



Roads and Parks Maintenance Department

TO: Community Services Committee

SUBJECT: Urban Forest Management Plan Implementation Update

Report Number: RPM-16-12

File Number(s): 820-01

Report Date: October 22, 2012

Ward(s) Affected: 1 2 3 4 5 6 All

Date to Committee: November 14, 2012

Date to Council: November 26, 2012

Recommendation: Approve the revised Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP), as described in staff report RPM-16-12; and, Direct the Director of Roads and Parks Maintenance to include a three year contract position required to implement the UFMP in accordance with the recommended timelines in the Roads and Parks Maintenance 2013 proposed budget submission, subject to Council approval.

Purpose:

- Address goal or action in strategic plan
 - Establish new or revised policy or service standard
 - Respond to legislation
 - Respond to staff direction
 - Address other area of responsibility
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Reference to Strategic Plan:

- Vibrant Neighbourhoods
- Prosperity
- Excellence in Government
- N/A

This report supports the city's strategic direction related to vibrant neighbourhoods and specifically, initiative 1.1.d: Implement a tree management plan to protect and enhance the urban forest.

Background:

The development of Burlington's Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP) began in 2009 and was approved by Council on July 5, 2010.

The purpose of the UFMP is:

- To establish a vision for Burlington's urban forest;
 - To review current practices of Burlington and compare them to established best practices in order to improve all aspects of
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urban forest management;

- To inform and support current and future policy and budget directions; and,
- To promote public awareness of the importance of stewardship of Burlington’s urban forest.

Public Consultation was fundamental in developing Burlington’s Urban Forest Management Plan. Internal and external stakeholders from the following organizations were invited to participate in one or more technical meetings, stakeholder workshops, public information centres or individual meetings:

Internal Stakeholders		
Mayor and Members of Council	Engineering	Legal
Senior Management Team	Parks and Recreation	Finance / Risk Management
Planning and Building	Corporate Strategic Initiatives	Roads and Parks Maintenance

External Stakeholders		
Bay Area Restoration	Field & Stream Rescue Team	Halton Peel Naturalist Club
Region of Halton	Halton District School Board	Halton Peel Woodlands and Wildlife Stewardship
Burlington Green	Halton Catholic District School Board	Hamilton Home Builders Association
Burlington Historical Society	Halton District Private Schools	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Burlington Hydro and Hydro One	Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee	Halton Regional Police Services
Burlington Sustainable Development Committee	Halton Environmental Advisory Committee	Burlington Economic Development Corporation
Conservation Halton	Halton Forestry Stewardship Advisory Committee	Royal Botanical Gardens

The UFMP contains 40 recommendations aimed at improving the management of the City’s urban forest. The recommendations are

centred around the following five key objectives:

- Management and Implementation;
- Community Engagement and Stewardship;
- Protection and Preservation;
- Replenishment and Enhancement; and,
- Health Care and Risk Management.

Each of the recommendations included an estimate of resources required for implementation, along with a proposed implementation timeframe (see Appendix A). The UFMP also recommended additional staff in order to meet the recommended implementation schedule. However, no additional resources were approved in 2011 or 2012.

Discussion:

This report has been prepared to update Council on staff's progress over the past two years and to provide two alternative timelines to complete the remaining items, both with and without the provision of additional resources.

As previously mentioned, the UFMP provides 40 recommendations aimed at improving the management of the city's urban forest.

Status of Recommendations

1. Completed Recommendations

The following UFMP recommendations have been completed using existing resources.

Item	UFMP Recommendation	Status
1	Develop appropriate work order management processes to track work requests and work performed on individual inventoried trees within the city's asset management system.	A work order management system has been implemented to track work requests on a per tree basis.
3	Start to document and track trees planted, protected and removed as part of the Site Plan Approval process.	Trees impacted as a result of development are being tracked through the Amanda system.
22	Require an arborist review all city capital projects with tree impacts, and perform regular and documented site inspections.	A consulting arborist has been retained to review capital projects and provide site inspections.
23	Increase resources for city inspection and oversight of tree protection requirements on all project types, and provide training for city staff inspectors.	A consulting arborist has been retained for inspection and oversight of tree protection requirements.

Item	UFMP Recommendation	Status
32	Increase inspection resources to ensure new tree plantings are installed in accordance with standardized specifications and that they survive following installation.	Completed using existing staff resources for contractor oversight.

