

**Presentation to Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee  
7 March 2006  
Ottawa Forests and Greenspace Advisory Committee**

Item No 1: Budget 2006 – Reductions

Urban Forestry position

The Ottawa Forests and Greenspace Advisory Committee supports staff recommendation No 2f to fund the Forester for the Urban Canopy position. We will give our rationale for this in a moment.

Alternate Sources of Funds to Meet Targets

When you are looking for sources of funds to meet your targets, recall that Ottawa spends more per capita on roads and sidewalks than other cities in Ontario and across Canada (Budget 2006 deliberations). So, perhaps you should be looking at items such as proposals for new road construction or road widening. Do we really need to have lower Wellington Street turned into a 6-lane road as part of the LRT reconfiguration of the Slater-Albert Escarpment? Last Friday's Citizen advertised the intent to widen the Tenth Line and Mer Bleue Road. Are we not just catering to the car and increasing our capital and downstream operating costs? I cite these two examples only because they are the most recently-advertised. The whole roads expansion and the impact on the urban and rural forest has not been studied in Ottawa but we do know that more urban sprawl is the ultimate result.

Reduction to Committee Support

We are also concerned about the proposed reduction in FTEs in the City Clerk's responsibility area and the impact that this will have on Advisory Committees and Standing Committees (page 24).

You cut all financial support to Advisory Committees and that means that we are not able to do some of the more publicly-oriented work we have done in the past and so they have been dropped. We give you highly skilled volunteer time (the mayor's speech at the volunteer recognition event, acknowledged hundreds of thousands worth of dollars of volunteer time and labour but still, Council cut the \$1,500 per committee support). How much longer will committed volunteers continue to assist you without support?

Now, there is a proposal to cut staff support to Advisory and Standing Committees. We now receive the printed minutes of the previous meeting and agenda for the next on the Friday before our Monday meeting. That my committee achieves its goals and gets things done is due, in part, to the fact that I send by email and fax, a list of action items before I go to bed after that Monday meeting. But we still depend on the minutes to flesh out the details. And, not all Advisory Committee members have access to email, so that mail service is important. I have some difficulty in understanding how Council can support another Advisory Committee (ARAAC) when it may not be able to provide support to the current ones.

The Advisory Committee Procedure Bylaw recently approved by Council requires agenda (and we assume the minutes) to be delivered 7 calendar days before an Advisory Committee meeting. I believe that the same standard must be met for Standing Committees. For Standing Committees that web-posting standard is not always met and with budget reductions in the City Clerk's office, you are advised that there will be delays. There are also cuts to the IT services that may ultimately impact the Committee, Standing and Advisory. If your deadlines are not met, will you not be in some form of technical breach of your own bylaws?

If Standing Committee agendas are not web-posted 7 days before the meeting, those of us who depend on that posting in order to provide comment face an even greater pressure. A 7-day

posting is a bare minimum. We need time to read the agenda and accompanying documents, draft a position, circulate it to our members by email, telephone and fax, make the appropriate text adjustments and then get here in time for the meeting. That is not easy now – don't make it more difficult.

### Shrub Maintenance and Litter Pickup

The proposed cuts and then proposed re-instatement documentation in the report does not state the source of the funds and FTEs, and so we are not certain how to comment on the proposed cuts to shrub maintenance and roadside litter pickup.

Under the \$1 million Cleaning the City and Greening the City program presented to Planning and Environment 22 November 2005 and carried forth and approved in the budget 2006, \$251K was approved for shrub and planter maintenance on roadways including equipment and 3 FTEs. Why is item 2g (shrubs maintenance in planters and along roadsides) being recommended for \$55.2K re-instatement funding if there is a million dollar program in place? Is this a cut and then re-instatement to the Cleaning the City and Greening the City Program or a cut to a previously-existing program?

We support the re-instatement of the \$55.2K on the assumption that it was a part of the \$1million program.

Would there not also be opportunities for co-funding shrub maintenance through the community partnerships being developed in that \$1M greening program thereby expanding the amount of maintenance that could be done?

Similarly, there is a cut of \$350K (including 6.16 FTEs) to roadside litter pickup, sweeping etc. outlined in the table on page 26 but as the source of funds and FTEs is not identified, we are not certain whether the \$1M Greening the City and Greening the City program is at risk.

Thank you for agreeing to fund the hiring of an Urban Forester. The citizens of Ottawa value their trees – we have told you this on many occasions. We need that position to work with landowners in the city and rural areas – to help them manage their trees and woodlands, to work with them when you pass the Good Forestry Practices bylaw (and we are anxious to see this return to Council for passage now that the Rural Summit has occurred and the air has cleared) and to provide the Planning and Growth Management department with a person who will be “on tap” to assist with tree and forestry aspects of development proposals, the Greenspace Master Plan, the Forest Strategy, the Biodiversity Strategy and other related plans that you committed to in the Official Plan.

We think that there are savings targets that can and should be met and we are encouraged to see this process beginning again.

Our three recommendations are

1. Support the staff recommendation to fund the Urban Forester position
2. Rescind the proposed decrease in service levels to Standing and Advisory committees
3. Retain shrub maintenance and litter pickup.

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Chair  
Ottawa Forests and Greenspace Advisory Committee  
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