

Committee of the Whole (1) Report

DATE: Tuesday, June 7, 2022

WARD: 5

TITLE: THORNHILL SNAP – CAPITAL BUDGET AMENDMENT

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To obtain Council approval for a budget amendment to Capital Project PL-9575-20 for the Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP) in order to proceed with the implementation of projects in 2022.

Report Highlights

- Implementation of the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan, as approved by Council, began in Q4 2021.
- The City received five external grants totaling \$48,500, to be used as additional funds for the implementation of the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan.
- The City received \$27,800 for woodlot compensation that will be used for planting within the Thornhill SNAP neighbourhood, focusing on the JEH MacDonald House property.
- The current capital budget requires a budget amendment of \$76,300 to implement the 2022 projects.
- Additional budget is needed to deliver on Thornhill SNAP Action Plan projects.

Recommendations

1. That Council approve a budget increase to Thornhill SNAP Capital Project PL-9575-20 in the amount of \$76,300 (inclusive of applicable taxes and administration recovery), with funding from grants and woodlot compensation fund, as identified in this report; and

2. That the inclusion of this matter on a Public Committee or Council agenda with respect to increasing the Capital Budget as identified in this report, be deemed sufficient notice pursuant to Section 2(1)(c) of By-Law 394-2002.

Background

Capital Project PL-9575-20 was approved to execute the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan

On May 14, 2019, Council passed a Member's Resolution to support the City's commitment to a Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP) in partnership with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), located within the Thornhill neighbourhood. The City and TRCA were successful in obtaining funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to undertake the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan, matched with funds from the Gallanough stormwater retrofit project (Capital Project EN-1879-12). A single source contract was awarded to TRCA to lead community engagement, stakeholder consultation and the development of the Action Plan. In 2020, the Thornhill SNAP Capital Project, PL-9575-20, was approved for the purpose of executing projects in collaboration with TRCA.

On September 27, 2021, Council endorsed the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan, which was co-developed by TRCA, the Thornhill community, and City staff from multiple departments to improve the local environment, build resiliency to climate change and encourage positive behavior changes among residents. At this time, Council also directed staff to seek external funding to implement unfunded projects identified in the Action Plan.

Work to advance the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan is underway

A preliminary implementation framework (Framework) was developed to serve as a high-level guide that identifies projects and project leads over the next five years, and includes estimated timelines and potential funding sources. The Framework is appended to this report as Attachment 1. It is a living document that will be updated as projects are scoped and implemented. A more detailed description of implementation for 2022 is appended to this report as Attachment 2.

Four Signature Projects have been identified in the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan that align with planned capital projects or City initiatives. Implementation of Signature Projects will be phased due to budgetary constraints, with some elements being implemented in the shorter term through the City's capital infrastructure budgets and

recent grants received by the City and TRCA, while other elements will require supplementary fundraising efforts from the City, TRCA and community partners.

Additional fundraising and a future budget request will also be required to fund the implementation of Thornhill SNAP projects that are unrelated in scope to the individual City capital infrastructure projects.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Council meeting extract, May 14, 2019](#) – A Member's Resolution was passed by Council in May 2019 in support of the Thornhill SNAP.

[Member's Resolution, June 4, 2019](#) – Council passed a Member's Resolution to declare a climate emergency and lists actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation, including the Thornhill SNAP.

[Council meeting extract, December 17, 2019](#) – Council adopted Green Directions Vaughan 2019 and includes a specific action to explore a SNAP project in Vaughan.

[Council meeting extract, May 5, 2021](#) – Council received a progress update on the Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program.

[Council meeting extract, September 27, 2021](#) – Council endorsed the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan and directed staff to seek external funding to complement municipal capital funding.

Analysis and Options

Planned 2022 projects require a budget amendment

The 2022 projects include implementing green infrastructure projects on private and public property, executing community events, and facilitating educational webinars about active transportation. To implement these projects a budget amendment to Capital Project PL-9575-20 totaling \$76,300 is required; a breakdown is provided below.

