



Healthy watersheds for
today and tomorrow.

June 10, 2024

Durham Regional Council

Corporate Services Department
Legislative Services
The Regional Municipality of Durham
605 Rossland Rd. E
Whitby, ON
L1N 6A3

Re: Durham TREES Program – Continuing The Partnership Into Phase 2

Dear Council:

In 2021, Durham Region and the 5 Conservation Authorities with jurisdiction within regional boundaries entered into a mutually beneficial partnership that would show a coordinated response to address the Climate Change Emergency declared by the Region on January 29, 2020, to support the climate change mitigation and resiliency goals outlined in the Durham Community Climate Adaptation Plan (DCCAP, 2016), and support the Conservation Authorities collective efforts to achieve watershed planning and climate resilience goals and objectives. During phase 1 of the partnership (2021-2024), with budget and administrative support from Durham Region, Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA), Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA), Kawartha Region Conservation Authority (KRCA), Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA), and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) created program branding, increased landowner outreach and communication efforts and ultimately succeeded in planting 361,670 trees throughout Durham Region, exceeding the target of 270,000 trees by approximately 30%. Additional funding was pursued and secured by the collaborative through Forest Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program, the Highway of Heroes Campaign, One Tree Planted, and the World Wildlife Fund to further enhance efforts to achieve these objectives.

To date, tree planting efforts have focused on the Afforestation model, whereby trees are planted as 1-3 year-old seedlings in mostly large blocks to establish forest cover where currently none or very little exists. The species composition for this model is primarily coniferous species due to their hardiness to environmental conditions and tolerance of full sunlight. The minimum number of trees required to meet eligibility standards for this program is 500 trees, translating to approximately 2/3 of an acre of new forest. Because of this, the Durham TREES Program has been primarily focused on planting trees on rural private lands that meet this eligibility criteria.

With the recent announcement of funding becoming available through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Growing Canada's Community Canopies Program (GCCC) for planting in Urban/Suburban areas, the Durham TREES collaborative has identified an additional opportunity to expand services to include the planting of larger, potted stock with a more biodiverse selection of species under a different tree planting model referred to as Naturalization. This new Naturalization Service would be in addition to the planting model already successfully implemented in phase 1 of the partnership. A successful funding application would allow the partnership to diversify its services to also provide smaller, yet more diverse planting projects to enhance and/or build on existing natural heritage features within the Region and increase the resilience of the overall natural heritage system. This is a service that is recognized by the 5 Conservation Authorities as having potential to garner a significant amount of additional interest and, with sufficient support, to become a very successful program stream. The focus would be on opportunities to enhance under-utilized greenspace on corporate grounds and other suitable sites approved under the FCM funding program throughout Durham Region by subsidizing planting projects of at least 100 potted trees and shrubs to increase urban forest canopy and mitigate heat-island effect.

In order to advance this FCM funding application in relatively short timelines, the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority has agreed to coordinate the funding submission process and has agreed in principle to provide project management services for Durham TREES on behalf of the other four Conservation Authorities for the three-year FCM-funded program (this responsibility will be confirmed by the five Conservation Authorities during the application process based on feedback from FCM staff regarding funding program eligibility criteria). An application for this funding opportunity requires the support of a municipal partner. Due to the existing successful partnership with Durham Region, the collaborative requests a council resolution that will allow this collaboration to continue through the Durham TREES Program with the existing Afforestation Services that were delivered through phase 1 of the partnership, along with the addition of the Naturalization Services should they be successfully funded through the proposed FCM application. It is recognized that any Regional funding for the continuation of the Afforestation Services program beyond phase 1 and the proposed Naturalization Services would need to be approved through the Region's annual business planning and budget process.

Based on the template provided by FCM, CLOCA, on behalf of the Durham TREES Program, are respectfully requesting the following Regional Council resolutions in support of the proposed project, as they are a necessary component of the FCM funding application process:

Whereas, the Corporation of the Region of Durham continues to support environmental enhancement, stewardship, and nature-based solutions through tree planting that supports climate mitigation and resiliency as outlined in the Durham Community Climate Adaptation Plan (DCCAP, 2016); and

Whereas, the five local Conservation Authorities in Durham Region, with CLOCA (or alternate as agreed to by the 5 Conservation Authority collaborative) acting as

project manager on their behalf, are undertaking the implementation of the Durham TREES program;

Be it resolved that Durham Regional Council, as the municipal partner, provides a letter of support for CLOCA and the other four Conservation Authorities in their application for funding through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Growing Canada's Community Canopies Initiative for Durham TREES; and

That Durham Regional Council recognizes that the lifetime contribution from the Growing Canada's Community Canopies initiative will not exceed \$10 million for tree planting within our municipality, inclusive of a maximum contribution of \$1 million for infrastructure activity costs, and that if approved, this project will be counted towards the limit.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. Questions or concerns may be addressed to the following, as representative of the Durham TREES Program collaborative:

- Roy Mosher, Restoration Coordination, CLOCA
 - Email: rmosher@cloca.com; Phone: 365-633-0499

Sincerely,



Chris Darling

Chief Administrative Officer

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority