



Community Services *Staff Report*

REPORT NO: CS-2024-31

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Chris Catania, Director of Community Services

PREPARED BY: Chris Catania, Director of Community Services

REVIEWED BY: Greg Clark, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 21, 2024

SUBJECT: Green Municipal Fund – Growing Canada’s Community Canopies

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report CS-2024-31 Green Municipal Fund – Growing Canada’s Community Canopies be received for information, and

THAT Council support Let’s Tree Wilmot, a project of the Wilmot Horticultural Society’s Green Municipal Fund grant application

SUMMARY:

To provide Council with information regarding the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Municipal Fund and to support Let’s Tree Wilmot’s, a project of the Wilmot Horticultural Society’s application toward this funding opportunity.

BACKGROUND:

The Green Municipal Fund’s (GMF) Growing Canada’s Community Canopies (GCCC) is a \$291M initiative that supports planting trees across the country, contributing to climate action. GCCC aims to plant at least 1.2 million new trees by March 31, 2031. The initiative is a part of GMF’s broader approach to nature-based climate solutions, which will achieve significant carbon sequestration and increase forest and community resilience to climate change.

Growing Canada's Community Canopies offers funding to support the accessible, ambitious, resilient and equitable expansion of tree canopies in communities. Growing Canada's Community Canopies will support projects that contribute to incremental tree planting in and around population centres, such as community-wide urban planting, forest restoration in naturalized areas, and more localized planting projects. Growing Canada's Community Canopies seeks to fund projects that maximize the social, environmental, and economic benefits of tree planting and increase biodiversity and ecosystem health.

REPORT:

Building the community's tree canopy is an important initiative in Wilmot and financial contributions are provided by Enova that is included in the annual operating budget for these initiatives. Over the past four years, Let's Tree Wilmot, a project of the Wilmot Horticultural Society has worked closely with Community Services staff to plant and care for trees in Township parks of St. Agatha, Petersburg, New Dundee, Baden, Mannheim, and New Hamburg.

Let's Tree Wilmot was established through a strong core group of volunteers who are part of the Horticulture Society of Wilmot. This group took a passion for improving the environment and growing the tree canopy and turned it into a tree planting program unlike anything the Township has seen in its history. The Township continues to partner with Let's Tree Wilmot seeing thousands of trees planted strategically in various Township settlement areas.

To further expand on Township tree canopy initiatives, the Wilmot Horticultural Society has submitted an application towards The Green Municipal Fund Growing Canada's Community Canopies and requires partnering support from the Township. The application focuses on two types of projects: 1) Diffuse planting in Township parks and recreational areas, and 2) Afforestation of approximately 5 hectares that will be part of an ecological restoration process in a riparian zone. The planting plan includes watering for two years, protection from animals and/or mowing damage, and continuous monitoring. This work will be undertaken in a unique partnership of community volunteers working closely with the Township of Wilmot Community Services department. Adding trees to these important locations is fully supported by staff with confidence in the ability for Let's Tree Wilmot to deliver this planting project.

To be eligible for Green Municipal Fund's funding, non-municipal applicants (Wilmot Horticultural Society) must provide a resolution drafted (Attachment) and adopted by the municipal council partnering on the project.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

- Community Engagement through Support for Community Groups, Volunteers and Youth
- Environmental Protection through Sustainability

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Financial contributions for increasing Wilmot's tree canopy are provided by Enova annually. Community Services provides approximately \$15,000 in the annual operating budget to ensure these initiatives are met. The Green Municipal Fund Growing Canada's Community Canopies will match equally the municipal contributions over a two-year period to ensure the projects stated are realized.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Council Resolution