

Date: 2022-05-24

Subject: **2022 – 2032 Urban Forest Management Plan (RM 75/2021) All Wards**

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Report Number: Community Services-2022-654

Recommendations:

1. That the report from Parks Maintenance & Forestry, dated May 24, 2022, to the Committee of Council Meeting of June 22, 2022, re: **2022 – 2032 Urban Forest Management Plan (RM 75/2021) All Wards** be received; and
2. That the 2022 – 2032 Urban Forest Management Plan and supporting technical documents be endorsed by Council

Overview:

- **The Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) is an outcome of the City’s Grow Green Environmental Master Plan, the Brampton 2040 Vision – Living the Mosaic and addresses the September 8, 2021 Committee of Council referred matter RM 75/2021 regarding tree planting and maintenance practices.**
- **The UFMP supports the Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan and the One Million Trees Program.**
- **This is City of Brampton’s first urban forest management plan and is a strategic plan that establishes a vision, seven guiding principles, five goals, fourteen objectives and measurable targets to be achieved within the next ten years.**
- **As part of the engagement process, the City received over 250 art submissions from residents, 450 inputs from residents and stakeholders through a survey and two stakeholder workshops as well as valuable**

feedback and contribution by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River.

- **To achieve the Goals and Objectives of the UFMP, 36 actions have been identified and outlined. The immediate priorities include the commencement of the City tree inventory and the expansion of resources to support operations and strategic planning.**
- **This staff report seeks Council endorsement of the UFMP with the associated supporting technical documents, and additional resources to support the operation, strategic planning and commencement of the City's tree inventory through the 2023 budget cycle.**

Background:

Brampton's urban forest is a vital asset to the City and its residents. This is demonstrated through various strategic City plans, including the Grow Green Environmental Master Plan, Brampton's 2040 Vision, the Community Energy and Emissions Reductions Plan, the One Million Trees Program, and public outreach strategies. Some of the benefits of maintaining and enhancing the City's green canopy include:

- reducing energy use and costs of buildings
- reducing climate change impacts in the community
- improving water quality and wildlife habitat
- improving air quality and public health
- improving mental health and wellbeing
- attracting residents and businesses

To ensure the continued health and adequate servicing of the urban forest, the City recognizes the need for a strategic plan to help manage the City's urban forest. The Grow Green Environmental Master Plan (2014) and Refresh (Council approved in 2020) outline the development and implementation of a UFMP. The UFMP was initiated in December 2019 to support the Urban Forestry section of the Parks Maintenance & Forestry Division by identifying opportunities to improve and maintain the urban forest within Brampton.

Brampton's urban forest is facing multiple pressures from continued growth and urbanization, an increase in invasive pests and diseases (e.g. emerald ash borer, LDD moth, elm disease), and the impacts of extreme weather events (e.g. May 2022 wind storm, 2013 ice storm, annual heat waves). The UFMP identifies the resources and actions required for the successful maintenance, protection and long-term growth of Brampton's urban forest in light of these pressures.

As part of the development process of the UFMP, residents and stakeholders were engaged to provide feedback and input:

- local art contest with over 250 participants
- surveys with over 450 responses
- multiple workshops for internal and external stakeholders
- collaboration with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River

Current Situation:

The UFMP is a key component to achieve the City's urban forestry targets and realize the full benefits of a healthy urban forest. The UFMP is developed based on input and contribution from the community, stakeholders and City partners and builds upon the three technical supporting documents. The UFMP outlines the current conditions and practices and offers 36 recommended actions to be implemented to achieve a long term healthy urban forest. The UFMP identifies the need for greater resources and enhanced maintenance strategies to maintain, grow and protect trees in the City.

Vision

The urban forest is a keystone component of a healthy, sustainable, equitable and resilient community. Our policies and infrastructure are designed to support and protect trees, forest and healthy ecosystems in the urban environment. The City of Brampton recognizes that the urban forest is essential to healthy neighbourhoods, clean air and water and natural ecosystems, while creating opportunities for recreation, education and a prosperous economy.

Guiding Principles

1. Recognizing the urban forest as an essential municipal infrastructure;
2. Collaboration and engagement with stakeholders;
3. Developing sustainable urban forest management;
4. Prioritizing preservation over replacement;
5. Equitable access for all residents;
6. Creating a diverse urban forestry; and
7. Implementing adaptive management and innovation.

