

Staff Report

Report To: Community Services Committee
Report From: Adam Parsons, Manager of Parks & Open Space
Meeting Date: February 17, 2021
Report Code: CS-21-010
Subject: Memorial Tree Program – Proposed Restructuring

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-21-010 respecting the proposed restructuring of the City’s memorial tree program, Community Services Committee recommends Council:

1. Authorizes staff to restructure the memorial tree program to a memorial forest program as outlined in the report;
2. Directs staff to provide notice of intent to amend the Fees and Charges By-Law; and
3. Directs Staff to amend the Fees and Charges By-law No. 2019-106 to add a new memorial forest program fee of \$358.05 and repeal the Memorial Tree Planting Policy No. OP 061.

Highlights:

- 360 trees have been planted since the memorial tree program started in 1992.
- The Inner Harbour and at Harrison Park have been very popular planting locations. Requests for these two sites must now be referred to other sites as they have been planted to the optimal density.
- A memorial forest program is a sustainable alternative to a memorial tree program that can optimize tree canopy density throughout the broader parks and open space system.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The memorial tree program supports initiatives outlined in the City's 2015 Strategic Plan; in particular:

3. Leverage our City's assets in order to enhance tourism opportunities
7. Encourage and promote participation in cultural activities and active lifestyles
8. Support community safety and social inclusion
9. Maximize revenue sources and funding opportunities
10. Optimize the City's operation whole maintaining or improving quality of life
14. Maintain, improve and promote the use of our local parks and trails
15. Ensure the responsible management of natural resources

Background:

The Existing Memorial Tree Program

The City has offered a successful memorial tree program since 1992.

The program fee is \$300.00 for a 50mm caliper tree installed at a specific requested location. The City's responsibilities under the program fee are:

- Upon receipt of a completed application form and payment, staff create a work order for the request.
- Staff locate and stake requested planting location, and verify placement is mutually acceptable to the City and the donor.
- Staff order utility locates for planting locations.
- Trees are ordered and planted each fall.
- If Customers choose to purchase a plaque from an approved supplier, City staff will install it on a stone at the base of the tree. Staff install memorial plaques upon receipt from an approved supplier. Installation is included with the program fee. Customers source plaques at their cost.
- Watering and after care.

Customers can choose a tree from a list of approved native species included with the City's Memorial Tree Planting Policy OP 061 and information package

(Attachment 1). Materials and labour for the installation of a plaque is included in the \$300.00 planting fee.

Photos: Examples of Memorial Trees Planted at Harrison Park



Success of the Memorial Tree Program

The City's records of the memorial tree program go back to 1992; since that date the City has planted 360 trees. The program fee has remained \$300.00

since it began 28 years ago. The fee established in 1992 would have offset the City's costs for purchasing and installing trees for the program.

Over the life of the program some areas are more popular than others. Harrison Park and the Inner Harbour have received the most requests, and have reached their planting capacity. Planting additional trees in these areas will cause over-crowding of the tree canopies and begin to detract from the overall design intention of those areas.

The City has received many positive inputs respecting the memorial tree program; however, there have been several comments regarding the aesthetic impact of the markers. These markers also become an issue if they are damaged by maintenance activities or vandalism.

Restructuring the Program for a Sustainable Future

Staff have investigated other successful memorial tree programs and are recommending changes to the program to maximize the benefit and make the program more sustainable.

Changing the existing memorial tree program to a "memorial forest model" would promote sustainable and responsible tree planting, and provide for a more even distribution of new trees planted each year across the City's network of parks, trails and open space. Restructuring the memorial tree program would include repealing the City's Memorial Tree Planting Policy OP 061. Draft memorial forest program guidelines are included as attachment 2.

Highlights of the proposed memorial forest proposed program include:

- The City will select suitable planting locations annually throughout the parks and open space system, focusing on parks and open spaces with existing low density tree plantings or where augmented beautification and shade opportunities would benefit the property and neighbourhood (Harrison Park and the Inner Harbour would be closed to new memorial tree planting);
- Revenues collected would be directed to the City's Parks and Open Space division for the purpose of purchasing and planting trees, and related tree planting materials;
- A central monument commemorating the contribution to the memorial forest program would be constructed at a location to be determined where each contribution would be acknowledged on a standardized plaque with space for a name, date and simple message (should one be desired). A central monument design,

construction cost, and location would be brought forward to Community Services Committee via a report in Q4 2021.

The photo below shows the central monument at the Pottawatomoni Conservation Area Memorial Forest.



It is proposed that the existing memorial tree program would end effective February 28, 2021. The memorial forest program would be launched March 1, 2021.

Analysis:

Other Memorial Tree/Forest Programs in Ontario

Many public agencies including municipalities in Ontario operate memorial tree or memorial forest programs. Attachment 3 outlines a sample of program highlights and fees in eight other Ontario Communities.

