TO: Chair and Members  
Public Works Committee  

WARD(S) AFFECTED: City Wide

COMMITTEE DATE: November 19, 2012

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:  
Service Delivery Improvements and Efficiencies for the Provision of Grass Cutting at Municipal Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries and Roads (PW12089) (City Wide)  
(Outstanding Business List Item)

SUBMITTED BY:  
John Mater, C.E.T.  
Acting General Manager  
Public Works Department

PREPARED BY:  
Chuck Alkerton  
Manager of Corporate Buildings & Technical Services  
(905) 546-2424, Extension 7015

SIGNATURE:  
Delfina Duarte  
Superintendent, Capital, Planning & Compliance  
(905) 546-2424, Extension 6627

RECOMMENDATION

(a) That the General Manager of Public Works be authorized to form a Grounds Maintenance Governance Review Committee that will oversee and guide grounds maintenance, contract management and develop communication strategies to improve the understanding of service standards and related quality of City of Hamilton green space;

(b) That the Committee mandate will be to review and recommend value added procurement strategies, quality assurance measures such as maintenance level standards and industry and city-wide best practices for grounds maintenance. In addition the Committee will review vendor performance, contract specifications, budget performance, reporting requirements and other initiatives to potentially improve efficiencies in service delivery;

(c) That the Committee structure will consist of Managers (or designate) representing the Public Works, Planning and Economic Development, and Community Services Departments. The Chair will rotate annually amongst each
Department and meetings will be held at a minimum of three times yearly in pre-season, mid-season and end of season. Reports to Council will occur on an ‘as required’ basis when significant changes are contemplated;

(d) That the Outstanding Business List Item identified as “Service Delivery Improvements and Efficiencies for the Provision of Grass Cutting at Municipal Facilities, Parks & Cemeteries and Roads”, be considered complete and removed from the Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On a motion by Council, the General Manager of Public Works was directed to collaborate with the relevant departments to review and report back to the Public Works Committee on the potential for service delivery improvements and efficiencies, including contract management practices and performance standards, for the provision of grass cutting at all municipal facilities sites and in parks and cemeteries, sports fields, and along trails and municipal roads.

The City currently has grass cutting and grounds maintenance services distributed by asset class and department/division/section. Asset classes include, for example, Corporate (Civic Properties/Community Buildings/Lodges/Police), Operations & Waste Management, Roads, Parks and Community Properties.

Over the last few years improvements have been made in the procurement process and management of contractual services. For example, tenders now combine various types of properties where efficiencies can be garnered by geography. A Corporate Facilities tender is in development for 2013 which will include a more stringent scope of work. In addition the current amalgamation of Community Services and Corporate Facilities will facilitate greater consistency in service delivery and quality control.

Additional improvements are underway and include establishing the (905) 546-City (2489) as the only number to call for all grounds maintenance inquiries. This will be advertised and highlighted on the City’s web-site. Staff is also studying the cost/benefit analysis of a City-wide Turf-Management program, a proactive program that is intended to reduce the cost/square foot of maintenance.

There are, however, more potential service delivery improvements and efficiencies that could be garnered through the review of:

(i) Clarification of staff, contractor, council and community accountabilities, expectations and priorities, with an emphasis on encouraging community partnerships and communications;

(ii) Alignment and improved integration of grass cutting and turf management standards, specifications and procurement contracts across asset classes and departments/divisions/sections, with priorities clearly defined and sites and activities bundled for maintenance efficiencies and aesthetic consistency;
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Values: Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork

(iii) Consistent management of contracts and performance standards, internal staff and external contractors with clear level of services and performance measures defined, with an emphasis on providing the performance monitors with current contract management knowledge, tools and guidance;

(iv) Exploration of innovation and sharing ideas and expertise on new approaches and best practices across the industry and;

(v) Improved communication mechanisms for public and internal inquiries

In order to achieve these types of improvements a Grounds Maintenance Governance Review Committee is recommended to review and revitalize a focus on service delivery methods. The committee will provide accountability, oversight, leadership, develop service standards and procedures, provide contract management support and explore innovative approaches to assist departments/divisions/sections in the optimizing efficiencies and continuous improvements in their service delivery.

Committee priorities will include analysis and alignment of reporting mechanisms and financial performance and development of a communications plan as well as setting baseline benchmarks for future tracking, data interpretation and scheduled communications. As well, further examination of contract management best practices, across departments/divisions/sections and at other municipalities, for potential aesthetic and service delivery improvement strategies would be a priority.

