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Trees & Forests Advisory Committee Wednesday April 28, 2021

Veteran Tree Incentive Program (VTIP)

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Overview of VTIP

- Intended launch April 2020 with Veteran Tree training event
- Suspended by global pandemic
- Launched March 1, 2021; PSA March 8, 2021
- 25%+ of eligible costs, up to \$1,000 per eligible tree
- “...that defers tree removal to the latest possible date while permitting successional planting to catch up”
- Prolongs safe life or creates wildlife habitat as last resort
- **If By-law permit required = “Injury”**
- Provides a “....reasonable alternative....” per Tree Protection By-law



Where did the idea come from?

- Long-standing public demand
- Urban Forest Strategy (2014)
- Protect what we already have
- Need to incent owners of “large trees”
- Reiterated – Tree Protection By-law review (2019)
- Council directed staff to respond (2019)
- Supported by City Engineer (1 year, 2021) with new By-law



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How has it been received?

- Advance warning to industry 2020, February 2021
- Two enquiries before PSA; 150+ enquiries Day 1 after PSA
- \$1,000 confusion! Traced to media report
- Rate of enquiry and application now waning; 1-2 per day
- Arborists caught off guard?
- Approximately 100 VTIP applications so far (2 months)
- EGM a strong influencer – injection; scraping egg masses
- EAB treatment – injection
- Wards not equally represented
- Few rejections, as insufficient
- Conversations, emails of support (including suggestions from rejectors)
- Enquiries from non-residential wanting it too!

Rules

- % based (25% +) – until budget is spent
- Anything that meets the goal “to defer tree removal.....”
- Distinctive Tree 50cm+ (= Urban Growth Boundary)
- Residential
- Services and/or materials
- **Complete** application by email or regular mail
 - Submit quote, screenshots of catalogue, etc.
 - Photo of tree (“before”)
 - Describe work



In Practice

- Caseload 15 – 25 applications per week
- First few weeks, issue with managing expectations
 - “What can I get done for \$1,000?”
- Site visits suspended in emergency PHO to May 20
 - 1st month, unscheduled site visits (with notice)
 - Frequent unmasked residents on warm days!
 - Can do the work remotely
 - Desktop review – City inventory; Streetview; Citymap aerial
- Manager discretion to vary, develop new rules
- About 1/3 budget committed



Gathering Information

- Sensitive information subject to MFIPPA – industry competition, etc
- End of year survey – all applicants
- Ward
- DBH
- \$\$\$ – per applicant; per Distinctive Tree
- Estimate tree canopy conserved
- Activity type
- “Injury”



Current Trends or Themes

- Silver maple dominating species profile – crown work; cabling
- White oak - EGM, DRF
- Norway maple a young contender! – crown elevating, thinning
- Black walnut; poplar; honey locust; sugar maple/Freemans; hackberry
- Rare: Zelkova, Catalpa; linden



End of Pilot Year Review

- Requires Council support to continue
- \$\$\$ budget
- Change the name – what to?
- Expand eligibility geographically
- Change the size threshold
- Limit by species
- Limit by activity
- Fixed or flat rate; % ; or both
- Award varying by Ward (tree canopy cover)
- Allocate fixed budget by Ward
- Work towards approved contractor list – Veteran Tree training event planned 2022



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Any Questions & Suggestions?