Benefits of a Memorial Forest Program

The benefits of a memorial forest program include:

- Prevents over-crowding of trees in popular locations;
- Promotes more even distribution of trees throughout the City's parks and trails;
- Permits staff to plan resources and optimize planting timing for each tree species;
- Permits staff to select native tree species that are best suited to soil microclimate and light conditions specific to each location;
- Allows for a long term approach when selecting tree species considering the tree's requirements over its entire lifecycle including typical crown diameter, height, and growing habit;
- The duty for perpetual care of plaques and markers at the base of trees in parks settings is eliminated;
- A memorial forest program requires less frequent customer contact related to each individual request, as planting locations will be arranged by the City and follow up contact related to plaque purchases and installation will be reduced;
- Avoids creating negative experiences in the future for donors when trees planted too close together don't mature evenly or with the classic characteristics of a chosen tree species;
- The proposed change in fee will ensure the memorial forest program covers the City's cost to deliver.

Implementation of a Memorial Forest Program

Despite the nomenclature for the program, participation is not limited strictly to contributions in memoriam. Interested parties may submit an application for other special occasions such as a wedding, graduation, birthday, or simply as a gift recognizing a special person, group or event.

Revenue from the program would be used to support tree planting in parks and trails where additional tree cover is desired, without creating impediments to the character and use of a site. The memorial forest model would permit the City to optimize species selection, purpose and timing for planting.

Starting with the restructured program, using widely available mobile phone based GPS data, trees planted as a part of the memorial forest program will be added to a public tree inventory on the City's GIS platform.

Existing memorial trees planted prior to 2021 will be catalogued and added to the public GIS tree layer when the City refreshes its overall tree inventory.

A memorial forest webpage would be established for March 2021 and include:

- Background information;
- A new fillable application form online and hard copies available at City Hall and Greenwood Cemetery;
- Program guidelines;
- A link to the memorial tree GIS layer to be published after the first year of planting is complete; and
- Photos of plantings.

Staff will investigate options for offering an e-card option that could be sent to families who have had a contribution made in a loved one's name.

The City would endeavour to host an annual ceremony where participants would be invited to acknowledge their contribution, and share in a moment of fellowship and remembrance.

Construction of a Central Monument

Design and cost for a central commemoration monument to be reviewed in Q4 2021 via a follow up report to Community Services Committee.

Financial Implications:

Fees and Costs

The cost to have a memorial tree planted is currently \$300.00. The current cost of administering each request averages \$408.91.

Staff recommend a fee of \$358.05 for participation in a memorial forest program. Cost estimates included in the new fee are detailed in attachment 4.

The restructured program will require the fee to be updated to offset the City's costs. The fee should be reviewed annually with the City's Fees and Charges By-law.

Submission
Approved by:

Tim Simmonds
City Manager

Signature on File

For more information on this report, please contact Adam Parsons, Manager of Parks and Open Space at aparsons@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1221.



City of Owen Sound

Memorial/Commemorative Tree Planting Program

The Process

The first step is for the family/group to decide on an appropriate location to plant the tree. The Parks and Cemetery Supervisor will help to accommodate the family's preferred location. Once an appropriate park has been determined a tree species is chosen as per the Native Tree Planting Policy, according to preference, site conditions, and availability. The Parks & Cemetery Supervisor will recommend the most appropriate species for the site selected.

The cost of a Memorial/Commemorative Tree is \$300.00 (subject to change with Council approval). This fee includes the purchase and planting of a minimum 50mm caliper tree, as well as for its maintenance for a 3-year establishment period. Once payment is received and arrangements are confirmed, the tree planting will be incorporated into the next available planting window (fall planting). In order to be included in the fall planting for the current year, the order form and payment must be received by August 1st of that year.

Should there be a conflict with existing or future service locations, the final planting site for the tree may be adjusted slightly. After the tree is planted, the City assumes responsibility and ownership of the tree.

Plaques

Commemorative plaques may be installed to identify the Memorial/Commemorative tree plantings, but are not included in the cost of the tree. All arrangements for ordering and purchasing a plaque are the responsibility of the person(s) donating the tree.

The preferred plaque type has been a bronze 5" by 8", with raised letters. Plaques should be installed flush with the ground to reduce vandalism and allow access of maintenance equipment. Plaques can be purchased from a number of suppliers in the Owen Sound area. Once the plaque has been purchased by the family/group, City staff will mount the plaque on a stone marker and install it at the base of the tree. This service has been provided at

no additional charge and has been included in the \$300.00 fee. Plaques can be dropped off at City Hall, Attn: Larry Gill.

The City of Owen Sound is not responsible for the maintenance or replacement of commemorative plaques.