Strategic Goals

- Understand – Develop a better understanding of all aspects of the urban forest and its management and utilize the knowledge and data to make better management decisions that help achieve the outcomes for the urban forest and the community.
- Maintain – Improve the health, condition, longevity and safety of trees in Brampton's urban forest.

- Grow – Support the City’s commitment to planting one million trees by 2040, expand the urban forest, strengthen its resilience against a wide range of stressors and enhance its capacity to provide services to the community.
- Protect – Protect existing trees and their growing environments against injury and destruction whenever possible through a coordinated and comprehensive approach to land use planning, development review and tree protection.
- Engage – Encourage all members of the community to engage in urban forest stewardship on both public and private lands and build strong forest partnerships to help realize the vision for Brampton’s urban forest.

Implementation Approach

Staff recommends taking a phased implementation approach with respect to the UFMP, starting with Initiate, followed by Expand and Evaluate.

Phase 1: Initiate (2022 – 2023)

In the first phase, staff will implement actions that are achievable with existing staffing and resources. These actions are considered “quick wins” and can be delivered without additional resources:

- 1.3 – Complete an urban forest canopy and structure study
- 2.3 – Development of a young tree structural pruning program
- 2.6 – Enhance existing tree maintenance programs and practices
- 2.7 – Implementation of a young tree structural pruning program
- 5.8 – Enhance urban forest information sharing and cooperation across City departments

Phase 2: Expand (2023 – 2025)

During this phase, the focus will be on expanding the Urban Forestry section to support operation and strategic planning. Staff will provide Council with a detailed request for additional resources in the 2023 budget submission to commence the City tree inventory project and increase support for units within the Urban Forestry section, subject to Council approval including:

- Urban Forest Health
- Tree Protection Plan and Review
- Urban Forest Strategic Initiatives and Projects
- Outreach and Engagement

Phase 3: Evaluate (2025 – 2027)

Staff will monitor and review the progress of initiated actions, evaluate the Urban Forestry resource strategy and prioritize remaining action items for the following years.

Next Steps

The UFMP identifies a number of enhancements in the City's current maintenance practices. The implementation of these enhancements is predicated on staffing and resources. Based on a high-level benchmarking with neighbouring municipalities, there is a great need for the City to expand its Urban Forestry section to help mitigate the factors including increased summer temperatures, droughts and the spread of invasive species. With Council approval of the UFMP, the immediate priorities would entail obtaining additional resources to support the operation and strategic planning of the Urban Forestry section and the commencement of the City's tree inventory project.

Staff intend to return to Council with an annual update highlighting the status and progress of actions implemented from the UFMP. This will further serve as the basis for any subsequent resource requests in future years to ensure the success of these efforts.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

There are no immediate financial implications associated with the endorsement of the UFMP. The UFMP focuses on collaboration and engagement with both internal and external stakeholders to achieve the strategic goals outlined in the plan. Additional resources and funding required to implement actions of the UFMP will be identified and requested for Council approval, as part of the annual budget process.

Term of Council Priorities:

The implementation of the UFMP supports the Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan, One Million Trees Program, Brampton 2040 Vision and the following Term of Council Priorities:

A City of Opportunities, by establishing community improvements that will increase employment.

A Mosaic, through innovative engagement that will engage a diverse range of stakeholders in meaningful ways to identify neighbourhood needs as it relates to the urban forest.

A Green City, by implementing a green framework to increase resilience to climate change, enhance natural heritage within communities and create resident opportunities to contribute to the improvement of the urban forest

A Healthy and Safe City, by encouraging outdoor recreation, nature connection and unity within green and shaded spaces.

A Well Run City, by providing the public access to Brampton’s urban forest inventory to grow the City’s open data platform.

Conclusion:

The 2022 – 2032 Urban Forest Management Plan presents priority based actions to be implemented by the City and its partners. The UFMP identifies the urban forest as a key component of a healthy, sustainable, equitable and resilient community. With the development of the UFMP, Staff is able to recognize the opportunities to advance the urban forest canopy through 36 recommended action items. With Council’s approval of the UFMP and recommendations, Staff and partners will be able to implement the UFMP that will serve as a guiding document for the next ten years towards the protection, maintenance and growth of Brampton’s urban forest.

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Attachments:

- Appendix A: City of Brampton Urban Forest Management Plan
- Appendix B: Supporting Technical Documents