

To: **COUNCIL**

Meeting Date: **10/19/2021**

Subject: **Reep Green Solutions – Annual Report (April 2020-2021)**

Submitted By: **Yogesh Shah, Deputy City Manager**

Prepared By: **Paul Willms, Sustainability Planner**

Report No.: **21-288(IFS)**

File No.:

Recommendation(s)

THAT Report 21-288(IFS) “Reep Green Solutions Annual Report (April 2020-April 2021)” be received.

Executive Summary

Purpose

- To present Reep Green Solutions’ Annual Report (April 2020-April 2021) to Council for information.

Key Findings

- Reep Green Solutions has provided a number of programs, services, and collaborative partnership projects in the City of Cambridge for over twenty years revolving around energy conservation, tree planting, stormwater, sustainability, climate change, and community engagement. These projects are cumulative and their impact is tracked through a long-term (2020-2030) initiative for “10,000 Meaningful Actions.” In the 2020-2021 period 1,469 meaningful actions were completed.
- Reep Green Solutions is a collaborative partner in ClimateActionWR and the TransformWR community climate change plan.

Financial Implications

- Since 2007, the City of Cambridge is providing annual core funding of \$21,223 along with other area municipalities and many other partners. Funding has been approved as part of 2021 operating budget.

- The City, in partnership with Waterloo, Kitchener and the Region, provide funding (\$29,000 is the City share) to Sustainable Waterloo and Reep Green Solutions to manage the administration of the ClimateActionWR plan.
- Reep Green Solutions received funding for Stormwater Management public engagement (e.g. Fiddlesticks workshops) and projects (e.g. Wesley Church stormwater garden) in 2014-2018 (\$10,000).
- In partnership with the City of Kitchener, Ages Foundation and City of Cambridge, Reep launched the Backyard Tree Planting Program and completed it 2019-2020 (\$28,500 City of Cambridge share). The program was successful, despite COVID, and residential demand has increased for both the educational and tree planting aspects. Staff are currently discussing a five-year renewal of the project with an agreement approval anticipated in late 2021.

Background

Reep Green Solutions has been working with City Staff, community groups, individuals, volunteers, and Area Municipalities for over 20 years on initiatives that have resulted in more energy efficient Cambridge homes, community climate change planning, tree planting on private property, community-based stormwater management projects, and educational workshops and demonstration houses among other programs and projects.

Despite COVID, Reep Green Solutions was able to launch a new program (e.g. Backyard Tree Planting Program), continue with ongoing initiatives (e.g. Zero Waste Challenge), and logged 1,469 Meaningful Actions (April 1, 2020-September 1, 2021) as part of its goal to reach 10,000 by 2030.

Analysis

Strategic Alignment

PEOPLE To actively engage, inform and create opportunities for people to participate in community building – making Cambridge a better place to live, work, play and learn for all.

Goal #4 - Environment and Rivers

Objective 4.2 Encourage innovative approaches to address environmental challenges.

For over 20 years Reep Green Solutions has developed and delivered award-winning local programs for addressing a variety of environmental challenges meeting Cambridge residents (literally) where they live in terms of public engagement on innovative approaches to energy conservation, reducing household waste, tree planting, stormwater management and low impact design, and climate change community action.

Comments

This year's annual report from Reep Green Solutions is a story of resilience in wake of the pandemic. Despite extreme challenges Reep continued with initiatives and even launched a new Backyard Tree Planting Program to implement the City of Cambridge Urban Forest Plan.

Reep Green Solutions literally *meets people where they live* when it comes to their outreach programs and also provides a number of services to the City consistent with the objectives of the City's Strategic Plan.

The Annual Report presents 2020 accomplishments across Reep's region-wide jurisdiction. Some highlights of Cambridge-specific outcomes include the following:

- Bloom In a Box native plants – increasing numbers of Cambridge households establishing native plants on their properties with some requesting a Bee City Canada sign to further promote native plants to neighbours
- Rain Garden native plants – 250 established
- Backyard Tree Planting Program – 47 trees planted
- Public engagement around stormwater management and water conservation – 14 water efficient upgrades installed; and, since April 2021, 15 WET home reviews completed. The Region of Waterloo partners with Reep to offer a free evaluation of a home's water efficiency and check for possible fixture leaks and related water issues.
- 12 energy efficiency upgrades (it should be clarified that "windows and doors" are counted as "1 upgrade" and the total of 12 upgrades actually includes the replacement of 41 windows and doors). This has reduced a total of 4.6 tonnes of GHG emissions per year for these homes, 2,100 m³ gas saved and average energy reduction of 22% per home. An additional 16 evaluations have been done since April 1, 2021 and more are on the waiting list so many more homes will be upgraded in the near future
- Project Neutral is a carbon-calculating, community climate action tool. The online platform provides personalized insights and actions to help residents reduce their household carbon footprint and join the shift to a clean growth. 125 Cambridge residents participated last year.
- Community Outreach activities such as webinars, workshops, walks, and other event appearances in Cambridge build capacity of residents to undertake various sustainability projects. Although origin is not tracked for webinars, 648 webinar

attendees included Cambridge residents as Cambridge City Green helps to promote these events to its 350-person membership.