2. Ongoing Initiatives

The following recommendations are in progress or under development:

Item	UFMP Recommendation	Status
2	Expand the existing tree inventory on city lands by adding data about park trees and street trees north of Highway 5, and increasing the list of parameters collected for each tree to allow for proactive management.	The inventory of park trees has been completed. The inventory of trees north of Highway 5 is anticipated to be complete by Q1 of 2013.
10	Expand and improve the urban forestry section on the city's website to offer more information and resources.	Updates to the city's website are ongoing and expected to be completed by the end of 2012. The inventory of city trees is also available on the website.
29	Increase resources and implement a formal program to plant in public spaces dominated by mature trees (so that regeneration is started before the mature trees must be removed).	Planting in mature areas is being considered as criteria within the annual tree planting program.
30	Develop a program to identify and increase resources to plant more trees in city parks and vacant public locations in urban areas not planned for development.	Planting in parks and vacant locations is occurring within available budget resources.
35	Formalize the city's process for evaluating trees and identifying those requiring removal or risk mitigation.	Being completed through a restructured pruning contract and enhanced inspection programs
40	Formalize programs for and integrate the city's following current practices that are consistent with best practices into the Avantis Maintenance Management System: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the grid pruning and inspection cycle data (currently at seven years), • inspection of cabled trees (annual), • inspection of formal trails in city-owned woodlands (annual), • inspection of mature trees (bi-annual). 	Ongoing – Methods of integrating inspection and maintenance information into the Avantis Management System are being reviewed.

3. Ongoing Planning Initiatives

The UFMP recommendations listed below were identified through internal and external stakeholder collaboration as related to the city’s ongoing updates to the Official Plan and the Site Plan Development Guidelines. As a result, these items have been integrated with one of these processes, as noted below.

Item	Recommendation	Status
14	Amend the city’s Official Plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specifically acknowledge the benefits provided by urban trees and green infrastructure; • include specific policies supporting the development of management plans for city-owned woodlots and other wooded natural areas including creek blocks; and, • include policies supporting the ongoing management and monitoring of the urban forest. 	Referred to Planning staff for consideration through the city update of the Official Plan.
15	Develop a policy-based definition of “significant trees” to guide tree protection during the planning process, and include in the Official Plan and the Site Plan Application guidelines.	
25	Amend the city’s Official Plan to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • objectives that support replenishment and enhancement of the urban forest with a high diversity of predominantly native trees; • specific policies supporting the replacement of trees removed through the development and/or infill process, • the naturalization and reforestation of creek blocks; and • the integration of trees in parks, open spaces and parking areas. 	

Item	Recommendation	Status
16	<p>Amend Site Plan Application Guidelines and guidelines for larger scale developments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include wording from the Planning Act (1990) that supports tree preservation as a condition of site plan approval; • include an objective of maintaining and expanding the city's tree canopy; • require that all trees of at least 10 centimetres in diameter be assessed and documented; • require securities for trees to be protected, and retain securities until an arborist report is provided at least two years after completion of construction confirming tree health; and • require a qualified arborist to conduct site inspections to ensure tree protection measures are implemented and all work proceeds as approved. 	<p>Referred to Planning staff for consideration through the review of Site Plan Application Guidelines, scheduled for completion in 2013.</p>
17	<p>Strengthen the city's current guidelines for addressing boundary vegetation and boundary trees during the development process by incorporating the legal justification provided through the Forestry Act (1998).</p>	
27	<p>Amend the Site Plan Application Guidelines and guidelines for larger scale developments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include wording from the Planning Act (1990) that supports tree planting as a condition of Site Plan approval (where preservation is not feasible); • (once a definition for "significant trees" has been developed) replace the requirement that trees serving a "deemed purpose" must be replaced with the requirement that "significant trees" be replaced; and • allocate a percentage of funds received for parkland dedications to tree planting and management in the city. 	
28	<p>Develop a standard methodology for tree valuation which would provide the basis for setting securities that reasonably reflect the value of private trees deemed to be protected or replaced through the development process.</p>	

Impact of Invasive Species

The emergence of the emerald ash borer (EAB) infestation and subsequent EAB Strategy has resulted in a significant increase in workload. Currently, approximately 0.5 of a full time staff equivalent (FTE) is devoted to co-ordination and oversight of the EAB strategy. It is anticipated that, as the EAB infestation continues to spread across the city, tree removals will become more prevalent, both on public and private property. As a result, the current FTE dedication to the EAB strategy will need to increase to 1.0 FTE. This is based on more staff time required to coordinate the timely removal of ash trees, schedule replanting of replacement trees and for public outreach initiatives.