Alternatives for Consideration - See Page 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Governance Committee will continuously review current procurement practices, service delivery methodologies and contract management in order to ensure optimal financial performance.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Staffing:**

There are no Staffing implications

**Legal:**

There are no Legal implications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</th>
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<tr>
<td>During the 2012 season, there were a number of incident reports relating to the timing of grass cutting, missed cuts and consistency of standards. This has lead staff to review its service delivery procedures in search of a holistic approach for city-wide improvements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a result of a motion by Council, the General Manager of Public Works was directed to collaborate with the relevant departments, to review and report back to the Public Works Committee, on the potential for service delivery improvements for the provision of grass cutting at all municipal facilities; in parks, cemeteries; sports fields; and along trails and municipal roads.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Changes to the City of Hamilton Pesticide By-Law No. 07-282 and any policies pertaining to the ban on cosmetic pesticide will impact the implementation and costs of the maintenance practices (e.g., aeration, fertilization, overseeding, topdressing, and irrigation) reviewed by the working group.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

Consultation occurred with the following groups prior to re-organization:

Public Works, Transportation, Energy and Facilities, Corporate Facilities Management
- Manager Corporate Buildings & Services
- Superintendent Facilities Operations
- Superintendent Capital, Planning & Compliance
- Building Supervisors

Public Works, Operations and Waste Management
- Senior Director, Operations & Waste Management
- Manager of Forestry and Horticulture
- Manager of Parks and Cemeteries

Community Services, Recreation
- Director, Community Facilities & Capital Programs
- Manager of Golf, Stadium and Arena Operations

Corporate Services, Financial Services
- Director of Financial Services
- Procurement Manager
- Procurement Specialist
- Supervisor, Customer Contact Centre

Hamilton Emergency Services, Emergency Services, Fire
- Assistant Deputy

*Additional resources reviewed including but not limited to:*
- City of Hamilton Yard Maintenance By-Law No. 10-118
- City of Hamilton Pesticide By-Law No. 07-282
• Communities in Bloom Evaluation Form 2012
• OMKN Promising Practices in Recreation, September 2009
• Office of the Procurement Ombudsman, Chapter 6 Procurement Practices Review Study on a Management Approach to Vendor Performance, May 2010
• York Region Report No. 5 of the Transportation Services Committee Regional Council Meeting of May 19 2011, Urban Boulevard Grass Cutting Services Levels
• Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs website, www.omafra.gov.on
• City of Hamilton Website, www.hamilton.ca
• City of Kitchener website, www.kitchener.ca/en/livinginkitchener/Municipal GrassCutting.asp
• Ontario Sport Turf Association
• Ontario Parks Association
• Recreational Outdoor Use Study

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Currently the City of Hamilton owns and maintains more than 21,989,318 m² (2,199 Hectares/ 236,658,758 sq.ft.) of land distributed across approximately 2678 different sites, each requiring varying degrees of grass cutting, grounds maintenance and landscaping services standards and practices. (refer to Appendix A to Report PW12089).

Current turf mowing and horticultural practices and property maintenance practices for our municipal facilities, parks, cemeteries, sports fields and areas alongside trails and municipal roads directly involve five City departments. Community Services, Planning & Economic Development, City Manager - Fire / EMS, Police, and Public Works Departments manage full-time and part-time staff, students and six external service procurement contracts with eight different vendors.

Grass cutting services, divided by asset class, have been carried out by the departments using three resource capabilities; external contracts, in-house employees/equipment, and community partnerships. The current service delivery approaches range from basic (cutting grass on rural roads two times per year), to complex (sports fields and golf courses) services, depending upon the demands of the asset class and horticultural practice standards. Tenders for primarily turf mowing services have been grouped by asset class in recent years to make our procurement of these services more efficient, however, each department/division/section still manages its own assets and established turf mowing standards for grass cutting within the individual department/division/section for individual properties under the particular section’s area of responsibility and resources within different seasonal timelines and priorities and budget restraints.
Our standards and service delivery is greatly influenced and affected by factors such as seasonal staff shifts each year, extended wetter growing seasons, timing of scheduled and contracted services and budgetary constraints. For some departments a heavy reliance on summer student staff, which starts at the beginning of May for internal property maintenance, is an issue when variable growing season starts and demands increase with the climatic conditions. In addition, the type, quantity and quality of equipment used by both contractors and City forces, has a direct impact on maintaining the service levels and affecting the aesthetic results throughout the season, with breakdowns of equipment preventing timely scheduled maintenance standards.

