Council Direction:

At the March 27, 2006 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council approved funding in the amount of $50,000 for the 2006 Trees Across Hamilton Program with direction to staff to confirm a source of funding for the “one time” commitment through the Public Works, Infrastructure and Environment Committee. In addition staff was directed to investigate alternative sources of funding for the program beyond 2006.

Information:

The Trees Across Hamilton program was initiated last year in an effort to undertake community based naturalized tree plantings in each Ward across the City. The 2005 pilot program was carried out over six weekends with volunteers, Ward Councillors, and staff participating in the tree planting events. In total, 3,000 tree whips and 2,000 seedlings were planted in thirteen different locations. Staff are currently planning the 2006 program, assessing candidate “whip” planting sites in each ward, and procuring native species plant materials for installation. Similar to last year, Councillors can support the program by assisting with volunteer recruitment; Community Liaison Coordinator, Tara-lea Beaudoin is available to assist with volunteer coordination (extension 1482).

Respecting 2006 program funding requirement of $50,000, Finance Staff have recommended the Tax Stabilization Reserve as a source of funding. Staff Report PW05148 (Trees Across Hamilton-Volunteer Naturalization Planting Program) proposed an interim program guideline and a feasibility study respecting the establishment of a Hamilton Trees Foundation to provide sustainable program funding through private and corporate donations. A staff report will be provided later in the year addressing recommendations for the creation of a Trees Foundation serving Hamilton.
Staff will provide an update to Council detailing the results of the feasibility study. Should you require further information in the interim, please contact Mike McNamara, Manager of Forestry and Horticulture at extension 3919.

Gerry Davis, CMA
Acting General Manager
Public Works