The public needs to be made aware that it is prohibited, under the *Provincial Cemeteries Act*, to scatter ashes for burial outside of a registered cemetery.

Plaque Contacts:

Miller Photoplaques 316062 Highway 6 Williamsford, ON N0H 2V0 Tel: 1-800-303-8403 Fax: 519-794-4628 Email: info@plaques.ca Website: www.plaques.ca	Trophies Two Owen Sound, ON Tel & Fax: 519-376-9280 Email: info@trophiestwo.ca Website: www.trophiestwo.ca
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Persons or groups wishing to plant a commemorative tree are encouraged to contact:

Larry Gill
Parks & Cemetery Supervisor
c/o Community Services Department
Owen Sound City Hall
808 2nd Avenue East
Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H4
Tel: 519-376-0265
Email: lgill@owensound.ca



**MEMORIAL/COMMEMORATIVE
TREE PLANTING PROGRAM
ORDER FORM**

Contact Information: _____ **Date:** _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____

Province: _____ **Postal Code:** _____

Phone#: _____

Email: _____

Tree Information:

In memory of: _____

Type of tree: _____

Location: _____

Comments: _____

Signature: _____

Paid: _____ (*payment to be made to the "City of Owen Sound"*)


Initialed by: _____

Office Use:

Process payment at front counter and attach receipt to tree order form.
Place in Parks mailbox with Attn: Larry Gill on the top of the form.

Approved Tree Species

Latin Genus	Common Name
<i>Acer freemanii</i>	Autumn Blaze Maple
<i>Acer rubrum</i> "Karpick"	Karpick Red Maple
<i>Acer rubrum</i> "Morgan"	Morgan Red Maple
<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	Silver Maple
<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Sugar Maple
<i>Amelanchier</i>	Serviceberry
<i>Betula papyrifera</i>	Paper/Canoe/White Birch
<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	Blue Beech
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Common Hackberry
<i>Crataegus</i> spp.	Hawthorne
<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	American Beech
<i>Gymnocladus dioica</i>	Kentucky Coffee Tree
<i>Juglans cinerea</i>	Butternut
<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Black Walnut
<i>Juniperus virginia</i>	Eastern Red Cedar
<i>Larix laricina</i>	Tamarack
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Tulip Tree
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	Ironwood
<i>Picea glauca</i>	White Spruce
<i>Pinus strobus</i>	Eastern White Pine
<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>	London Plane tree
<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	American Sycamore
<i>Populus</i> spp.	Poplar
<i>Quercus alba</i>	White Oak
<i>Quercus bicolor</i>	Swamp Oak
<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Burr Oak
<i>Quercus palustris</i>	Pin Oak
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Red Oak
<i>Salix</i> spp.	Willows
<i>Sorbus decora</i>	Showy Mountain Ash
<i>Sorbus thuringiaca</i>	Oakleaf Mountain Ash
<i>Tilia americana</i>	Basswood
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	White Cedar
<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	Eastern Hemlock

 <p style="text-align: center;">STANDARD POLICY</p> <p><i>Owen Sound</i></p>	<p>S.P. NO: 061</p> <p>PAGE NO. 1 of 2</p> <p>DATE: Sept 19/07</p>
<p>SUBJECT: Memorial/Commemorative Tree Planting Program</p>	<p>DEPARTMENT: Operations DIVISION: Public Works</p>
<p>COUNCIL AUTHORITY OR STAFF APPROVED: Sept 19/07 Operations Advisory Committee By-law 2013-030</p>	<p>NEW: XX</p> <p>REVISED: X</p> <p>DATE: Feb 11/13</p>
<p>The Process</p> <p>The first step is for the family/group to decide on an appropriate location to plant the tree. Parks staff can assist with the site selection for those wishing to plant in a City park and Cemetery staff will assist with the arrangements for those wishing to plant a tree in Greenwood Cemetery. Once an appropriate park has been determined a tree species is chosen as per the Native Tree Planting Policy, according to preference, site conditions, and availability. The Parks Superintendent or Cemetery Administrator will recommend the most appropriate species for the site selected.</p> <p>The cost of a Commemorative Tree is set out in the Fees and Charges By-law, as amended from time to time. This fee includes the purchase and planting of a minimum 50mm caliper tree, as well as for its maintenance for a 3 year establishment period. Once payment is received and arrangements are confirmed, the tree planting will be incorporated into the next available planting window (spring or fall).</p> <p>Should there be a conflict with existing or future service locations; the final planting site for the tree may be adjusted slightly. After the tree is planted, the City assumes responsibility and ownership of the tree.</p> <p>Plaques</p> <p>Commemorative plaques may be installed to identify the Memorial /Commemorative tree plantings, but are not included in the cost of the tree. All arrangements for ordering and purchasing a plaque is the responsibility of the person(s) donating the tree.</p> <p>The preferred plaque type has been a bronze 5" by 8", with raised letters. Plaques should be installed flush with the ground to reduce vandalism and allow access of maintenance equipment. Plaques can be purchased from a number of suppliers in the Owen Sound area. Once the plaque has been purchased by the family/group, City staff will mount the plaque on a stone marker. This service has been provided at no additional charge and has been included in the Commemorative Tree fee.</p>	



