

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM17.15	ACTION			Ward: All
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Commemorative Tree and Bench Program Review - by Councillor Paula Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Alejandra Bravo

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Paula Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Alejandra Bravo, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Acting General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to review the Commemorative Tree and Bench Program and report to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee by the first quarter of 2025 with an updated program design that improves the overall customer service experience, is informed by public engagement, councillor consultation and best practices from other jurisdictions, and identifies the resources required to sustain the program.

Summary

The Commemorative Tree and Bench Program, adopted by Council in 2000, enables members of the public to pay tribute to a loved one by donating and dedicating a bench or a tree in a City of Toronto park. The opportunity to dedicate a bench or tree in a park setting has been a meaningful and valued experience for many residents and the program has grown in popularity.

Over the years, donors and Councillors have identified areas for program improvements, including response and installation timelines, consistent and clear information about eligible location in parks, and maintenance and replacement of commemorative benches and trees. There is also an opportunity to consider a broader range of commemoration options to make dedications in parks more financially accessible and equitable.

This motion directs Parks, Forestry and Recreation to undertake a review of the Commemorative Tree and Bench Program and make recommendations for an updated program design that addresses issues and delivers a leading customer-focused park donations and dedications program that:

- (i) is informed by public engagement and best practices from other jurisdictions;
- (ii) delivers responsive customer service and improves the overall customer service experience; and
- (iii) aligns with the City's priorities for park beautification and tree canopy expansion.

Reason for urgency: The ongoing limitations of the program identified above create barriers to access which staff are committed to addressing through this review.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM17.15