1. Three external grants totaling \$20,000 was received in 2021

In 2021, staff were successful in attaining three grants totaling \$20,000 to implement three quick start projects. Details of the grant money are as follows:

- a. A grant of \$10,000 from Enbridge's Municipal Energy Plan Incentive Offer to conduct Focus Group sessions and to offer two educational webinars to homeowners to help advance the Home Retrofit program (focus groups were held on November 24 and 25, 2021 and the webinars were hosted on December 9, 2021 and January 20, 2022).
- b. A grant of \$5,000 from York Region's Greening Action Partnership Fund to implement a tree planting project at New Forest North Park and Hefhill Park (project implemented on September 29, 2021).
- c. A grant of \$5,000 from TD Friends of the Environment to implement a pollinator planting and install educational signage at Oakbank Pond (project implemented on September 9, 2021).

2. Two external grants totaling \$28,500 was received in early 2022

In early 2022, staff were successful in attaining two grants totaling \$28,500. Details of the grant money are as follows:

- a. A grant of \$25,000 from the TD Green Space Grant program for the design and implementation of a rain garden in York Hill District Park, and a community educational workshop including tree planting.
- b. A grant of \$3,500 from Tree Canada for the planting of 12 trees at Blessed Scalabrini Catholic Elementary School, located adjacent to York Hill District Park, including an educational workshop for the students, and the planting of 12 additional trees in York Hill District Park.

These projects will be implemented by end of year 2022, subject to approval of the budget amendment.

3. Woodlot compensation in the amount of \$27,800 was received in 2021

As part of the Donna Mae Estates Plan of Subdivision application 19T-17V012 on Donna Mae Crescent, City staff assessed the property and determined the proposed removal of edge woodland trees was feasible upon the natural heritage improvements/restorations of the JEH MacDonald House (121 Centre Street) with plantings. In 2019, Council approved condition 59 which states the following:

Prior to final approval of the Plan, the Owner shall submit a Woodland Enhancement and Implementation Plan that provides ecological gains in areas on or adjacent to the Subject Lands, including but not limited to the City-owned Macdonald House Lands located east of the Subject Lands, to the satisfaction of the City. The Owner shall provide woodlot compensation in the amount of

\$27,800 through planting and/or a cash-in-lieu contribution, to the satisfaction of the City.

As a result of the JEH MacDonald House being located within the Thornhill SNAP neighborhood, it was determined that the implementation of this condition can be facilitated through the Thornhill SNAP program. The funds totaling \$27,800 will be utilized for woodland enhancements at the JEH MacDonald House property and elsewhere in the Thornhill community.

Financial Impact

A capital budget amendment is required to Capital Project PL-9575-20 to implement the planned 2022 projects under the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan. The recommended capital budget increase of \$76,300 is inclusive of applicable taxes and administration recovery, with funding from received grants and woodlot compensation fund. The budget increase has no incremental pressure on tax or other City reserves.

The additional funds required for the project and associated funding sources is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Project Funding Summary 2022 (PL-9575-20)	
Approved Capital Budget - Taxation	\$52,250
Requested Budget Amendment – Various Grants	\$76,300
Enbridge for the Thornhill Home Retrofit Program	\$10,000
York Region's Greening Action Partnership Fund	\$5,000
TD Friends of the Environment	\$5,000
TD Green Space Grant program	\$25,000
Tree Canada	\$3,500
Woodlot Compensation	\$27,800
Total Capital Budget Funding	\$128,550

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Through the completion of the City's first SNAP, we are joining a network of municipalities in York Region and across the Greater Toronto Area that have committed to a collaborative, neighbourhood-based approach for advancing urban renewal in strategic, older urban areas where multiple priorities overlap and intensified action is required. The neighbourhood screening exercise identified Thornhill and other geographical areas in the City that would benefit from the SNAP approach. The action

planning process, and budget planning framework developed for the Thornhill SNAP can be translated to other communities in Vaughan to build an overall sustainable and resilient City.

Conclusion

A capital budget amendment to Capital Project PL-9575-20 for \$76,300 is needed to implement the planned 2022 projects under the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan.

Implementation of the projects outlined in the Action Plan will be phased due to budgetary constraints, with some elements being implemented through existing municipal capital infrastructure budget, while other project elements will require fundraising efforts and a future budget request.

For more information, please contact Alanna MacKenzie, Sustainability Coordinator, ext. 8941

Attachments

1. Thornhill SNAP 5 year Implementation Framework, Policy Planning and Special Programs
2. Thornhill SNAP Implementation Summary 2022, Policy Planning and Special Programs

Prepared by

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Approved by

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Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager,
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Reviewed by

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Nick Spensieri, City Manager