

# COMMITTEE REPORT



TO **Planning & Building, Engineering and Environment  
Committee**

SERVICE AREA Planning & Building, Engineering and Environment  
DATE February 21, 2012

**SUBJECT Draft Urban Forestry Management Plan**  
REPORT NUMBER 12-14

## SUMMARY

### **Purpose of Report:**

To present a Draft of the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

### **Committee Action:**

To receive Report 12-14 in advance of stakeholder and public consultation related to a Draft of the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

## RECOMMENDATION

"THAT report 12-14 dated February 21, 2012, from the Planning & Building, Engineering and Environment entitled Draft Urban Forestry Management Plan be received."

## BACKGROUND

The consulting firms of Urban Forest Innovations Incorporated and Beacon Environmental were retained to work with staff to develop an Urban Forestry Management Plan.

A framework for the Urban Forestry Management Plan was completed and approved by Council in November 2007. The Framework provided planning and operational context for urban forest management in the City; laid out a structure for strategic planning; identified key areas that needed addressing such as public communication, tree inventory, sustainable management, connectivity; and put forth 25 recommendations addressing the above.

Following the adoption of the framework, staff and the consulting team began to address some of the recommendations and held stakeholder and community workshops in the spring of 2009. A Council Report entitled 'Strategic Urban Forestry Management Plan and Tree-By Law Update', dated July 20, 2009, gave an overview of the success and findings of the public and stakeholder meetings and

---

recommended staff move forward with a draft Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP).

Background information on the City's Framework for the Urban Forestry Management Plan is available on the City's website at <http://www.guelph.ca/living.cfm?itemid=76780&smocid=1780>

## **REPORT**

The need for an Urban Forest Management Plan has been recognized by the City and members of the community, and is supported by Council directives. The 2007 framework and recent Official Plan policy updates (OPA 42) which have both been approved by Council, strongly support the development and implementation of this Plan.

The UFMP (Attachment 1) outlines a vision, key principles and goals for the improvements of the City's Urban Forest. It also updates and builds on the 25 recommendations from the 2007 framework, taking into consideration stakeholder and public input from the 2009 workshops, current City resources and practices, best practices and precedents in other municipalities, and assembles 21 redefined UFMP Recommendations as deliverables.

The vision, principles and goals provided in the Plan are intended to guide the development and implementation of recommendations over a 20 year period. The 20 year Plan is broken into a framework of four, five-year periods that allows for flexibility and revisions in response to changing conditions, practices in forest management, and budgetary constraints.

Recommendations in this Plan have been assigned timing that are either within one of the Five Year Management Plans, or extend across several five year periods. This Plan also includes a summary of the recommendations specific to the first Five Year Management Plan (Attachment 1 – Appendix B).

### **Vision:**

The vision, developed in partnership with stakeholders, is to build a strong and healthy tree canopy using a variety of growing and maintenance techniques best suited for Guelph and its residents, and is contained within the Plan as follows:

*"The City of Guelph will foster the health and sustainability of its community by maximizing its urban forest cover. Continually pursuing and promoting the implementation of best practices for tree protection, tree establishment and tree maintenance will provide a range of environmental, social and economic benefits for residents, and habitat for a diversity of plant and animal species. By setting an example on its own lands and supporting expanded local stewardship, the City will enjoy and sustain its urban forest for the long term."*

---

**Plan Principles:**

1. Develop and maintain a good understanding of the City's urban forest.
2. Assess and monitor the state of the City's urban forest management program at regular intervals.
3. Continually seek creative ways to leave space for and integrate existing trees into new and infill development.
4. Plant the right tree in the right place, for the right reasons.
5. Consider new technologies to integrate trees downtown and in other built-up settings.
6. Improve resilience to climate change and other stressors by managing the urban forest for optimal species and structural diversity, and health.
7. Strive to maintain City trees in a healthy and safe condition.
8. Recognize the value of and invest in the City's green infrastructure on a long-term basis.
9. Take an adaptive management approach to urban forest initiatives at all levels.

