



Report to: General Committee

Meeting Date: June 7, 2022

SUBJECT:	2022 Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF) Project Funding
PREPARED BY:	Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the report entitled “2022 Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF) Project Funding” be received;
2. AND THAT the external funding application Blessed Frederic Ozanam Parish Community Garden for site expansion and improvements be approved for \$7,450 to be funded from the MESF reserve;
3. AND THAT the external funding application From Seedlings to Suppers: Growing Cornell Community Garden for site expansion and improvements be approved for \$7,597 to be funded from the MESF reserve;
4. AND THAT the internal funding application for Community Garden – 120 Kirkham Drive site improvements for \$10,000 submitted by the Sustainability and Asset Management Department be approved to be funded from the MESF reserve;
5. AND THAT the internal funding application for LDD (Lymantria Dispar Dispar) Burlap Kits for \$9,165 submitted by the Operations Department be approved to be funded from the MESF reserve;
6. AND THAT further, that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to recommend that funding from the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF) be provided for two external applications and two internal applications as reviewed and recommended by the MESF Staff Committee.

BACKGROUND:

Council created MESF in 2002 to assist the City with funding support for environmental initiatives which contribute to the sustainability and health of the natural environment and support GreenMarkham and Waste Diversion targets.

All recommended and approved MESF projects are expected to meet at least one of the following objectives:

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- Project is a leading innovation (i.e. pilot project) that can be showcased by Markham;
 - Project promotes education, understanding and participation in environmental sustainability in Markham;
 - Project supports the City's environmental policies and strategic plan.

On January 20, 2020, Council approved the continuation of the MESF program and the addition of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Small Grant (SNSG) as part of the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF).

The MESF and SNSG programs are administered by the Waste & Environmental Management section of the Environmental Services Department and applications are reviewed by an internal staff committee with representation from a broad range of departments, including Sustainability and Asset Management, Operations, Culture and Environmental Services (Waste & Environmental Management). MESF applications are reviewed by the staff committee and recommendations are forwarded to Council for approval. The SNSG program grants are approved by the Executive Leadership Committee.

Over the years Markham's MESF program has supported many successful projects including community wide tree planting, WOW portable water trailer, school zero waste diversion and habitat/stream improvements. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the intake of new MESF projects was put on hold in 2021.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

The MESF Committee received two external MESF applications for the 2022 funding year. Both projects support and expand Community gardens. There has been increased focus and demand for community gardens. The province of Ontario re-opened community gardens and declared them an "essential source of fresh food" for people, including those who are facing food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

External Project Details:

The MESF Committee received and reviewed two external MESF applications for the 2022 funding year.

1. Blessed Frederic Ozanam Parish Community Garden Project

Blessed Frederic Ozanam Parish Community Garden was new in 2021 with a large communal area plus allotment plots. This project application provides new/additional space for organic food production, community engagement and education on sustainable growing.

The total funding recommended for approval for this initiative is \$7,450 for general garden improvements including tools, fencing, compost centre, raised growing beds and

15 additional plots. The MESF Committee has confirmed that the garden is available to all residents and visitors.

2. From Seedlings to Suppers: Growing Cornell Community Garden Project

Cornell Community Garden is a well-established community garden started as part of a Sustainability & Asset Management pilot in 2013. This project provides additional space for organic food production, attract pollinators and refurbish existing garden elements.

The total funding approved for this initiative is \$7,597 for additional plots, raised garden beds and site upgrades. The MESF Committee has confirmed that the garden is available to all residents and visitors.

Both projects support Markham's Food Security priority contained in [Markham's Greenprint and GreenMarkham](#).

Internal Project Details:

The MESF Committee received and reviewed two internal MESF applications for the 2022 funding year.

1. Sustainability and Asset Management Department – Kirkham Community Garden Allotment Expansion

City of Markham – Community Garden at 120 Kirkham Drive is an established site. The total funding approved for this initiative is \$10,000 for the purchase and installation of site fencing needed for the expansion of 20+ additional plots.

2. Operations Department – Lymantria Dispar Dispar (“LDD”) Burlap Kits

This project supports the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program to help reduce the LDD caterpillar damage and protect Markham's green infrastructure. The total funding approved for this initiative is \$9,165 for the purchase and distribution of 1,500 residential LDD Burlap Kits.

Both internal MESF projects meet MESF program requirements and funding criteria and are recommended for approval by the MESF Committee.

The table on the following page summarizes the recommended expenditures from the MESF Reserve.

MESF Reserve Activity 2022 Funding Plan and Account Balance	
Initial Balance (May 2022)	\$67,717
Blessed Frederic Ozanam Parish Community Garden	(\$7,450)
From Seedlings to Suppers: Growing Cornell Community Garden	(\$7,597)
Kirkham Community Garden Expansion	(\$10,000)
LDD Burlap Kits	(\$9,165)
Remaining Balance	\$33,505

All approved project applicants are required to submit a final report outlining project results, original copies of paid invoices and receipts. Any unspent funds are to be returned to the City.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The funding required is \$7,450 for the Blessed Frederic Ozanam Parish Community Garden, \$7,597 for From Seedlings to Suppers: Growing Cornell Community Garden, \$10,000 for Kirkham Community Garden Expansion, and \$9,165 for LDD Burlap Kits. Total funding amount is \$34,212.

Approved projects are to be funded from the MESF reserve, reducing the current reserve balance from \$67,717 to \$33,505. The reserve balance of \$33,505 contains sufficient funds for any 2022 Small Neighborhood Community Grant project awards.

After completion of the 2022 application period, Staff will re-evaluate the need to top up the reserve as part of the 2023 capital budget process.

CONCLUSION:

The approved MESF projects meet MESF program requirements and community funding criteria and are recommended for approval by the MESF Committee. All recommended projects align with corporate initiatives regarding environmental sustainability.

The MESF Committee is recommending that the four MESF funding applications for community environmental projects totaling \$34,212 be approved.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not Applicable

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Aligns with MESF guidelines and supports GreenMarkham goals.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Operations, Sustainability & Asset Management and Finance Departments have been consulted.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Eddy Wu
Director, Environmental Services

Morgan Jones
Commissioner, Community Services