

Staff Memorandum



To	Mayor Alex Nuttall and Members of Council
Subject	2025 Ice Storm Recovery Update
Date	June 4, 2025
Ward	All
From	Dave Friary, Director of Operations Kevin Rankin, Manager of Parks and Forestry
Executive Member Approval	Bala Araniyasundaran, General Manager of Infrastructure and Growth Management
CAO Approval	Michael Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update concerning the status of the ongoing recovery and clean-up operations in relation to damage caused from the March 29th and 30th Ice Storm that swept through our region.

Recovery and Clean-up Operations in May

The March 29th and 30th Ice Storm that swept through our region had a devastating impact to trees and hydro infrastructure across the Region. The northern part of Barrie was particularly hard hit with ice accumulation greater than 15mm in most areas. Operations Department staff, along with support from other key departments such as Waste Management and Environmental Sustainability, have been working to manage the resulting tree debris created on public and private property.

Due to the nature of the event, the City's clean-up operation is best described in phases that will take place over months. The damage to trees and vegetation will have a lasting impact that will take years to recover. The phases of work associated with the City trees are described below:

Phase 1 (completed):

- Getting traveled portion of streets open/cleared and ensuring driveway entrances are open.
- Removing immediate hazards over roads and sidewalks.

Phase 2 (Underway and status update as of May 27, 2025 is as follows):

- Clearing sidewalks and collecting downed branches on boulevards and collection of private brush piled on boulevards and within road rights-of-way (*projected completion June 7th*)
- Inventory of damaged trees – by Tree Risk Assessor Qualified and Certified Arborists (*Streets 100% complete, Parks 95% complete, forest edges & trails 60% complete*)
- Clean-up of fallen debris from damaged trees in all city parks (*90% complete*)

- Removing trees that sustained critical damage, as identified by a Tree Risk Assessor Qualified and Certified Arborist, and pose an immediate or high-risk hazard (*80% of 4,400 completed*)
 - Please note that trees identified for removal by the initial assessor are re-checked by a certified arborist prior to removal. Arborists will be recommending pruning and other measures to save as many damaged trees as possible, however all trees that are structurally unsound, or will become so in a short time period will have to be removed. Authority to prune, remove and plant City owned trees is granted in the Public Tree By-law (2014-116).
- Pruning broken (and hanging) branches from trees, (*46% of 9,300 completed*)
- Clearing fallen city trees from private yards/back yards. There are 125 km of forest edge bordering on private properties, with currently 893 known locations where tree branches or whole trees have fallen along this edge. (*16% completed*)
- Clearing of fallen and hanging trees and branches over 150km of trails (*10% completed*)

Phase 3 (not started):

- Stump removal (grinding out) of all destroyed trees
- Replanting of trees
- Long term care of damaged trees (monitoring and additional pruning, watering and fertilizing as necessary)
- Forest Health Assessments completed to determine short- and long-term management needs for heavily affected forested areas
- Complete City canopy assessment to ascertain total canopy loss as a result of the ice storm.

The work has transitioned to certified arborists for pruning, removals and highly technical removals (e.g. crane assisted) behind residents' properties. During May there have been anywhere between 47 to 91 crews working across the city completing clean-up each day. Crews have included City Forestry staff, pre-qualified forestry contractors and their subcontractors, and brush and material collection contractors.

Landfill Operations have shifted to manage the large influx of brush brought to the landfill from residents and contractors. As of May 29, 2025, the Landfill has accepted approximately 9,500 tonnes of wood, brush and branch waste from city staff/contractors and residents (in approximately 6,000 loads) since April 1, 2005.

Landfill hours were adjusted to increase operating days and times for residents, contractors and city staff to deposit material. Tipping fees for residential brush were waived at the landfill site until Saturday, May 31, 2025 to support storm clean-up. The Recycling Depot, located at the lower gate area of the site, opened early for the season and was temporarily accepting small loads of residential brush debris. Large loads/commercial traffic must use the upper landfill/scales. For more information about the landfill, visit barrie.ca/landfill.

Brush and chips brought to the landfill are being processed and hauled away by an external contractor at no cost to the city in addition to reuse in city parks for lining trails, dog parks, naturalization areas and for stormwater pond clean outs.

Provincial Disaster Assistance Program

The Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance (MDRA) program helps municipalities recover from extraordinary costs after a natural disaster. A disaster is defined as a sudden, unexpected, extraordinary, natural event that results in eligible municipal costs at least equal to three percent of a municipality's own purpose taxation levy. Details on the program were included in the April 27, 2025 Memorandum to Council on the Ice Storm.

Under this program, eligible costs up to the approximate threshold of \$8.5 million would be funded by the Province at 75%, with 95% funding available for eligible costs that exceed this threshold.

Eligible expenses include capital costs to repair public infrastructure, as well as certain operating costs. Some examples of eligible and ineligible costs are as follows:

Eligible costs include:

- Debris cleanup crews from outside service providers
- Rental of specialized equipment (excavators)
- Employee expenses directly related to the disaster (e.g., meals, mileage)
- Repair or restoration of municipal property and infrastructure (e.g., municipal roads, buildings, sidewalks) to pre-disaster condition

Ineligible costs include:

- Regular salaries and benefits of employees, even if the employee has been diverted to disaster-related work
- Grinding of tree stumps, tree replacement or tree canopy restoration
- Damage to private property

The preliminary estimated eligible costs for cleaning up from the ice storm that will be submitted to the MDRA program for funding are summarized in the table below.

Expense Types	Projected Cost
Contracted Services	\$23,881,586
Equipment Rentals	\$474,870
Assistance from other Municipalities	\$111,500
Municipal Asset Repairs	\$90,000
Overtime Expenses	\$227,000
Capital and Operating Equipment Expenses	\$170,000
Total Projected Expenses	\$24,954,956
Estimated Disaster Relief Funding	\$22,013,355
Estimated Municipal Expenses	\$2,941,601

The submission deadline for the funding is July 28, 2025 (120 days after the ice storm). These are projected estimates based on work completed plus projected work. Stump removal and replacement tree planting are not eligible MDRA program expenses and will be included in a separate Staff Report to General Committee for consideration on June 11, 2025.

More details on the day-to-day operations updates on status are available on the City website (www.barrie.ca/alerts/ice-storm).

Appendix:

N/A

Memo Author:

Kevin Rankin, Manager of Parks and Forestry Operations

File #:

N/A

Pending #:

N/A