

Calgary Tree Disaster 2014 – Recovery & Restoration: Proposed Funding Recommendations for 2015-2018 Action Plan

Previous Council Direction

On 2014 October 6 Council received the verbal update on VR2014-0069 Calgary Tree Disaster 2014 for information and directed Administration to report back to Council 2014 November 17 with a progress update on response actions, recovery plan and budget recommendations for consideration at 2015-2018 Action Plan.

Issue

In September 2014, Calgary's urban forest was heavily damaged by a late summer snowfall. To protect The City from liability risks as well as stabilize and restore the urban forest, a significant one-time investment is required for tree hazard mitigation, corrective pruning, tree maintenance and community replanting initiatives. Due to the timing of the storm, the required funding for this work was not included in the 2015-2018 Action Plan.

Investigation/Assessment

Trends: As the urban forest grows, so do the social, economic and environmental benefits. Communities with trees can have lower crime levels and more social cohesion. Trees provide wildlife habitat and can remove air and water pollutants and reduce soil erosion. Mature, healthy trees benefit property values and can reduce home energy costs.

Public Engagement: Results from Action Plan citizen engagement found that 90% of participants agreed a healthy urban forest contributes to a world class city. Previous public engagement (CPS 2012-05) found that citizen awareness and knowledge of tree preservation and growth strategies is low, however there is significant desire to become educated on trees.

Long-term Council-approved Plans: The Municipal Development Plan includes urban forestry as a core indicator for success and sets the 60-year target of 14-20% for the urban tree canopy. Prior to the storm, the urban tree canopy covered 9% of the city.

Council Priorities: This package supports Council Outcome *H5: Protect and enhance our urban forest and natural landscape throughout Calgary* and Parks' Strategic Action *H5.1 Plant trees to enhance and increase the city's tree canopy in alignment with MDP targets for tree canopy coverage*.

Business Plan Impact

Using current budget allotments to manage the tree disaster recovery would significantly limit and disrupt The City of Calgary's urban forestry services, including:

- Services such as tree planting citywide, all non-emergency tree work, service requests, and maintenance would be impacted.
- Existing funding would only cover the pruning of one quarter of the damaged public trees over four years, leaving 75% at higher risk for failure, disease and death.
- Public education and community outreach programs would not be supported.

For 2015-2018, Parks recommends the implementation of the community-based Calgary Tree Disaster 2014 Recovery Framework (Attachment 2) to guide long-term recovery.

Budget Recommendation Summary

For 2015-2018, Administration requests one-time funding of:

- \$35.5 million from the Fiscal Stability Reserve (FSR).

From the proposed 2015-2018 budget Parks will redirect \$11,200,000 from operating and \$700,000 from capital to recovery and restoration. Future funding strategies for resiliency will be developed. Alternative funding strategies (such as grants, sponsorships and donations) for resiliency efforts will be explored.

Action Plan Budget Request Summary	Total Required (\$000)	Capital Budget Request (Redirect)	Operating Request (FSR)	Parks Operating Funding from Action Plan 2015-18 (Redirect)
Recovery	\$35,000	\$700	\$23,900	\$10,400
Restoration	\$12,400	\$0	\$11,600	\$800
Total	\$47,400	\$700	\$35,500	\$11,200

Omnibus Funding Requests for Action Plan 2015-2018

ONE-TIME (\$000s)	2015	2016	2017	2018
Net Operating Budget One-time Request	\$11,900	\$11,800	\$11,800	

Funding Source: Fiscal Stability Reserve

Capital Budget

Program 500		Project Name: Calgary Tree Disaster Recovery				
(\$000s)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019+	Total
Capital Budget (Incremental)	\$700					\$700

Funding Source: Program 500