Given the anticipated increase of staff resources directly related to EAB initiatives, a proposal for a three year contract position has been included in the 2013 proposed budget submission, funded under the Corporate Initiatives Asset Category dedicated to EAB initiatives. An additional staff member in the area of EAB will address the anticipated increased resource requirement as well as allowing staff to focus on implementing the remaining UFMP recommendations.

A permanent FTE is not recommended due to the uncertainty regarding the rate of onset of EAB. Staff will report to Council regarding the further potential need for this position through future annual EAB Action Plans.

2013 Initiatives

The key projects recommended for 2013, assuming approval of an FTE, include the following:

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of a private tree by-law for Burlington (recommendation 21);
2. Complete the review and update of Public Tree By-law number 19-1975 (recommendation 20);
3. Evaluate the state of the city's urban forest through measuring canopy cover (recommendation 7);
4. Initiate a city-wide Woodlot Management Plan (recommendation 4);
5. Complete the delegation of woodlands between 0.5 and one hectare to the Region of Halton (recommendation 19);
6. Develop a pruning cycle for young trees to promote healthy and aesthetic growth (recommendation 37);
7. Review opportunities to coordinate pruning activities with Burlington Hydro (recommendation 5); and,
8. Integrate inspection and maintenance data into Avantis system (recommendation 40).

This work program is based on approval of the three year contract position noted above. Should this position not be approved by Council through the 2013 Budget process, then items 3, 4, 5 and 7 will be deferred to a later time.

The implementation dates of the above initiatives, both with and without the additional contract FTE, have been amended in the UFMP Recommendations and Implementation Schedule (Appendix A).

Private Tree By-law

The subject of a private tree by-law frequently arises in conjunction with development sites. It is important to note that a tree on property that is part of a development application is exempt from private tree by-laws permitted under the Municipal Act.

Input received throughout the UFMP consultation process was mixed, both in favour of and against a private tree by-law. In addition, the results of a survey of other municipalities revealed a wide range of private tree by-laws in existence.

The UFMP recommends that the city complete a detailed study to evaluate the effectiveness of private tree by-laws in other communities, the appropriateness of a by-law for Burlington, and potential resource implications. This recommendation was originally targeted to begin in 2016. Based on feedback received from members of Council and the public, staff recognizes there is an emerging need to begin looking into a private tree by-law sooner. As such, the implementation date for this initiative has been accelerated to 2013.

Remaining Recommendations

Appendix A provides implementation timelines for the remaining recommendations of the UFMP, both assuming that existing staffing levels are maintained as well as with the addition of a three year contract position within the forestry area.

Financial Matters:

The 2013 proposed Capital Budget and Forecast currently being reviewed by Executive Budget Committee includes \$8.9 million over the next 10 years for the management of invasive species, including emerald ash borer. To date, the capital budget has approved funding of \$1.3 million over the last four years.

It is requested that the 2013 proposed budget fund the three year contract position, at an estimated total cost of \$256,130 for three years. The FTE request and the capital budget allocation will be subject to council review and approval of the 2013 budget.

Environmental Matters:

The environmental benefits of trees are well established. The UFMP will provide a long-term planning framework necessary to ensure that Burlington's trees are managed

effectively and efficiently over the coming decades, and to contribute to and support the community's environmental sustainability.

Communication Matters:

Staff provided an update on progress to date regarding the implantation of the UFMP to the Sustainable Development Committee in October 2012. The amended dates for implementation of the remaining UFMP recommendations will be communicated to the stakeholders who were involved in the development of the plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Black
 Manager, Field Services
 (905) 333-6166 ext.6170

Appendices:

A. UFMP Recommendations and Implementation Schedule

Notifications:
 (after Council decision)

Name	Mailing or E-mail Address

Approvals:

*required

 *Department City Treasurer General Manager City Manager

	To be completed by the Clerks Department
Committee Disposition & Comments	
	01-Approved 02-Not Approved 03-Amended 04-Referred 06-Received & Filed 07-Withdrawn
Council Disposition & Comments	
	01-Approved 02-Not Approved 03-Amended 04-Referred 06-Received & Filed 07-Withdrawn