



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: March 19, 2021
Submitted by: Community Services Department – Environment Division
Subject: Delegation Response – Green Teams of Canada

Purpose

To provide Council with input on the fee-for-service partnership proposed by the delegation from Green Teams of Canada, based on a review of volunteer activities under the City's Invasive Plant Management Program.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT invasive plant volunteer events for a two-year pilot period that combines fee-for-service events by Green Teams of Canada and City-led events by Environment and Recreation divisions be supported as recommended in the report dated March 19, 2021 from the Community Services Department – Environment Division regarding Delegation Response – Green Teams of Canada;

AND THAT the budget of \$11,900 per year for two years to support this work be referred to the Finance Committee for identification of a funding source.

Background

Invasive plants are non-native species that occur outside of their natural range, are able to grow and spread rapidly, and can impact local biodiversity, natural and built assets, and human health and safety. Invasive plants are anticipated to be more persistent and wide spread under climate change. The City's Invasive Plant Management Program (the Program) is led by the Environment division. Activities follow five key areas:

- Management on City lands;
- Management through development;
- Education and outreach;
- Community stewardship; and
- Regional and Provincial networking.

The Program's community stewardship activities have focused on volunteer invasive plant removal in City parks, engaging volunteers through partnership with other organizations and groups. The number of events and volunteers engaged has generally been stable over the past five years within existing operational budgets and work plans (**Attachment 1**). Volunteer events

typically target large invasive plant infestations that would not be undertaken by City work crews. These events also help promote community stewardship and outreach.

The Program is currently funded through Environment division annual operating budgets. Green Teams of Canada (GTC), also known as the “Lower Mainland Green Team”, has been working with the City under a fee-for-service arrangement within existing budgets since 2016. They have been a critical partner in expanding community stewardship efforts; however, this arrangement can no longer be supported under existing budgets for the following reasons:

- The cost of fee-for-service GTC-led events has increased over time. Initially, their funding model subsidized this fee (\$800 per event). Over time, changes to their funding model has meant that the full cost of their service must now be borne by the City (\$2,000 per event). The number of GTC-led events each year has depended on their fee and budget availability.
- The Program has intentionally focused on increasing invasive plant removal by City crews and including more restoration planting and maintenance work. Consequently, less operating budget is available to support this fee. A request for new service and increased operating budget for the Program was not approved in 2020 or 2021.

GTC presented as a delegation at the Regular Council Meeting on November 17, 2020, to seek Council’s support to run community engagement activities annually in Port Moody parks and natural spaces through a long-term fee-for-service partnership. Direction was provided by Council for GTC to present to the Environmental Protection Committee (EPC). A presentation was also made to the Climate Action Committee (CAC). Both EPC and CAC brought reports to Council recommending support for this initiative. At the Regular Council Meeting held on February 23, 2021, the following resolution was passed:

RC21/091

THAT the report dated January 25, 2021 from the Environmental Protection Committee regarding Green Teams of Canada Fee-for-Service Partnership with the City of Port Moody be referred to staff for action.

Discussion

To date, GTC has positively contributed to volunteer invasive plant removals in Port Moody¹. They provide a “full service” partnership – event promotion and registration, local and regional volunteer recruitment, planning and outreach, equipment, snacks and prizes, event closure, and reporting. GTC events can be run without City staff in attendance, although liaising is still critical.

¹ Green Teams of Canada’s proposal includes other options for community engagement activities; this report responds specifically to invasive plant removal activities based on experience-to-date with GTC. Environment and Parks staff are involved in a range of outreach and engagement activities, expected to increase under direction of Port Moody’s Climate Action Plan, and other local partners also provide community outreach activities, including local stewardship groups.

Staff do not currently organize the type of event run by GTC, but instead partner with local groups when they request support to host an invasive plant removal event (see list of partners in **Attachment 1**). Events with local partners typically require more City staff resources to implement, but partners do all volunteer recruitment. As a result of COVID-19 and cancellation of public events, staff from Recreation and Environment divisions partnered in early 2021 to host City-led invasive plant removal events using Recreation's database of Port Moody volunteers. This partnership has great potential, and Recreation staff are eager to continue exploring this opportunity. Invasive plant removal events provide an outdoor volunteer opportunity and typically run during fall and winter, so would not conflict with other City-led events that use these volunteers (e.g., Car Free Day, Community Fair, etc.).

The proposed fee-for-service partnership with GTC would incur a direct cost of \$2,000 per event (see **Attachment 2**). Additional resources would be needed to implement similar City-led invasive plant removal events, with an estimated cost of \$1,300 per event (see **Attachment 3**).

Staff recommend a hybrid approach of GTC and City-led events over the next two years that includes:

- No more than four GTC-led events per year; and
- No less than three City-led events per year.

If Recreation and Environment divisions continue to successfully partner on invasive plant removal events, City-led events would be expected to increase and GTC events would be expected to decrease over this two-year period. However, if City-led events are not successful (especially when other City events return as COVID-19 restrictions ease), this hybrid approach will ensure that volunteer invasive plant events still continue through the fee-for-service partnership with GTC. At the end of this two-year period, all volunteer efforts can be compared and recommendations made based on key metrics (i.e., number of volunteers, number of events, amount of invasive plants removed, and full cost of event). Long-standing events with other partners (e.g., Rotary Club of Port Moody, Port Moody Ecological Society, local high schools) would still continue. It should be noted that the hosting of all volunteer invasive plant removal activities would abide by any current Public Health Orders.

Other Option(s)

1. THAT the report dated March 19, 2021 from the Community Services Department – Environmental Division regarding Delegation Response – Green Teams of Canada be received for information.
2. THAT Council not support the proposal for the City to enter into a fee-for-service partnership with Green Teams of Canada and volunteer opportunities continue to be implemented where possible within operational budgets.

Financial Implications

Staff recommend supporting no more than four GTC-led events per year (\$2,000 per event) and no less than three City-led events per year (\$1,300 per event), for the two-year period. This two-year pilot project requires a budget of \$11,900 per year until March 2023. A funding source is needed as no funding is available in operating budgets to support this work.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Communications and Engagement Division staff currently support invasive plant removal volunteer events through promotion and outreach with existing communications tools. The frequency of promotion and outreach, especially through social media, may increase if more City-led events are hosted.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

Supporting invasive plant volunteer events is consistent with the Environmental Leadership priority in the 2019-2022 Council Strategic Plan.

Attachment(s)

1. Summary of community stewardship events, 2016-2020.
2. Breakdown of fee-for-service costs from Green Teams of Canada.
3. Estimate of costs for City-led events.

Report Author

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Delegation Response – Green Teams of Canada.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Summary of community stewardship events, 2016-2020.pdf - Attachment 2 - Breakdown of fee-for-service costs from Green Teams of Canada.pdf - Attachment 3 - Estimate of City costs.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Mar 29, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Julie Pavey-Tomlinson, Director of Environment and Parks - Mar 22, 2021 - 10:44 AM

Ron Higo, Acting General Manager of Community Services - Mar 22, 2021 - 1:14 PM

Dorothy Shermer, Corporate Officer - Mar 22, 2021 - 4:36 PM

Rosemary Lodge, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Mar 22, 2021 - 5:28 PM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Mar 23, 2021 - 7:05 PM

Jim LaCroix, Manager of Recreation Services - Mar 28, 2021 - 7:57 PM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - Mar 29, 2021 - 4:15 AM