Owen Sound

STANDARD POLICY

S.P. NO: 061

PAGE NO. 2 of 2

DATE: Sept 19/07

SUBJECT:
Memorial/Commemorative Tree Planting Program

DEPARTMENT:
Operations
DIVISION:
Public Works

COUNCIL AUTHORITY OR STAFF APPROVED:

Sept 19/07 Operations Advisory Committee
By-law 2013-030

NEW: XX

REVISED: X

DATE: Feb 11/13

The City of Owen Sound is not responsible for the maintenance or replacement of commemorative plaques.

The public needs to be made aware that it is prohibited, under the Provincial Cemeteries Act, to scatter ashes outside of a registered cemetery.

Persons or groups wishing to plant a commemorative tree are encouraged to contact the Parks Superintendent or Cemetery Administrator.

Attachment 2.



City of Owen Sound Memorial Forest Program

The Process

A memorial forest program promotes the sustainable planting of trees throughout the City's parks and trails systems.

The City will select suitable native tree species and planting locations annually throughout the parks and open space system including trails, focusing on sites with existing low density tree plantings or where augmented beautification and shade opportunities would benefit the property and/or neighbourhood.

The financial contribution to participate in the program is \$358.05 (subject to change with Council approval) for the purchase and planting of an appropriate size tree for the location selected.

Once payment is received, the tree planting will be incorporated into the next available planting window (spring or fall planting).

In order to be included in the fall planting for the current year, the order form and payment must be received by August 1st of that year.

After the tree is planted, the City assumes responsibility and ownership of the tree.

Plaques

Commemorative plaques may be installed by the City at a monument constructed for this purpose.

A standard 15cm x 15cm plaque on a central monument acknowledging individual donors and simple in memoriam messages is included in the program fee. Plaques are installed annually in September at a commemoration service.

The City of Owen Sound is not responsible for the maintenance or replacement of commemorative plaques.

The public needs to be made aware that it is prohibited, under the *Provincial Cemeteries Act*, to scatter ashes for burial outside of a registered cemetery.

Persons or groups wishing to participate in a memorial forest program are encouraged to contact:

Larry Gill
Parks & Cemetery Supervisor
c/o Community Services Department
Owen Sound City Hall
808 2nd Avenue East
Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H4
Tel: 519-376-0265
Email: lgill@owensound.ca

Other Memorial Tree Program Highlights

Agency	Memorial Tree or Forest Program	Program Highlights	Participation Fee
Grey Sauble Conservation Authority	Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 locations • Plaque on central monument • June dedication ceremony • Book of remembrance at GSCA office 	\$75.00
University of Guelph Arboretum	Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with local funeral home • Single location • Annual dedication ceremony 	\$75.00
City of Kingston	Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated Website that provides detailed information about the program 	\$530.44
City of Oakville	Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Mapping • Planting throughout Parks System • Plaques placed for 5 year terms 	\$2,410.00 - 5 year contract \$591.00 - 5 year contract renewal
City of Toronto	Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred locations considered, final placement at the City's discretion • Non-specific planting dates to optimize conditions for selected species 	\$738.00
Brockville	Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to 7 tree species • Administer plaques in house • Planting focused on trail system 	\$440.00 Tree \$465.00 Plaque

Agency	Memorial Tree or Forest Program	Program Highlights	Participation Fee
Niagara Region	Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single location • Donation – any amount supports maintenance • Memorial Plaque 	By donation \$20.00 Plaque
St. Clair Conservation Authority	Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of conservation area • Partnership with local funeral home 	Donation of \$50.00 or more

Attachment 4.

Estimated Memorial Forest Planting Costs				
Item	unit	# units	Unit Cost	Total
Administration	per hour	2	\$ 35.00	\$ 70.00
Equipment				
Truck/Utility Vehicle	per hour	1	\$ 14.78	\$ 14.78
Labour	per hour	2	\$ 25.36	\$ 50.72
Materials				
Tree (avg. 2020)	ea.	1	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00
Stakes		2	\$ 25.00	\$ 50.00
Soil	Cubic Yard	0.02	\$ 27.50	\$ 0.55
Tree Wrap	ea.	1	\$ 2.00	\$ 2.00
Standard Plaque	ea.	1	\$ 45.00	\$ 45.00
				\$ 358.05