

Staff Memorandum



To	Mayor A. Nuttall and Members of Council
Subject	2025 Ice Storm Recovery Update
Date	October 22, 2025
Ward	All
From	D. Friary, Director of Operations K. Rankin, Manager of Parks and Forestry
Executive Member Approval	B. Araniyasundaran, General Manager of Infrastructure and Growth Management
CAO Approval	M. 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 & 30th Ice Storm that swept through our region.

Recovery and Clean-up Operations in May

The March 29th & 30th Ice Storm that swept through our region had a devastating impact to trees and hydro infrastructure across the Region. Operations Department staff, along with support from other key departments such as Waste Management and Environmental Sustainability, have completed the clean-up phase of the ice storm.

Due to the nature of the event, the City's clean-up operation was described in two phases spanning over the past 6 months. The damage to trees and vegetation will have a lasting impact that will take years to recover and is detailed in the recovery program (phase 3). The phases of work are described below:

Phase 1 - Clean-up Operations (completed):

- Getting traveled portion of 1,676 km of streets open/cleared and ensuring driveway entrances are open
- Removing immediate hazards over roads and sidewalks

Phase 2 - Clean-up Operations (completed September 30, 2025):

- Clearing of 688km of sidewalks and collecting downed branches on boulevards and collection of private brush piled on boulevards and within road rights-of-way
- Tree Risk Assessment of >46,000 damaged trees – by Tree Risk Assessor Qualified and Certified Arborists
- Clean-up of fallen debris from ice storm damage
- Removing trees >3,200 street and park trees and 2,000 trees along woodlot edges and trails that sustained critical damage, as identified by a Tree Risk Assessor Qualified and Certified Arborist, and posed an immediate or high-risk hazard

- Pruning broken (and hanging) branches from 9,159 street trees and 830 open space park trees
- Clearing fallen city trees from private yards/back yards. There are 125 km of forest edge bordering on private properties where tree branches or whole trees failed from ice damage. Over 900 residential properties had all or portions of city trees fallen into them.
- Clearing of fallen and hanging trees and branches over 150km of trails
- Assessments and clearing branch/tree debris from 456km of City waterways and 425 acres of stormwater management areas

Phase 3 - Recovery and Replanting Program (underway):

- Stump removal (grinding out) of all destroyed trees (*commenced in July and are projected to be completed by end of 2025*).
- Replanting of trees on streets, parks and natural areas scheduled to commence in Spring 2026.
 - Council Motion 25-G-173 approved the Ice Storm Replanting and Recovery capital project funding on June 18, 2025
 - Staff have applied under the Growing Canada's Community Canopies – Tree Planting grant funding which could cover up to 50% of eligible replanting costs.
 - Information on the replanting program available online at www.barrie.ca > Ice Storm Replanting & Recovery
- 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 (*started Aug 2025, with completion by September 2026*)
- Complete City canopy assessment to ascertain total canopy loss as a result of the ice storm (*completion estimated December 2025*)

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 June 4, 2025 Memorandum to Council on the Ice Storm. The submission deadline for the funding is October 31, 2025.

Stump removal and replacement tree planting are not eligible MDRA program expenses and were included in a separate Staff Report to General Committee on June 11, 2025.

Details on the day-to-day operations and updates on status continue to be 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