



Planning and Building Services

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February 2, 2015

Information Report

Development and Infrastructure Services/Planning and Building Services- Planning Information Report 2015-01

TO: Mayor Van Bynen
 Members of Council
 Chief Administrative Officer
 SLT

SUBJECT: Newmarket Urban Forest Cover Study

ORIGIN: Planning and Building Services - Planning

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise Council that **revisions to the 2015 Capital Budget**, scheduled to be considered by Council in March/April 2015, is proposed to **include the Newmarket Urban Forest Cover Study**. This study is to be carried out jointly by the Town in cooperation with the Region and implements the policy provisions of the Regional and Town Official Plans and will establish the necessary base line data to enable monitoring of forest cover into the future.

COMMENTS

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may request this Information Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

1. **Background**

The Region of York approached the Town regarding the development of an Urban Forest Study to be funded jointly (50 %/50%) by the Town and the Region and conducted by either Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) or Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA).

The study would cost in the order of +/- \$110,000 with a cost of +/- \$55,000 to Newmarket.

2. **Policy Rationale**

Policy 2.2.50 of the Regional Official Plan requires that local municipalities develop an Urban Forest Management Plan in conjunction with the Region. The policy is attached as Attachment 1.

The Regional Plan also has an objective to achieve a target of 25 % woodland cover to be achieved in conjunction with local municipalities. See Policy 8.2 Monitoring for Success under Attachment 1.

The Town of Newmarket Official Plan has a target to achieve 12 % tree cover by 2026. (See Attachment 1)

In order to achieve these targets, base line measurements must be established and forest cover monitored.

3. Urban Forest Studies Undertaken in York Region to Date and Methodology

The Region in conjunction with Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Markham has completed an Urban Forest Cover Study for these three municipalities; a study is currently underway with Aurora. These studies have been conducted by TRCA applying consistent methodology developed for the GTA as part of a collaborative working group that includes York Region, Peel Region, City of Toronto, Pickering and Ajax. The i-tree software created in the US and the Urban Tree Canopy assessment protocols have been employed. By employing consistent software and study methodologies a Region wide analysis will be possible.

The Terms of Reference developed for the previous studies identified above can be readily adapted to Newmarket, thereby reducing staff resource requirements.

The Summary Report for the York Region Urban Forest Study prepared for Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Markham may be accessed through in the Town's public drive through the following link:

[T/Public/Planning/Urban Forest Studies.](#)

4. Next Steps

The Region is interested in partnering with the Town, in conjunction with TRCA and/or LSRCA, to initiate the Urban Forest Cover study for Newmarket. The study would be conducted by the conservation authority. The completion of the Newmarket study would mean that all of York Region urban communities will have implemented the Official Plan(s) policy provisions.

Council decision to support the study is intended to be addressed through the 2015 Capital Budget which will be revised to include the Newmarket Urban Forest Cover Study.

Revisions to the 2015 Capital Budget is scheduled to be brought before Council in March/April 2015.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

Living well

- *Focusing on health, safety and the environment to promote activity and enrich lives*

- *Environmental protection and natural heritage preservation
Well equipped & managed*
- *implementing policy and processes that reflect sound and accountable governance*
- *Leadership excellence and leading edge management*
- *Clear vision of the future and align corporate/business plans*

Well respected

- *Inspiring partnerships and co-operation with stakeholders that revolve around well-being, synergy and balance*
- *Being a champion of cooperation and collaboration.*

CONSULTATION

Consultation has been carried out with the Region and Procurement Services.

HUMAN RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

Staffing levels are not impacted as a result of the recommendations in this report.

BUDGET IMPACT

Operating Budget (Current and Future) - NA

Capital Budget

Capital Funding for this project is being considered as part of the 2015 Capital Budget process. \$50,000 will be allocated from Development Charges and the remaining \$5,000 will be allocated from the operating fund.

CONTACT

For more information on this report, contact Marion Plaunt, Senior Planner, Policy at 905 953-5300 Ext. 2459 or at mplaunt@newmarket.ca.

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Attachment 1

Excerpts from the Region of York Official Plan and the Town of Newmarket Official Plan

Region of York Official Plan

2.2 Natural Features: Components of the Greenlands System

2.2.50 That local municipalities shall develop an Urban Forest Management Plan, together with York Region, that may include additional locally significant woodlands.¹

2.2.51. That York Regional Forests shall be sustainably managed in a manner that enhances their ecological, educational and recreational functions to ensure their health in perpetuity.

2.2.52. To encourage and work with the Province and other stakeholders involved in woodlands management to maintain and enhance publicly and privately owned forested lands, and to encourage landowners through stewardship initiatives to use good forestry practices.

8.2 Monitoring and Measuring Success

Comprehensive monitoring will help York Region measure the success of this Plan. Monitoring also allows the Region to respond to new trends and to continuously improve the effectiveness of this Plan. Ongoing monitoring and assessment will:

- identify emerging trends and related issues that could impact the relevancy of the policies in this Plan;
- analyze the effectiveness of the policies and strategies within this Plan and other Regional initiatives; and
- provide the basis for adjustments and updates where required.

¹ i-Tree Eco (formerly known as the Urban Forest Effects Model or “UFORE”), is an evaluation tool that can be used in urban forest management to measure the type, value and extent of the economic and environmental benefits of the urban forest. Urban forests provide more than aesthetic values, they assist in increasing energy efficiency and pollution abatement. The data generated from the i-Tree Eco analysis is key to an urban forest management plan.

Objective

To ensure policy directions in this Plan are successfully implemented to improve the economy, environment and community.

It is the policy of Council:

1. To develop a series of indicators to measure success, based on the three themes of this Plan.
2. To produce regular monitoring reports that measure the success of this Plan.
3. To develop, in co-operation with local municipalities, common measuring and reporting tools to monitor progress towards targets established in this Plan, including:
 - g. a minimum woodland cover of 25% of the Region's total land area.

Town of Newmarket Official Plan

9.3.2 Woodlots

Woodlots are an important natural heritage feature in Newmarket. As the existing forest cover is relatively low, and with the Town approaching full build-out, it is important to protect the existing Woodlots. They provide habitat for forest-dependent plants and animals, help regulate temperature, reduce air pollutants, reduce soil erosion, contribute to the aesthetic value of the Town and offer passive recreational opportunities.

Policies

Programs

1. Council may enact a Tree By-law to ensure compatibility with the Regional Tree By-law.
2. Council shall promote reforestation and naturalization in all private and public lands where appropriate.
3. Council shall promote and establish programs to increase the tree cover of the entire Town from its current level of **9% to 12%**. The means to achieve this target include:
 - a. active tree planting, particularly within Town-owned parks and undeveloped portions of the East Holland River and Bogart Creek Floodplains;
 - b. infilling gaps within and between existing woodlots; and,
 - c. allowing natural vegetation succession to occur selectively within undeveloped areas.

- d. continue to contribute to the environmental protection of Lake Simcoe and the East Holland River Watershed by maintaining partnerships with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) and non-government organizations; and,
- e. encourage a program of tree planting and tree preservation in accordance with the Town's Tree Preservation, Protection, Replacement and Enhancement Policy so that all residential areas are provided with a sufficient number of trees to maintain a high standard of amenity and appearance.