

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 19, 2018

Item 3, Report No. 6, of the Finance, Administration and Audit Committee, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 19, 2018.

3 **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – FORESTRY AND HORTICULTURE OPERATIONS AUDIT**

The Finance, Administration and Audit Committee recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Director of Internal Audit, dated June 6, 2018, be approved; and
- 2) That the presentation and Communication C6, presentation material entitled, "*Forestry and Horticulture Operations Audit*", be received.

Recommendations

1. That the Internal Audit Report on the Audit of Forestry and Horticulture Operations be received.

Item:



Finance, Administration and Audit Committee Report

DATE: Wednesday, June 06, 2018

WARD(S): ALL

**TITLE: INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – FORESTRY AND
HORTICULTURE OPERATIONS AUDIT**

FROM:

Kevin Shapiro, Director of Internal Audit

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To present to the Finance, Administration and Audit Committee the Internal Audit Report on the Audit of Forestry and Horticulture Operations.

Recommendations

1. That the Internal Audit Report on the Audit of Forestry and Horticulture Operations be received.

Report Highlights

- In response to the 2013 ice storm and the damage caused by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), re-establishing the urban tree canopy became a top priority for this Term of Council.
- Approximately 13,260 residential trees were identified for replacement as a result of the ice storm, ongoing damage caused by EAB as well as natural tree mortality.
- Improvements are required to ensure risks related to the execution of the City's Forestry and Horticulture operations are efficiently and effectively mitigated.
- Management has developed action plans which will mitigate the identified risks and address the recommendations outlined in the report.
- Internal Audit will follow up with management and report on the status of management action plans at a future committee meeting.

Background

The objective of the audit was to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal controls, processes and procedures in place to mitigate the business risks associated with managing Forestry and Horticulture Operations.

The audit approach included a review of City policies and procedures, tree planting and beautification strategy, contractor performance and payment processing, data analyses of transactional and work order data, physical sampling of records, and interviews with staff and management.

The scope of the audit covered Forestry and Horticulture activities for the period of January 2016 to August 2017.

Previous Reports/Authority

Not applicable.

Analysis and Options

Transportation Services, Parks and Forestry Operations (TSPFO) maintains over 130,000 boulevard trees, 195 hectares of woodlots, approximately 750 hanging baskets, 550 flower planters, 200 planting beds, over 800 hectares of parks, 200 playgrounds, a wide variety of sports fields, boulevards, open spaces and numerous trail systems. TSPFO also maintains the local road network, which accounts for over 2,000 lane-kilometers, over 80 traffic signals, traffic signs, pavement markings and the School Crossing Guard program.

Forestry Operations strives to lead and promote environmental sustainability as part of their vision for Service Excellence. This is done through the care and maintenance of the City of Vaughan's Urban Forests which includes boulevard trees, green spaces, parks, natural areas, and woodlots. Forestry staff have developed a seven-year plan to manage the Urban Forest. Managing and controlling invasive plant species as well as caring for trees within the city will visually enhance outdoor spaces, creating inviting spaces for visitors, businesses, and a source of civic pride.

Horticulture staff oversee the maintenance of the City's horticultural displays and flower beds. They are also responsible for the maintenance of shrub beds. Shrub bed maintenance consists of the pruning, weeding and mulching of more than 500 borders and gateway features throughout the City. Horticulture staff have also developed and implemented a citywide beautification strategy.

Forestry and Horticulture Operations staff are also responsible for snow removal/walkway clearing at city facilities, citywide fence repair and replacement, community outreach and Service in Kind, which entails staff setting up, taking down and running City and third-party events year-round.

Financial Impact

There are no direct economic impacts associated with this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Not applicable.

Conclusion

Improvements are required to ensure risks related to the execution of the City's Forestry and Horticulture operations are efficiently and effectively mitigated. The following opportunities were identified:

- Establishing a risk based framework to determine priority activities, service levels and whether existing resources can appropriately sustain these activities, considering present and future City growth.
- Improving monitoring and oversight activities over several processes including contract administration, work order administration and inspections.

Internal Audit will follow up on the status of outstanding Management Action Plans related to this audit and will report the status to the Finance, Administration and Audit Committee.

For more information, please contact: Kevin Shapiro, Director of Internal Audit, ext. 8293

Attachments

1. Internal Audit Report – Forestry Operations Audit

Prepared by

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