
2007 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Enhanced Neighbourhood Beautification Implementation Plan 2007

This briefing note is prepared in response to the request that the DCM responsible for the Clean & Beautiful City Secretariat report back to Budget Committee in March 2007 with an Implementation Plan to support the delivery of the Enhanced Neighbourhood Beautification Program, total of \$0.66 million (additional \$0.014 million per ward), that addresses whether sufficient capacity exists to deliver such a program in 2007.

Background:

- The Mayor's Platform calls for investing \$17.6 M over four years, (\$4.4 M a year, \$100,000 per ward, 80/20 capital/operating split) into an Enhanced Neighbourhood Beautification program to support projects that would make Toronto even more Clean and Beautiful. This is a community-based program with a strategic, city-wide view. The plan for the full 4 year program will be brought to Budget Committee in July 2007. This program is part of the overall Clean and Beautiful City Initiative, which includes over 48 programs delivered by City Divisions, directed to making the city more clean and beautiful – such as increased maintenance and improvements of orphan spaces, Civic Improvements Program and increased street tree planting and maintenance.
- In 2007 the recommended operating funds for the enhanced program are \$0.66 M. – an additional \$0.594 M. over 2006. (Capital funding of \$1M. for 2007 has been approved.) This year's proposed budget is considered a reasonable and implementable transition to the full program anticipated for 2008-2010.
- In 2007, \$15,000 per ward will include \$3,000 for an expanded neighbourhood beautification grant program currently delivered by the Secretariat. The remaining \$12,000 is targeted for Demonstration Projects.

Neighbourhood Beautification Grant Program

- Building on the 2005-2006 pilot project, the funding per ward will be increased from \$1,500 to \$3000 for neighbourhood projects brought forward by community groups. Secretariat staff will work with the public and City Councillors to identify projects that have maximum visibility, simplicity of design and workload, a keen and able group of volunteers to execute and maintain the project, a simple approval process and safe access. These funds are used as a catalyst to secure other contributions, new partners and long-term stewardship.

- Similar to the past two years, full program details regarding the application process, project criteria and an information session for Councillor's staff will be launched in early April. Program details will be available on the City's website and sent to Councillors for distribution to their communities. Councillors will sign-off on project selection.

Demonstration Projects

- Demonstration Projects are larger-scale and/or city-wide projects requiring city divisional or external partner assistance for delivery.
- At this time a list of Demonstration Projects and locations is being developed by city staff in consultation with Councillors and the public.
- The selection process consider the following: maximum impact on the neighbourhood; city-wide impact; projects that are community-led, initiated or supported and ready to proceed; city-wide efficiencies of implementation including the ability of a number of city divisions to participate; a funding/sponsorship partner; easy project realization; secured and committed long-term custodian; and opportunities to test, implement, and document new approaches to Neighbourhood Beautification and community involvement that could lead to future projects.
- The first and most extensive Demonstration Project in 2007 will be Boulevard Transformation – replacing hard, impermeable pavement in neighbourhoods with greened, sustainable boulevards. Project delivery plans are now being developed by Toronto Water, Transportation Services, Toronto Botanical Gardens and the Secretariat. Sites across the city will be selected for suitability and neighbourhood interest in planting and long term ownership. Planting approaches will include xeriscaping, and/or low maintenance and sustainable plants materials that will perform through the four seasons and will have benefits for local beautification, neighbourhood building and stewardship, storm water management and water efficiency. Private partners have expressed interest in this project and further announcements will be made when these partnerships are formalized. This project has the potential for future city-wide neighbourhood transformation with significant environmental benefits. Given the demand and potential impact of this project, Boulevard Transformation could account for at least one third of the \$528,000 available for Demonstration Projects.
- The remaining two-thirds of the funding will be directed to a range of other opportunities which could include: 1) the transformation of orphan spaces in Priority Neighbourhoods based on the "City Repair" model in Portland, Oregon which utilizes artists in collaboration with local youth to produce public art in their neighbourhoods; 2) a city-wide program of other types of artistic expression, including community gardens designed with artists (Harbourfront model); 3) art in strategic locations inlaid in the public sidewalk; 4) the marking of trail and ravine entrances in neighbourhoods; and temporary installations that will have beautification impacts on their neighbourhoods, including shade structures and street closing prototypes.
- The final project selection will occur in consultation with the local area Councillor, with final approval by the DCM responsible for the C&BC initiative.

Operating Impacts

- Future operating impacts of this program will be addressed in 2007 by selecting projects with minimal future operating costs and secure, long-term stewards. Future operating costs will be calculated as a part of the project proposal.
- For 2008-2010, a percentage of the total \$4.4 M. dollars spent (likely in the order of 10%) will be dedicated to maintenance and future operational costs.

Staffing Requirements – 2007

- The C&BC'S budget provides for two full time staff – a Project Manager and an Executive Assistant. Salaries for two full time Projects Officers are funded through Clusters A and B.
- Apart from the increased day to day implementation workload, there will be additional demands for new partnership development. Further, the Secretariat is taking over carriage of the city-wide C&BC Communications budget of \$125,000. An updated Communications Plan for Clean and Beautiful is being prepared to include the enhanced Neighbourhood Beautification Program and a Civic Pride Campaign which will be directed to the reduction of litter, gum, cigarette butts and graffiti. This will be delivered through public education, radio and newsprint ads and other program collateral.
- Experience gained over the past two years and new interdivisional working relationships will expand delivery capacity related to the implementation of the enhanced beautification program. However, the significant increase in project volume and withdrawal by Strategic Communications of intensive support for implementation (ie. the coordination of the C&BC Appreciation Awards) make additional resources necessary.
- A Coordinator position is required for a range of projects including coordination of the C&BC Appreciation Awards, project recording, graphics, website updates, and general communications support. That salary, anticipated in the order of \$55,000 for a .75 FTE, will be paid from the 2007 \$0.66 M. operating enhancement.
- The need for additional staff for the full 2008-2010 program will be reported to Budget Committee in July 2007. The need for implementation support from Transportation Services and PF&R has been identified and is currently being arranged for.

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Date: March 21, 2007