

Report to: Environmental Issues Committee
Report date: May 11, 2015
Subject: Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF),
 Funding Applications, Spring 2015
Prepared by: Claudia Marsales Senior Manager Waste and Environmental
 Management
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Recommending:

1. That the Spring 2015 MESF funding applications be approved:
 - i) Ontario Streams East Don River Rehabilitation Initiative request for \$5,742.00
 - ii) The Living City Foundation, TRCA – Creating Habitat Through the Seasons request for \$8,300
 - iii) TRCA on behalf of Pomona Mills Park Conservationists (PMPC) –River Elbow Community Planting request for \$1,469
2. That the funds be provided from the 2015 Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF), account #87 2800168;
3. And further, that Staff be authorized to do all things necessary to give effect to the above.

Discussion:

The purpose of this report is to recommend that funding from the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund be provided for 3 Community Environmental projects for a total of \$15,511.00. A summary of each project request is attached.

The chart below shows proposed expenditures from the fund for the Spring 2015 funding cycle. The Spring 2015 deadline for MESF applications was February 13, 2015. Each application has been evaluated based upon community funding criteria.

The following chart summarized recommended expenditures from the MESF Fund for 2015:

| MESF Funding 2015 | |
|--|-----------------|
| TOTAL MESF FUNDING Balance – January 1, 2015 | \$88,122 |
| AVAC Feasibility Study | \$50,000 |
| ZERO WASTE FOR SCHOOLS* (managed by Waste Management staff) | \$25,000 |
| | |
| FUNDING APPROVED FOR MESF PROJECTS – Spring 2015 cycle | |
| | |
| Ontario Streams- East Don River Rehabilitation program | \$5,742 |
| Pomona Mills Park Conservationists Inc.-Elbow River Community Planting | \$1,469 |
| TRCA – Creating Habitat Through the Seasons | \$8,300 |
| | |

Zero Waste for Schools Program allocated \$25,000 on an annual basis beginning 2013 as approved by Council on December 18, 2012

1. Ontario Streams – East Don River Rehabilitation Initiative requesting \$5,742

Ontario Streams is a non-profit organization that focuses on protecting and rehabilitating streams and wetlands in Ontario through education and community action. This applicant is requesting \$5,742 in funding from MESF. The initiative aims to protect the existing natural stream and riparian habitat within the Lake Ontario Watershed, while also rehabilitating degraded systems to improve habitat for local fish and wildlife populations. Details of the project are as follows:

- Project will take place along a 10km stretch of the East Don River, northwest of Bayview Avenue and Proctor Avenue
- The goal will be accomplished through riparian regeneration, bank stabilization and in-stream habitat enhancement
- Eroding, leaking metal barrels that were put in place 25 years ago to reduce erosion along the stream bank will be removed, preventing the release of sediment and metals into the stream
- A cabled debris jam will be installed to protect the bank, create cover habitat for fish and slow the flow of water to reduce erosion of the bank downstream
- Biodegradable coir will be spread over the 10km stretch to stabilize the bank
- Grass seed and native plant shrubs will be planted, whose roots will work to stabilize the bank from erosion
- A total of 700 native trees and shrubs will also be planted within a 2500m² area, increasing biodiversity, enhancing the riparian habitat, and moderating stream temperatures by providing shade
- A Restoration Ecologist will be responsible for project guidance and field support, a Project Biologist will be responsible for all planning and implementation, fundraising and reporting, Habitat Technicians consisting of University and College students will assist with implementation of on-ground work at the site and community volunteers will take part in tree planting and bank stabilization

Project Cost Summary:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Total Project Cost: | \$20,107.25 |
| Amount requested from MESF: | \$5,742.00 |
| Amount requested from other sources: | \$14,365.25 |

Staff Recommendation: That the funding application from Ontario Streams for \$5,742 for a stream rehabilitation project be approved.

2. The Living City Foundation, TRCA – Creating Habitat Through the Seasons requesting \$8,300

The Living City Foundation exists to support the work of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). This applicant is requesting \$8,300 in funding from MESF. The project will be located at the Markham Museum and will act to engage Markham residents in habitat creation projects on-site, as well as teach residents about the importance of wildlife habitat. The project will protect the natural environment and increase biodiversity in Markham by creating habitat for local wildlife. Details of the project are as follows:

- The main activities are: two field trips with Markham Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) students, four education program toolkits, two Markham Museum staff training sessions
- One spring field trip will consist of planting native wildflowers at the Markham Museum and participating in the Environmental Geotour with LINC students
- One winter field trip will consist of learning the sport of snowshoeing and exploring the winter habitat features at the Markham Museum with LINC students
- Both field trips will begin with an in-class lesson on biodiversity at Markham LINC centers
- Markham Museum will be provided with four education program toolkits with topics covering native wildflowers, pollinators, birds and local wildlife
- Kits will also include hands-on activities to teach participants about local wildlife and habitat creation, such as creating seed balls, bee “condos” or winter bird feeders
- Kits will be used for summer camps and other family programs/events planned at the Markham Museum
- Two staff training sessions will be hosted with Markham Museum staff to introduce the four education program toolkits and practise delivering each program

Project Cost Summary:

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|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Total Project Cost: | \$14,562.00 |
| Amount requested from MESF: | \$8,300.00 |
| Amount requested from other sources: | \$6,262.00 |

Staff Recommendation: That the funding application from The Living City Foundation for \$8,300 habitat and wildlife education project be approved.

**3. TRCA on behalf of Pomona Mills Park Conservationists (PMPC) –River Elbow
Community Planting requesting \$1,469**

Pomona Mills Park Conservationists, Inc. (PMPC) is a group of volunteers who have adopted Pomona Mills Park to help restore and rehabilitate the lands along the East Don River within Pomona Mills Park. This applicant is requesting \$1,469 in funding from MESF. The planting aims to increase the population of native species to improve wildlife habitat, prevent the infiltration of invasive species, such as the Common Buckthorn and Manitoba Maple, as well as reduce stream bank erosion. Details of the project are as follows:

- A clean up of the area occurred on April 26, 2015 lead by 50 community and PMPC volunteers
- Planting occurred May 2, 2015 and included deciduous trees and shrubs
- Plantings took place along the “River Elbow” which is located along a bend of the East Don River
- PMPC members will perform follow up maintenance (weeding and removing invasive species) to ensure better survival rates of native species
- The project will be monitored once every two weeks year round
- The plantings will also supply shade to the East Don River, reducing water temperatures for fish populations

Project Cost Summary:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Total Project Cost: | \$1,469.00 |
| Amount requested from MESF: | \$1,469.00 |
| Amount requested from other sources: | N/A |

Staff Recommendation: That the funding application from TRCA-PMPC for \$1,469 for a planting project be approved.