

NO: R090

COUNCIL DATE: **MAY 26, 2014**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **May 21, 2014**

FROM: **Acting General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Planning and Development
General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture
Sustainability Manager**

FILE: **5280-01**

SUBJECT: **“Green Surrey” Program**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Engineering Department, Planning and Development Department, the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department and the City Manager’s Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Approve-in-principle the development of a “Green Surrey” Program as documented in this report and direct staff to continue the consultation process and to report back to Council with the results of that consultation.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to inform Council and obtain Council’s approval for the development of a “Green Surrey” Program that is a collection of environmentally themed projects and programs by all Departments in the City that supports and advances the Environmental Pillar of the Sustainability Charter.

BACKGROUND

The City has abundant parks and natural habitat areas, significant agricultural lands, countless fish bearing watercourses, sensitive ocean shoreline and residents & businesses that are invested in the City’s future.

The City is also at the leading edge of projects related to clean energy and clean industry, and has numerous residential developments that have very high levels of community sustainability.

The City has also performed well in establishing a balance between conserving its living heritage and building for the future. Several important initiatives in the past nine years and many currently under development are greatly assisting in achieving and maintaining this balance.

In October 2005, Council adopted the Nature Matters Program, as an enhanced environmental program for the City. The program covers an expanded range of environmental initiatives by the Engineering and Parks, Recreation & Culture Departments for the residents and businesses of Surrey through year-round initiatives.

On September 29, 2008, Council received Corporate Report No. R175, which summarized the consultation process and key findings arising from the Sustainability Charter development process and included a proposed Sustainability Charter. At that meeting, Council approved the Sustainability Charter.

The Surrey Sustainability Charter defines sustainability as:

“ . . . meeting the needs of the present generation in terms of the socio-cultural systems, the economy and the environment, while promoting a high quality of life but without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

The Charter sets out a Vision for sustainability that is supported by high-level and specific Goals, and an Action Framework for addressing sustainability issues.

DISCUSSION

Since the implementation of Nature Matters and the subsequent development of the Sustainability Charter, there have been a number actions completed, in-progress and planned that are directly related or closely related to the actions included under the environmental pillar of the Sustainability Charter. Examples of these actions include:

New (Subject to Development, Consultation, and Council Approval)

- Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and its related documents, maps and policies
- Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Areas
- Riparian Area By-law

In-Progress

- District Energy in the City Centre
- An Organic Biofuel Facility
- NSERC – Powertech – City of Surrey Executive Industrial Research Chair in Energy Systems for Smart Cities

Completed

- Ecosystem Management Study
- Alternative Fuel Infrastructure at Service Stations
- Acquisition of over 725-acres of Parkland over the past 10-years

Given the number of environmentally related activities, many of which are outside of the actions included in the environmental pillar and recognizing that many go beyond the scope of the previously implemented Nature Matters initiatives, staff see the merits in developing a new coordinated delivery program for all of the City’s environmentally themed initiatives.

The delivery program can be:

- a strong brand that can be used promote and educate the community on the City's actions; and
- identify opportunities for the community to participate.

The delivery program can be categorized under one of three themes, Conservation, Investment or Engagement:

Conservation

Intended to represent specific plans and/or policies that help to preserve, maintain and enhance the City's natural environment.

Investment

Intended to represent investments that the City has made to help preserve, maintain and enhance the City's natural environment.

Engagement

Intended to represent opportunities to educate and involve the City's residents in the actions taken by the City and actions that they make take in order to preserve, maintain and enhance the City's natural environment.

The City's comprehensive program of civic construction activities was given the name "Build Surrey" which resonated strongly with residents and the business community; in this same fashion, a delivery program for environmentally-related initiatives will need a name that provides a strong brand for the program. In preliminary staff discussion, a number of names were considered for the delivery program; "Green Surrey" was chosen as working title for the time period during which further consultation efforts are carried out.

Consultation

In order to better define the "Green Surrey" Program, including its scope, list of initiatives and engagement plan, it is recommended that staff consult with internal stakeholders and the following Committees:

- Agricultural & Food Security Advisory Committee;
- Environment Sustainability Advisory Committee;
- Development Advisory Committee;
- Investment and Innovation Committee; and the
- Parks, Recreation and Sport Tourism Advisory Committee.

It is also recommended that staff conduct a public consultation process and explore the use of CitySpeaks and integration with the Smart City Strategy, in addition to consulting with other stakeholders such as the Urban Development Institute, Surrey Environmental Partners and the Semiahmoo Fish & Game Club.

Following this consultation process, staff will report back to Council with the framework for the “Green Surrey” Program taking into consideration the results of the consultation process.

Concurrent with the consultation process staff will continue with the implementation of the various actions that are either in-progress or planned, including bringing forward in the coming months for Council’s consideration the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and its related documents, together with mapping and policies related to a Riparian Area By-law. Further, staff will continue to their efforts in preparing an update to the Sustainability Charter for Council’s consideration early next year.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The recommendation of this report will assist in supporting all of the objectives included in the Environmental Pillar of the City’s Sustainability Charter.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council approve-in-principle the development of a “Green Surrey” Program as documented in this report and direct staff to continue the consultation process and to report back to Council with the results of that consultation.

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