In 2020 Cambridge, in partnership with the City of Kitchener and Ages Foundation, collaborated with Reep Green Solutions to implement the Backyard Tree Planting Program and Workshops. Despite the 2020 pandemic, Reep Green Solutions was able to complete 37 homeowner consultations, plant 47 trees, and schedule 11 additional trees to be planted in the Spring 2021 within the City of Cambridge. Additionally, 106 participants tuned in to virtual webinars about trees hosted by the Program.

The Healthy Yards and Neighbourhoods program provides native plants to homeowners (“Bloom in a Box”) to create their own pollinator or rain gardens.

Reep Green Solutions provided webinars on a variety of sustainability topics, as well as other COVID-friendly projects whereby residents contribute “meaningful actions” (e.g. through Project Neutral and cutting their carbon footprint or attending a webinar to build their knowledge). A significant number of “meaningful actions” (953), and “supportive actions” (2,210), were logged this past year (despite COVID) on the way to the 10,000 meaningful actions goal. Meaningful actions include planting a tree through our Backyard Tree Planting program, switching to low-flow fixtures after a WET Home Water Review, planting a pollinator or rain garden, participating in the Zero Waste Challenge, or adding attic insulation after an EnerGuide Home Energy Audit. These actions are meaningful because they contribute to multiple Council-approved targets, goals and actions such as the TransformWR community climate change strategy’s Actions to reduce our emissions 80% by 2050 or the City’s Urban Forest Plan canopy target and planting on private properties in order to achieve 30% canopy. “Supportive actions” are also important to track and involve capacity-building through educational opportunities for residents such as workshops and webinars where people gain the skills and confidence that influence future shifts toward living sustainably.

Existing Policy/By-Law

Reep Green Solutions’ initiatives implement several City policies including the Strategic Plan, Urban Forest Plan, and TransformWR community climate change plan.

Financial Impact

The City of Cambridge provides core funding (along with other area municipalities) for Reep Green Solutions as well as for specific partnership programs:

- Since 2007, the City of Cambridge has provided annual core funding of \$21,223. Funding has been approved as part of 2021 operating budget.

- Annual contribution of \$29,000 to ClimateActionWR in partnership with the Cities, Region of Waterloo, Sustainable Waterloo and community partners in order to administer the community climate change plan and public engagement;
- In partnership with the City of Kitchener, Ages Foundation and City of Cambridge, Reep launched the Backyard Tree Planting Program and completed it 2019-2020 (\$28,500 City of Cambridge share).

Public Input

Posted publicly as part of the report process.

Internal/External Consultation

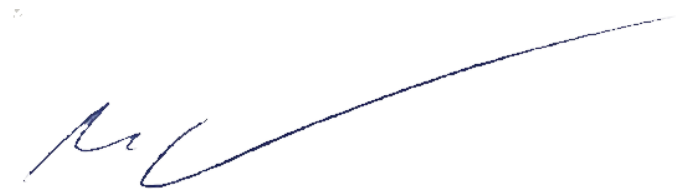
This report was shared with City Divisions that have worked with Reep Green Solutions.

Conclusion

Reep Green Solutions continues to evolve from its origins (i.e. as experts in home energy audits) into a sustainability and public engagement leader in stormwater management, trees, energy conservation, equity and inclusion, and climate emissions reduction and adaptation projects. Reep delivers significant projects with impact that are aligned with multiple City master plans, policies and the City's Strategic Plan.

Signature

Division Approval

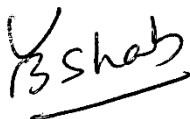


Reviewed by the CFO

Reviewed by Legal Services

Name: Michael Hausser
Title: Director of Operations

Departmental Approval



Name: Yogesh Shah

Title: Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Department

City Manager Approval

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Calder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Name: David Calder

Title: City Manager

Attachments

- A. [Reep Green Solutions Impact Report \(April 2020-April 2021\)](#)