In general the scope of work in each of the current contracts is task and/or material based and includes the supply of all labour, materials and equipment to maintain the grounds, grass, planting beds and foliage at each facility. Spring and fall clean-ups are part of some of the contracts and can include lawn raking for the removal of winter kill debris, removal of dead vegetation, leaves and debris, lawn rolling, aeration, overseeding, fertilization and plant bed cultivation, removal of garbage, and sweeping of parking lots and walkways. Additional work including weed control, insect control and crabgrass control services and snow removal are also included in some of the external contracts depending upon the demands of the asset class and resources available to each department.

Tracking the current turf conditions and aesthetic state of our properties, and regular reporting internally and to the community is currently reactive in most cases. Incidents are reported by the public through various channels depending upon the asset class and department/division/section responsible. It is not often easy to navigate the layers of our government to report issues and provide feedback on grass cutting issues or concerns. From there, front line staff follow-up with the issues in the timeliest manner possible, with resources diverted as required when necessary.

Overall specialized knowledge regarding grass cutting and property maintenance practice is isolated by group, with what may appear to be inconsistent standards and baseline data aligning performance metrics and reporting. Documentation of ongoing day to day issues and timely inspections are a challenge to the individual department/division/section monitors given the number of sites and the frequency of the turf cutting. Contract administration files are separated at the contract monitor level within the distributed portfolios, as is the invoicing and payment. Procurement Policy #8 Vendor Performance Evaluation, the primary corporate contract evaluation tool, outlines a basic process for the submission of incident reports if there are contractor performance problems. Reports come from front line staff monitoring the contracts; they are filed with Procurement and trigger a mediated back and forth between the vendor and the City. Upon completion of the contracts, some of which run five years or more, there is a final performance review.
ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Option #1 - Maintain current service levels and management practices

This option maintains the management and service delivery system as is with grass cutting/turf quality issues being addressed as they arise. Collaboration among affected departments will remain the same along with the current asset class service levels, and approach to tenders and renewals.

This reactive option does not allow for the growth of our infrastructure or the reconciliation of gaps in service delivery and puts a strain on our current resources. Given the multiple contractors and contract managers it remains possible that the public will still see different service levels at City properties within the same asset class and there is the potential for a lack of aesthetic unity between adjacent sites.

This could be overcome by a more robust outward communication plan describing the current standards and service levels for each asset class and the rational for the variances between asset classes.

Option #2 - Fully centralize grounds maintenance for the entire City Of Hamilton

A fully integrated centralized model for grounds keeping could be advantageous to achieve corporate-wide unity on standards and aesthetics, tap into specialized knowledge, and support a strategic approach to contract management.

However, given the range of property types, the magnitude of the area to be maintained, and the current departmental structures it would require a major shift in accountabilities and will require an additional dedicated resource.

Within this option one single tender for all asset classes would be issued and managed by an assigned department. It is unrealistic to expect that any single local contractor would be able to service all of the properties across the asset classes. There is also a greater risk that with a single contractor performance levels would suffer. Such a large contract may also prohibit small company bidding.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN


**Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization**

- More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus

**Financial Sustainability**

- Delivery of municipal services and management capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner

Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

Values: Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork
Growing Our Economy

- An improved customer service

Environmental Stewardship

- Natural resources are protected and enhanced
- Reduced impact of City activities on the environment
- Aspiring to the highest environmental standards

