

NO: R053

COUNCIL DATE: March 14, 2011

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **March 2, 2011**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture** FILE: **0330 - 01**

SUBJECT: **2011 Earth Day Celebration – *Party for the Planet***

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview for Council regarding the plans for the City's planned 2011 Earth Day Celebration known as *Party for the Planet*.

## BACKGROUND

Earth Day, first celebrated in 1970, was conceived of as a means of raising public environmental consciousness. Earth Day is now a global event, celebrated in 180 countries on or near April 22<sup>nd</sup> of each year. Although Earth Day incorporates many environmental themes, there has been a significant focus since 2000 on both clean energy and on the efforts related to combating global climate change.

Earth Day has been celebrated in Surrey since 1999, typically on a Saturday close to April 22<sup>nd</sup>. At these events, Surrey residents have had the opportunity to learn about the natural environment with local environmental groups taking on responsibilities in relation to sharing information about the environment. Earth Day in the City of Surrey has also been the start of the annual City of Surrey *Environmental Extravaganza*, which is a series of more than 80 events and programs hosted by 35 local community organizations between April and June of each year. The Earth Day Celebration in prior years has featured activities and displays, as well as live music, tree planting, mascots, face painting, costume parades, crafts and a salmon release in local creeks. Generally, these events have been modest in scale with many attendees being those residents that already had an interest in environmental issues.

Historically, the Parks Division organized the Earth Day event. However, with the growing corporate focus on sustainability, other Departments are now becoming involved in elements of the Earth Day celebration. The Drainage & Environment Section and Solid Waste Section of the Engineering Department, the Sustainability Section, the Special Events Section and various Park Sections have collaborated to develop a new, expanded Earth Day Celebration for 2011, labelled as "*Party for the Planet - Surrey Celebrates Earth Day.*"

## DISCUSSION

*“Party for the Planet – Surrey Celebrates Earth Day”*, which is being held on April 16, 2011, is a major event focussed on all age groups and all cultures. The event will be attractive to a broad cross-section of people by including main stage headline entertainment, popular children’s performers, unique displays and features and exciting environmental activities. The event is planned for the Central City Plaza and the North Surrey Recreation Centre Parking lot so that it can accommodate a large audience and be accessible by transit.

The 2011 *Party for the Planet* event will focus on celebrating City of Surrey sustainability initiatives and City of Surrey environmental partnerships. The event will include Canada’s first ever Bike Powered Main Stage and Surrey’s first ever Green Zip Line and Aerial Element System, a carbon-neutral physical and physiological adventure and other public engagement activities. The *Party for the Planet* will also showcase Surrey’s first CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) waste collection truck.

The *Party for the Planet* event will allow City of Surrey staff work groups that are involved in elements of sustainability, such as Traffic and Transportation, Waste Diversion, Trees and Landscapes, Water Management, Energy, etc. to communicate a sustainability message in each of these areas in a fun and interactive environment.

“Enviro-Activity Zones” on site will include:

- Agriculture Alley;
- Community Corridor;
- Energy Avenue;
- Nature Nook;
- Transportation Trail; and
- First Nations Village.

These Zones will include participation by community organizations and will involve features such as Nature Matters – Salmon Life Cycle Obstacle Course, Surrey Nature Centre - Where’s Wildlife Interpretive Forest, Orphaned Wildlife Rescue - Birds of Prey demonstration, Scavenger Hunt Straw Maze, Vancouver Planetarium Star Lab, Telus World of Science - Origami Plant Pots and Seed Planting, BC Chicken Growers - Poultry in Motion Educational Mini Barn, Translink -Travel Smart, BC Hydro Power Smart, etc.

The event will include a Main Stage that will feature headline entertainment acts and will also feature entertainers who promote “green” messages.

Sponsorship for the event has been confirmed and includes Coast Capital Savings as the Presenting Sponsor, Central City/Blackwood Partners as the Green Zip Line Sponsors, BC Hydro as the Bike Powered Stage Sponsor, Teresan Gas as a Community Sponsor, and Surrey Downtown BIA as the Community Corridor Sponsor. Other sponsors include Safeway, Waste Management, BC Plant and Health Care and Surrey.com.

CTV has been confirmed a major television media sponsorship and will be providing a promotion for the event with a value worth over a \$150,000, including CTV live news broadcasting from the event venue on the day of the event. Partnerships with various other radio and print media are also being developed.

The primary purpose of the *Party for the Planet* event is to demonstrate the City of Surrey's leadership as an innovative, sustainable city in the province through public outreach and community engagement. This event is expected to be a major regional draw to the Surrey City Centre.

## SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Surrey' Earth Day Celebration, *The Party for the Planet*, will assist in achieving a variety of the goals contained in the City's Sustainability Charter as follows:

- SC13 – *“Promote a variety of opportunities for community celebration and gathering through local and city-wide events and festivals...”*
- EN16 – *“The City will continue to provide community education and awareness of Surrey's natural environment to City staff and the public...”*
- EN14 – *“The City will provide information on best practices in areas such as alternative energy systems, energy efficiency, recycling and re-use, composting and reduction of solid and liquid waste through a variety of communication means that are easily accessible to local residents and businesses.”*

## CONCLUSION

Surrey has celebrated Earth Day in a modest way since 1999; however, in 2011 the event will be significantly enhanced and renamed as *“Party for the Planet – Surrey Celebrates Earth Day”*. It will be held in Surrey City Centre on April 16 2011 and has received strong support from both the business community through sponsorships and environmental organizations.

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