**Goals:**

1. Improve knowledge of the City's urban forest resources, particularly outside of natural areas, through a more comprehensive inventory program.
2. Monitor and review the status of the City's urban forest management every five to ten years using established criteria and indicators, and revise planning and practices as required to ensure ongoing progress towards realizing the vision.
3. Foster a "tree friendly" culture among City staff through interdepartmental coordination on tree issues and sharing of ideas and best practices.
4. Foster a "tree friendly" culture in the community through exemplary programs and activities on municipal lands, sharing best practices and techniques for application on private lands, and providing support and incentives for tree protection and planting.
5. Transition towards proactive tree establishment and replacement whereby all plantable spots in the City are utilized, including underplanting in areas dominated by mature trees.
6. Explore the use of new technologies in selected areas for integration of trees in hardscapes such as downtown and parking lots.
7. Move towards proactive tree risk assessment and Plant Health Care practices on municipal lands, and reduce the need for emergency response.
8. Improve the resilience of the urban forest to current and anticipated stressors by implementing policies and management practices that optimize the diversity of tree species, structure and age classes.
9. Expand and improve partnerships and funding related to urban forest initiatives on private lands, including building partnerships with local industries and businesses.
10. Recognize the urban forest as a critical municipal asset and infrastructure component through a long-term commitment to proactive management, adequate resource allocation and joint stewardship by the City and the community.

---

## **The Plan:**

The Urban Forestry Management Plan is broken down into seven chapters:

1. The Context for Urban Forest Management in Guelph
2. Setting the Direction : Plan Principles, Vision and Goals
3. Getting Organized: Management and Monitoring
4. Planning for Trees: Legislation, Policies and Guidelines
5. Leading by Example: Protection, Establishment and Enhancement
6. Sharing the Responsibility: Outreach, Stewardship and Partnership
7. Moving Forward with the Plan: Implementation

Chapters 1 and 2 outline the Background/History, Rationale and the Plan Direction, while Chapters 3 through 6 look at the City's Current Forestry Practices, Best Practices and Innovative Ideas of other municipalities, the Gaps and Opportunities that should be considered, and then provides Recommendations. Chapter 7 discusses implementation of the Plan.

## **Recommendations:**

The UFMP contains 21 recommendations (Attachment 2 – Summary of Recommendations). The recommendations are not in order of significance but have been prioritized within the context of the 20-year framework (e.g. all high priority recommendations are to be undertaken within the first five years).

A fundamental recommendation and prerequisite to initiating the Plan will be the creation of a Senior Urban Forester position- Recommendation #1. This individual will take ownership and champion the implementation of the Plan; coordinating, managing and ensuring key goals are achieved throughout the entire 20 year period.

Other critical recommendations that should be implemented early are as follows:

- The formation of an internal interdepartmental 'Tree Team' – Recommendation #2. Comprised of key staff from all departments involved with tree related issues, planning for and/or maintaining. This group, headed by the Urban Forester, will meet regularly to review plans and/or discuss issues and come up with solutions.
- Inventory of all municipal trees - Recommendation #3. This will be a crucial step in the Plan and will allow staff to have a complete and thorough understanding of the existing urban forest before assessing and implementing new strategies of management/maintenance and tree canopy cover growth. For example, it is impossible to know what the impact of Emerald Ash Borer will be on municipal lands without knowing how many ash trees there are, and where they are located.
- Expand the City's capacity for planting and maintenance of municipal trees – Recommendation #5. City forestry staff are currently primarily able to respond to service requests on an as needed basis and undertake a basic level of replacement tree planting. Additional staff are required to pursue proactive tree management on City lands and expand tree planting efforts,

---

as well as better manage the risk presented by older trees in some of the City's parks and neighbourhoods.

- Develop and Implement an Emerald Ash Borer Strategy – Recommendation #6. This destructive pest has been confirmed within City limits and will quickly spread and kill the Ash tree population. Immediate action is required to help combat this inevitable situation.
- Implement and assess use of the new Tree Technical Manual – Recommendation #13. This document will provide the guidance required to help ensure trees are better protected and planted in all types of projects.

### **Five Year Management Plan:**

The Management Plan is comprised of four, five-year periods that prioritize actions and resource requirements. The priorities are based on a logical and well developed sequence of events, designed by the consulting team and staff, composed of High, Medium or Low Priority/ Target Timing.