Healthy Community

- Plan and manage the built environment

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

Appendix A - Grass Maintenance Listing
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract Management Department</th>
<th>Contract Management Section</th>
<th>Municipal Property / Facility Type</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Size m2</th>
<th>Number of Sites</th>
<th>Approx # of service per season per site</th>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Service Level Description</th>
<th>Contract #</th>
<th>Contract end Date</th>
<th>Service Providers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Managers Office</td>
<td>Fire / EMS</td>
<td>Fire &amp; EMS Buildings</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of turf at Fire/EMS Stations</td>
<td>1x every 10 working days or as required</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>PW City Staff - Horticulture staff (19 locations), Volunteer Fire Fighters (9)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Recreation Community</td>
<td>Arenas</td>
<td>April 1-Oct 1</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of turf at community centers and arenas</td>
<td>1x every 7 working days</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>PW City staff (28); Community Associations (12); School Board (8); CS City staff (2); Contract (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Recreation Recreation &amp; Community Centres</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>April 1-Oct 1</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of turf at community centers and arenas</td>
<td>1x every 7 working days</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>PW City staff (28); Community Associations (12); School Board (8); CS City staff (2); Contract (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Recreation Golf Courses</td>
<td>Fairways</td>
<td>April 1-Nov 15</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of turf at golf courses</td>
<td>Fairways 3x per week</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>City Staff (permanent and summer students starting May 1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Recreation Greens</td>
<td>April 1-Nov 15</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of turf at golf courses</td>
<td>Daily, Greens, 5x per week</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>City Staff (permanent and summer students starting May 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Recreation Roughs</td>
<td>April 1-Nov 15</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of turf at golf courses</td>
<td>Rough 1x per week</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>City Staff (permanent and summer students starting May 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Economic Development</td>
<td>Museums and Cultural Properties</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>May 1-Oct 30</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of turf at cultural facilities</td>
<td>Public Works locations - 1x every 7 working days</td>
<td>October 31, 2013</td>
<td>4M (4 sites), Public Works in house staff (8 sites), Tenant (1 site)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works Corporate Facilities Management</td>
<td>Corporate Facilities Offices</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>May 1-Oct 30</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>16,380</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of turf at corporate facilities (municipal service centers, operations centers, libraries)</td>
<td>C12-14-09 Grounds Maintenance Services Required at Various Facilities</td>
<td>October 31, 2013</td>
<td>4M</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Works Parks &amp; Cemeteries</td>
<td>Cemeteries</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>1,606,602</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of turf at active cemeteries including around monuments and head stones</td>
<td>1x every 5 business days</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>City Staff (permanent and summer students starting May 1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Works Parks &amp; Cemeteries</td>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>15,168,698</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of City Parks (Citywide, Community, Neighbourhood, Parkettes and some schools and open spaces)</td>
<td>1x every 7 working days</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>City Staff (permanent and summer students starting May 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works Parks &amp; Cemeteries</td>
<td>Sports Fields</td>
<td>Class A &amp; B</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>1,810,802</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of turf at sports fields (soccer, baseball, lawn bowling, football, cricket)</td>
<td>1x every 5 working days</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>City Staff (permanent and summer students starting May 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works Parks &amp; Cemeteries</td>
<td>Class C &amp; D</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mowing and Trimming of turf at sports fields (soccer, baseball, lawn bowling, football, cricket)</td>
<td>1x every 7 working days</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>City Staff (permanent and summer students starting May 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Management Department</td>
<td>Contract Management Section</td>
<td>Municipal Property / Facility Type</td>
<td>Season</td>
<td>Size m²</td>
<td>Number of Sites</td>
<td>Approx # of Cuts per season per site</td>
<td>Service Description</td>
<td>Service Level Description</td>
<td>Contract #</td>
<td>Contract end Date</td>
<td>Service Providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>Processing &amp; Disposal</td>
<td>Public Works Facilities Waste Management</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mowing and trimming of turf at Community Recycling Centers, transfer Stations, Materials Recycling Facility, central Composting Facility and Glenbrook Landfill Site</td>
<td>1 x every 5 business days - except at Glenbrook Landfill which is done as needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site Operations Contractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>Roads Operations</td>
<td>Roads Operations Rural Roadside</td>
<td>Spring, Fall</td>
<td>2,213,000</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mechanical Mowing of the City’s rural ditch lines</td>
<td>2 cuts annually - spring cut extends from road to shoulder to centerline of ditch, fall cur extends from road shoulder to edge of Road Allowance</td>
<td>C11-33-11 Annual Roadside Mowing</td>
<td>June 1, 2015</td>
<td>Aesthetics roadside Mowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>Water &amp; Wastewater</td>
<td>Public Works Facilities water &amp; waste water (79)</td>
<td>May 1-Oct 31</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mowing and trimming of turf at water and waste water facilities</td>
<td>Ranges from 2 to 17 cust per season, depending on the location</td>
<td>C11-50-10 Grass cutting &amp; Maintenance Services Required at WWTP</td>
<td>May 1, 2014</td>
<td>Topper Enterprises, BySeasons Inc., Erin Mills Gardening &amp; Landscaping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>