



# REPORT

## ***Parks & Recreation Department***

<b>To:</b>	Mayor Cote and Members of Council	<b>Date:</b>	April 11, 2022
<b>From:</b>	G. Dean Gibson Director of Parks & Recreation	<b>File:</b>	2055120
		<b>Item #:</b>	2022-245
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>2022 Earth Day Programs</b>		

## RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the City's plan to offer three programs in recognition of Earth Day 2022.

## SUMMARY

Earth Day will be celebrated globally on April 22, 2022. The City of New Westminster will be acknowledging this day with three program offerings to residents, businesses and organizations who would like to participate and make a difference by taking on responsibility for the sustainability of our city's resources through an Adopt-A-Catch-Basin Program, an Adopt-A-Street-Tree Program, and an Earth Day Datathon. It is further intended that the City register its Earth Day activities with the Earth Day Canada organization.

## BACKGROUND

Earth Day, first celebrated in 1970, was conceived as a means of raising public environmental consciousness. Although Earth Day incorporates many environmental

themes, there has been a great focus in more recent years on both clean energy and efforts related to combating global climate change. Given the City's commitment to sustainability and climate action goals, an interdepartmental team have collaborated on offering three opportunities to connect residents to help them feel engaged and empowered in a collective effort to improving the City's stormwater management, growing the urban forest, and energy efficiency of buildings. The development of an Adopt-A-Catch-Basin Program, continuation of the Adopt-A-Street-Tree Program, and creation of a Datathon are supported by principles outlined within the following guiding documents and strategies:

- [\*Urban Forest Management Strategy\*](#) (2016)
- [\*City of New Westminster Tree Planting Master Plan 2020-2030\*](#) (2019)
- [\*Climate Emergency Response\*](#) (2019)
- [\*City-Wide Integrated Stormwater Management Plan\*](#) (2017)
- [\*Environmental Strategy and Action Plan\*](#) (2018)
- [\*Community Energy and Emissions Plan\*](#) (2011)
- [\*Intelligent New West Strategy \(2018-2023\)\*](#)
- [\*2019-2022 Strategic Plan\*](#)

## **ANALYSIS**

The local Earth Day Programs developed and to be launched by staff involve multiple departments including Engineering Operations, Parks & Open Space Planning, Climate Action, Communications, Economic Development, and Information Technology. In creating a plan for Earth Day, the following criteria were considered:

- Accessible by a diverse range of residents, organizations and businesses across the City (i.e. a range of ages and abilities, individual or groups, multi-family or single-family, homeowners or renters, etc.);
- Environmental education opportunities and collective impact in the community; and
- Supports the City's work towards implementation of overarching sustainability goals and climate action targets.

Staff have shared the plans for acknowledging Earth Day 2022 with the Environment and Climate Task Force (ENC TF) and the Environment and Climate Advisory Committee (ENC AC) for feedback.

## **DISCUSSION**

In recognition of Earth Day on April 22, 2002 the following program opportunities will be offered:

1. **Adopt-a-Catch Basin**, is a new program that will be launching to encourage residents and businesses to share in the responsibility for cleaning a storm water catch basin. This helps with storm water management, and encourages residents to connect with our storm water management system.
2. **Adopt-a- Street-Tree**, is an existing program that encourages residents and businesses to steward a newly planted street or boulevard tree. This helps our new street trees thrive so we can all enjoy and connect with the numerous long-term benefits that a lush urban canopy provides.
3. **Earth Day Datathon**, will create an opportunity for volunteers to analyze utility and property data with a goal of increasing the understanding of local building energy efficiency and predicting building energy consumption. The data analysis will be guided by questions posed by the City. The goal is for the findings to provide important insights to the City, businesses and building owners and to assist each in making informed decisions regarding building retrofit priorities. Retrofits are critical to the City's goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050. This program will be offered in partnership with Data for Good, a non-profit organization, and Landcor Data Corporation, a local business.

The launch date for the programs will be on April 11, 2022 and will include advertising through a press release, local newspaper, City website and through the City's social media platforms. The Datathon is anticipated to take place virtually on April 22. By also registering these 2022 activities with the organization Earth Day Canada, the City will be joining over 100 communities across the country in making environmental commitments to create healthier environments for their citizens.

For the Adopt-a-Street-Tree and Adopt-a-Catch-Basin programs, eligible members of the public in New Westminster, including residents, businesses and organizations, will be directed to a website with adoption instructions. The website will be user-friendly and include an interactive map with the option for the "adopter" to name their newly adopted catch basin and/ or street tree. It is anticipated that these two programs will be offered on an ongoing basis with periodic promotional campaigns. Community and staff feedback will be welcome on an on-going basis and used towards program improvements in the future.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Staff from the Communications Department will advertise the Earth Day 2022 Programs accordingly. Staff from Engineering Services will coordinate all requests, questions and tracking for the Adopt-A-Catch-Basin Program and Parks & Recreation Department will continue to coordinate the same for the Adopt-A-Street-Tree Program. Staff from the Information Technology Department will monitor and report statistics on the uptake for both programs after Earth Day 2022. Staff from Economic Development will coordinate the Datathon.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The most effective way to achieve New Westminster's Sustainability and Climate Action goals is through City-Community partnerships.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications anticipated at this time. The operational savings that may result from community stewardship of catch basins and street trees will be better understood as the programs become established and monitored over the next several years. For the Datathon, 'Data for Good' is a non-profit organization and is offering their services at no charge. Landcor Data Corporation is contributing their data at no charge as well.

## **OPTIONS**

The options presented are:

1. To receive this report for information and direct staff to proceed with next steps as outlined in this report; or
2. Provide staff with alternative direction.

Option #1 is recommended.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Earth Day 2022 Program described in this report focuses on expanding community outreach to connect a diverse range of residents, businesses and organizations in New Westminster to help them feel engaged and empowered in making a difference.

## **APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:

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This report was approved by:

Dean Gibson, Director, Parks & Recreation

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer