



REQUEST FOR DECISION

MEETING DATE: March 20, 2023

TITLE: Spruce Up Spruce Grove

DIVISION: Community & Protective Services

SUMMARY:

This revised, community-wide, self-directed, volunteer cleanup program encourages residents, groups, schools and/or businesses to 'Spruce Up' their community. It addresses limitations of the previous program structure and better aligns with City Council's Strategic Plan by encouraging community connections and environmental sustainability and promoting citizenry and preservation of our neighbourhood green spaces.

PROPOSED MOTION:

No motion required.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

Historically, the community cleanup program participation opportunities were promoted and provided through the Community Service Partnership Program (CSPP). This is a grant-like program that provides opportunities for community organizations to receive funds by supporting various City initiatives or events. Participation in the community clean-up program was limited to a small number of registered Societies, to clean up a specific area and receive a set 'fee-for-service'. The use of the CSPP for this program:

- limited the opportunity for individuals and informal community groups to engage in the community cleanup program;
- was difficult to ensure the amount/quality of work being done (e.g., some groups would only have minimal volunteers participating, some groups would do an area after the City crews had already cleaned the area, some groups would clean an area with minimal effort and results, etc.)

The CSPP remains, however it will no longer be utilized for this initiative, but rather initiatives where City staff are able to support the group's participation such as Canada Day and other events.

Transitioning from the CSPP to a community-wide initiative will encourage all residents to participate. Anticipated outcomes such as increased sense of pride, ownership, and connection to the City of Spruce Grove's green spaces is anticipated. The revised 'Spruce Up Spruce Grove' program will focus on promoting city-wide participation, inclusion, accessibility, as well as environmental stewardship, and creating community connections. Financial resources, similar to past years, will be invested into the program. These resources will be used to encourage participation through a Kickoff Party, prize incentives and giveaways, program supplies, and communication plans. Opportunities for internal and external partners to collaborate, connect and engage will also be part of the program.

Program Length: April 26 - May 31, 2023 (5-week program)
Kick Off BBQ on May 7, 2023 (12:00 - 2:00pm) in Central Park

Program Location: Clean up locations include parks, school yards, green spaces, trails

Participation Incentives:

- Door Prizes (entered to win in 4 categories: school classes, community groups, businesses & public groups), thank-you certificate, volunteer reference letter (upon request)
- Free community hotdog BBQ & engagement prizes at Kickoff Party

Strategic Vision:

- Community Connections
- Environmental Sustainability

Related Themes:

Community Connections: "We are working towards building a thriving community where residents feel a sense of belonging, diversity is celebrated, and opportunities to connect are created."

Environmental Sustainability:

"Is about working together to protect, and enhance the environment not only for residents today, but also for future generations." "Growing forward together in harmony with nature means that our natural areas are enhanced, the urban forest, park and trail system is healthy and growing..." "...and providing opportunities to participate in climate focused programs."

Goal 9: Proactive policies, strategies, and practices to ensure the environment is sustained and natural areas are enhanced.

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:

n/a

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:

The Recreation and Culture department will lead the implementation of this program with the support of Public Works - Parks and Communications. Other internal and external partners will be invited to engage, be advocates for, and participate in, the Kickoff Party (such as Environment and Transit, Economic and Business Development, Community Social Development, Protective Services, City Council, and identified Community Groups, etc.).

The City's Youth Advisory Committee has also been engaged in the program and the Spruce Up, Spruce Grove initiative has been added to their 2023 Work Plan under Priority #3. They have also made the following motions regarding the program:

- THAT the Spruce Up Spruce Grove Youth Advisory Committee invite members to attend the 'Spruce Up Spruce Grove' Kickoff Party.
- THAT the Administrative Liaison work with the Community and Protective Services to develop a 'Spruce Up Spruce Grove' activity for Youth Advisory Committee members to attend.

The City's Senior Environmental Advisor is enthusiastically in support of the program.

IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:

This new program will require branding, a communication awareness campaign, and tactics from the Communications department. Celebration and showcasing public participation in the program are also anticipated.

The Kickoff Party event will take place on May 7, in Central Park, with participation and information provided to the community by different departments and partners. Information related to environmental stewardship (recycling, compost, garbage, water usage, etc.), neighbourhood block parties, upcoming programs, and events (Canada Day, summer playground programs, etc.) will be available, as well as an opportunity for City Council to consider participating with the community at the event.

The removal of the Spruce Up Spruce Grove from the CPSS program will allow for resources to be provided to not-for-profit groups for other City initiatives, such as events. As CPSS is fundamentally a grant program, it is currently being included in the review of the Community Grant Program, ensuring community not-for-profit groups will still have opportunities to receive a fee for services.

IMPACTS:

The anticipated impacts and intent for this program will encourage participants to feel a sense of belonging, pride, and connection to the City of Spruce Grove.

Outcomes:

- The public is aware of the new 'Spruce Up Spruce Grove' Program.
- Participants demonstrate ownership of neighbourhood spaces.
- Parks staff report improved the condition of the natural environment.
- An increased number of community groups participate in the program.
- Participants are informed of other City and community services/programs.
- Parks staff report less garbage in community green spaces in the spring.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This program change will change the focus of the historic expenditures of previous Spruce Up the Grove program by focusing more on overall incentives and prizes versus the fee-for-service concept. Estimated total budget for this year is \$6,300 and is included in the approved 2023 operating budget.