



**ACER Association for Canadian Educational Resources**  
**Pandemic Response Strategy - Q1 Report**  
**March 21 – June 21, 2020**

**ACER Canada – AGM held June 14, 2020 [www.acer-acre.ca](http://www.acer-acre.ca)**

ACER Canada held its 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting as its first virtual event. More than 30 people attended, with an audience reach from Paris, Vancouver, Thunder Bay, Cobourg and across the GTHA. Below are some highlights.

**Membership**

The AGM resolved to create a temporary no fee Emergency “Cover Me” COVID Pandemic Membership, to recognize the impact of pandemic. The intent is to attract membership, by reducing financial barriers to participate. This will also encourage affiliation and information exchange and resourcing amongst residents under evolving Reopen and Recovery regulations.

- o AGM Press Release: [https://bit.ly/ACER-2020-AGM\\_NOTICE-Press-Release](https://bit.ly/ACER-2020-AGM_NOTICE-Press-Release)
- o ACER Canada Newsletter: [ACER Spring/Summer 2020 Newsletter](#)
- o Peel Weekly News: [Local Group Plants Hope at Annual Meeting](#)

ACER Canada is positioning its Post-COVID business from the insight that its market position is LIFO - Last In First Out, because of its not-for-profit charity status in the environmental research sector, where jobs are predominated by women. ACER's volunteer base is mostly drawn from people resident in low tree-canopy areas, with worst health and socio-economic impacts under COVID-19 infection and lockdown.

ACER Canada is encouraged by research and thought leadership which understands there is no return to what was normal, and that sustainable recover depends on walkable, livable residential areas with tree canopy so all people can breathe.

**Funding**

ACER Canada learned it is one of 20 proposals of 400 submissions from across North America that was approved for funding from Arbor Day Foundation via TD Green Spaces initiative. Under the Project Crossroads: Planting for Change umbrella, the funding will plant up to 1500 tree specimens for climate change research in five identified low tree-canopy heat islands within the Bramalea SNAP precinct (Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program).

**COVID-19 Response**

ACER Canada lost its spring 2020 planting season to pandemic lockdown.

Since March 2020 declaration of the pandemic emergency, ACER Canada has made greater use of its website and social media platforms to promote distance learning activities for STEM curriculum. ACER Canada uses the aggregator hashtag #DistanceLearning

**Pandemic Planting Protocol - Field-Testing and Training**

ACER Canada's new pandemic planting protocol to respect new physical distancing, safety and health restrictions was created with peer review by forestry and conservation experts. The Model builds on socially restricted bubbles, and careful sequence of pre-scheduled planting activities, according to tasks and abilities. Field testing will be undertaken by municipal forestry staff by the end of July.



In September, a demonstration planting will take place, in anticipation of October planting for the balance of tree specimens.

ACER Canada staffing was adjusted. Employees were eligible for CERB.

ACER Canada is creating a proposal under new federal funding announced for not-for-profit Emergency Response.

Canada Student Jobs funding scaled up under federal pandemic response. A university graduate student with background with education-based international community development has been hired. An included task is an academic paper to assess impact of COVID-19 upon residents in the target Project Crossroads: Planting for Change sites, who will participate in planting days.

## **Collaborations with Stakeholders and Community**

### **Earth Day 2020**

#### **Mississauga Climate Change Network**

April 22, 2020 - On the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day, Project Crossroads: Planting for Change was included in a suite of topics presented to Mississauga Climate Change Network. The webinar is archived at <http://mississaugaclimateaction.ca/>. Select Earth Day 2020 tab.

ACER Canada founder Alice Casselman was recorded on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/LWNabcYbe0>.

- View Slides: [https://bit.ly/ProjectCrossroads\\_Earth-Day-2020\\_MCA-Network](https://bit.ly/ProjectCrossroads_Earth-Day-2020_MCA-Network)

#### **Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee**

To recognize the pandemic experience to expose higher health risks for people living areas of low tree canopy and degraded environments, Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy issued its first-ever tweet to recognized Earth Day:

[https://twitter.com/Peel\\_Poverty/status/1252987841145196544](https://twitter.com/Peel_Poverty/status/1252987841145196544)

Peel Poverty Reduction Committee commits to ensure a livable community for all. #EarthDay2020  
#Peelpovertyreductionstrategy

#### **Peel Region – COVID19 Response - Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy**

In advocacy for climate justice, progress updates on Project Crossroads: Planting for Change are made at meetings of Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy - Advocacy and Awareness Roundtable (PRS-AAR).

At June 2, 2020 meeting Peel health data confirms experience of higher morbidity and mortality rates of COVID19 infection coincide with heat islands of low tree canopy mapped out of Project Crossroads stakeholder collaborations held by ACER Canada October-November 2020.

PRS-AAR was also updated on the webinar convened by Partners in Project Green: "The Business Case for Natural #Infrastructure", which is collecting data to show cashflow benefits and costs savings inherent with improved Green Infrastructure to save energy and mitigate damage from extreme weather events. <https://partnersinprojectgreen.com/resources/the-business-case-for-natural-infrastructure/>

As a result, policy recommendations of PRS-AAR to the PRS-Steering Committee on a Peel-relevant response to COVID-19 recovery request the inclusion of Peel Climate Change Plan as a consideration for imagining the post-COVID economy.