Recommendations and associated costs for the First Five Years (2013 -2017) are highlighted by year in a table format as Appendix B of the Plan. The second five years (2018 – 2022) are also indicated in this table under one column as many of the first five year recommendations carry over into the second period and beyond. Nevertheless, it is difficult to confirm the timing of actions beyond the first five year period so flexibility is built into the Plan to allow for operational or financial conditions and future Council decisions. It will be the responsibility of the Urban Forester, the newly formed Tree Team and arm's length Urban Forest Advisory Committee to recommend to Council when Recommendations and Actions should be initiated and report which have been completed, which are incomplete and if new recommendations need to be proposed.

### **OPA 42 and 2011 Tree Canopy Study:**

OPA 42 speaks to the City working towards achieving a 40% tree canopy coverage, which is a very ambitious goal for an urban municipality. The recently released 2011 Canopy Coverage Study estimates the City's current canopy coverage at approximately 20% and has recommended that further analysis be completed to confirm an achievable canopy coverage target within the Plan period. The full dedication by the City to implement the UFMP in its entirety, as well as the commitment and support of the private sector, residents and other stakeholders will be necessary to achieve significant increases in the City's canopy coverage over the next 20 years.

### **Emerald Ash Borer:**

In recent months Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has been detected within City limits by the City Forestry Department. An EAB specific report will be coming forward to Committee in April of 2012 with further details regarding immediate actions required and financial impacts.

### **Implementation:**

The implementation of the UFMP will require coordination across many departments in the City and will require the updating of many policies and development

---

standards. These standards include, but will not be limited to, Site Plan Guidelines and Street Tree Planting Guidelines, Storm Water Management Design Guidelines, Property Demarcation Policy, Naturalization Policy and the Engineering Alternative Design Standards.

The hiring of specialized staff and support staff, and the training of existing staff will also be part of the initial implementation. The Plan also recommends that much of the work be completed in-house provided necessary resources are established and that only time sensitive and/or intensive activities be outsourced.

**Conclusion:**

The UFMP is a comprehensive document that provides high-level strategies that are translated into on-the-ground deliverables - the end goal being the management of a sustainable urban forest within Guelph over the next twenty years.

With the threat of invasive insects that include Emerald Ash Borer, Asian Long-Horned Beetle, Gypsy Moth and other non-native species, the health and growing viability of our urban forest is under constant attack and pose serious danger to the canopy. This, along with other factors such as financial and development commitments will be considered when evaluating the successes of the UFMP every five years of the twenty year plan and be brought back to Council in the form of an Information Report.

**Next Steps:**

Following presentations to PBEE Committee and Council, a Stakeholder Meeting and a Public Open house will be scheduled in the coming months at City Hall. This will be an opportunity for all interested parties to review and discuss in more detail the Plan and to aid in its completion. Staff will bring back the final recommended UFMP later in 2012.

In addition to the UFMP, a Tree Technical Manual (TTM) has been drafted and is in the process of being reviewed by City staff. The TTM is under development in part to ensure the Recommendations within the UFMP can be implemented on all future projects by providing new or alternative details that work in conjunction with City policies, guidelines and engineering standards. Once an internal draft is completed, staff will begin discussions with stakeholder groups to gather feedback and plan to bring the TTM to Committee/ Council later in 2012.

**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Goal 5 – A community-focused, responsive and accountable government.

Objective 5.4 – Partnerships to achieve strategic goals and objectives.

Goal 6 – A leader in conservation and resource protection/enhancement.

Objective 6.6 - A biodiverse City with the highest tree canopy percentage among comparable municipalities.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the information currently available, staff have prepared the below summary to demonstrate the potential impact of the UFMP on the City's tax supported operating and capital budgets. In 2013, the UFMP would result in increased operating expenditures of \$520,000 which translates into a 0.30% impact on the City's tax levy requirement. This includes the cost of hiring 4.5 full time equivalents (FTEs) and approximately \$120,000 per year for studies, education and promotional expenditures. An additional FTE is scheduled to be added in 2016. The chart below also reflects the capital funding requirements that are currently not included in the City's 10-year capital budget. In 2013, the UFMP proposes \$138,000 in capital spending that will be funded from City reserves. This funding, plus funding in all subsequent years, would need to be accommodated within the City's 20% capital financing guideline and will require the delay and/or deferral of projects currently included in the capital forecast.

