trees and forests. Funding assistance is for tree replacement for trees lost due to the Ice Storm and maintenance work to help save existing ice-damaged trees on public lands.

Regional staff will make application under this program seeking cost recovery of funding expended to maintain and plant trees since the Ice Storm through the Forest Renewal Program and for future life cycle maintenance and tree replacement costs on all Regional road allowances and properties over the next two (2) years.

The application amount is estimated at $1,500,000.00

Plantation Restoration

An area previously unexplored is tree plantation restoration due to the lead that the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) and the Conservation Authorities (CA's) have taken in extension services as far back as the 1960's. The Regional Forester has been approached by the Rideau Valley, South Nation and Mississippi Conservation Authorities and dialogue has been exchanged regarding Regional participation in plantation restoration. Regional staff do not have the resources to provide extension services but a proposal has been received that would allow the Region's Forest Restoration program to provide landowners with advice and assistance in establishing a proper planting plan for their properties and in attaining suitable planting stock. OMNR has offered to assist with co-ordination of this work through the Land Stewardship office in Ottawa-Carleton.

The program would be implemented by the CA's as a Regional initiative with a target of planting 100,000 seedlings per year across Ottawa-Carleton. In keeping with the resource-sharing aspect of the Forest Renewal program, for every dollar the Region provides, the landowner would be required to provide an additional two dollars. The estimated cost for the program is $90,000.00 annually.

Recommendation #3

That the Region of Ottawa-Carleton, the three local Conservation Authorities and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources develop a program that would provide assistance to rural plantation owners for the provision of tree seedlings. The program would be undertaken as a pilot project for a period of two years with an estimated annual cost of $90,000.00.

CONSULTATION

As partnerships have been developed and specific initiatives identified, 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 both the 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 have been provided in the 1999 Capital Budget, Account No. 912-30751, (Order No. 900076), Ottawa-Carleton Forest Restoration Program (Reference Page No. 471).

Approved by
M.J.E. Sheflin, P. Eng.

CH/pnb