### Urban Forest Management Plan: Impact on Tax Supported Operating and Capital Budgets

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 - 2022	Total Impact
<b>Operating Requirements</b>							
New FTE Expansions	\$400,000	(\$20,000)	\$0	\$84,000	\$0	\$0	\$434,000
Studies	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$50,000	\$155,000
Education & Promotion Costs	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000
<b>Net Increase/(Decrease) to Operating Budget</b>	<b>\$520,000</b>	<b>(\$20,000)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$84,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$639,000</b>
<b>% Impact on Operating Budget</b>							
	<b>0.30%</b>	<b>-0.01%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.04%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.02%</b>	
<b>Capital Requirements (City Share)</b>							
New Rooting Technologies	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
EAB Tree Replacement**	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$500,000	\$700,000
Forestry Equipment	\$38,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$38,000
<b>Total Capital Requirements</b>	<b>\$138,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	<b>\$1,738,000</b>

\* assumes a 3% annual increase to the City's tax levy requirement

\*\*reflects the incremental increase required to carry out this recommendation in comparison to what is currently included in the 10-year capital forecast

The financial implications of the recommended management plan will be more fully considered during the review of the Draft UFMP. If the UFMP is ultimately approved as a long term management framework, the financial implications will be vetted through the Council budgetary process to ensure accommodation within the Council budgetary guidelines.

## DEPARTMENTAL CONSULTATION

Planning staff have consulted with a number of City departments that may be affected by the Urban Forestry Management Plan including:

**Planning & Building, Engineering and Environment:** Engineering Services, Water Services, Policy Planning and Urban Design, Development Planning

**Operations and Transit:** Park Maintenance and Development, Forestry Services, Community Connectivity and Transit

---

**Communications:** Corporate Services

**Corporate Administration:** Downtown Renewal, Economic Development and Tourism

**Financial Services:** Financial Planning

## COMMUNICATIONS

As part of the consultation process to help inform the UFMP, stakeholder and public workshops/presentations occurred in the spring of 2009. An initial round of consultations was also undertaken in the fall of 2010 at the outset of this study with key stakeholders.

Following this Report being received by Council, notices will be advertised in the Tribune inviting interested parties to provide comment and/or attend an open house/workshop in the coming months. Individual notices will also be mailed to all those involved in the first round of discussions in 2009, requesting further comment and/or attendance to an open house/workshop in the coming months.

## ATTACHMENTS

The attachments are available on the City's website at [guelph.ca/ufmp](http://guelph.ca/ufmp). Click on the link for the February, 2012 Draft Urban Forestry Management Plan (with Appendices).

Attachment 1: Draft Urban Forestry Management Plan

[Appendix A](#) – Recommendations from the 2007 Framework for Guelph's Urban Forestry Management Plan: Current Status and Relationship to this Plan.

[Appendix B](#) – Recommendations for the First Five-Year Management Plan (2013-2017).

[Appendix C](#) – Selected online urban forestry resources.

[Appendix D](#) – Criteria and Indicators for Monitoring the State of Guelph's Urban Forest Management.

### Prepared By:

Rory Barr Templeton  
Landscape Planner  
519-822-1260 x2436  
[rory.templeton@guelph.ca](mailto:rory.templeton@guelph.ca)

---

### Recommended By:

Todd Salter  
Acting General Manager  
Planning Services  
519-822-1260 ext. 2395  
[todd.salter@guelph.ca](mailto:todd.salter@guelph.ca)

---

### Recommended By:

Murray Cameron  
General Manager  
Park Maintenance and Development  
519-822-1260 x2007  
[murray.cameron@guelph.ca](mailto:murray.cameron@guelph.ca)

---

### Recommended By:

Janet L. Laird, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Planning & Building, Engineering and Environment  
519-822-1260, ext. 2237  
[janet.laird@guelph.ca](mailto:janet.laird@guelph.ca)