REQUEST FOR A DECISION



Livable Community Committee - October 17, 2024

To: Her Worship Mayor Kate Rogers and Members of City Council

From: Dylan Gamble, Director Engineering and Operations

Date: October 09, 2024

Title: Urban Forest Management Strategy

ISSUE:

City Council on August 22, 2022 directed staff to deliver an Urban Forest Management Strategy ("Strategy"). The City of Fredericton Urban Forest Management Strategy is complete and ready to be considered for adoption by City Council.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

A. Recommendation:

It is recommended that the following resolution be forwarded to City Council for consideration:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the City of Fredericton hereby receives and adopts the Urban Forest Management Strategy, as prepared by Stantec Consulting Ltd. dated October 9, 2024 AND directs the Director of Engineering & Operations to develop annual implementation plans to execute the recommendations for consideration of City Council in future budgets.

SITUATION, BACKGROUND & DISCUSSION:

SITUATION:

- a. <u>Current (extant) Direction</u>. At the August 22, 2022, Regular City Council meeting, P22-08 was approved, and Stantec Consulting was retained to create the Urban Forest Management Strategy.
- b. <u>Alignment</u>. Part of the Environmentally Responsible Guiding Principle in particular the statement that the city wants to be an environmental steward through the thoughtful renewal of infrastructure and natural assets.
- c. Link to <u>CAO goal or inflight</u>. This is corporate priority CP10 –Urban Forest Management Strategy.
- d. Why is this coming to Council and why now? The Urban Forest Management Strategy is now complete for City Council consideration and adoption.

BACKGROUND.

The City of Fredericton – Parks and Trees Division, in alignment with Fredericton's Municipal Master Plan, Climate Adaptation Plan, and Fredericton Growth Strategy, received City Council direction on August 22, 2022 to proceed with RFP P22-08 For the Supply of Consultation Services to Coordinate and Complete Preparations Necessary for the Production of an Urban Forest Management Strategy. The Fredericton Municipal Plan from 2017 predicts that by 2041 population will increase by 50% from 60,000 to 90,000. This will without a doubt put additional pressure on Fredericton's Urban Forest, and urban canopy cover. Fredericton has a history of

urban forest establishment through street tree plantings dating back over 200 years, further strengthened by creation of the Fredericton Tree Commission, an advisory body on all things relating to the urban forest. There is well established service level delivery relating to tree care and maintenance of the city's street trees and many other forested parks and natural areas. The Urban Forest Management Strategy analyzes the city's current urban forest and identifies gaps to guide us into the future considering the period of growth Fredericton is undergoing, changing climate, changing values and other potential risks.

The city's forest has been under many pressures, dating back over 70 years ago with the identification of Dutch elm disease, to more recently with the active infestation of Emerald Ash Borer, and in the future the possible detection of Hemlock Wolly Adelgid and Spongy Moth – all introduced pests presenting additional challenges on good management of the beloved urban forest. Staff have established themselves as leaders dealing with these introduced pressures. These introduced pressures coupled with climate change, and increasing development and the use of urban forests requires strategic management of the city's natural assets. The strategy includes evaluation of existing species mix, tree density, tree health, leaf area, and canopy cover, as well as other species to establish in the urban forest. It highlights the need to balance nonforest values such as grasslands or flood plains, risks such as fire, climate change but also to balance out the urban forest with other uses of city land such as food forests. This strategy will guide staff in long term planning to identify current plantable locations and possible areas to naturalize or reforest. Building on the already excellent stewardship of the urban forest this will prepare the city for known challenges and better prepare staff for unknown challenges of the future.

DISCUSSION

The City of Fredericton Urban Forest Management Strategy consolidates all existing forest management practices, the data, engaged with City Council, staff, the Fredericton Tree Commission and the public to create a guiding document to sit within other City plans to shape future urban forest management to continue to be good stewards of the land and deliver a healthy resilient forest.

This strategy will be executed over the next twenty-five (25) years through annual implementation plans. The strategy includes twenty-six (26) mutually agreed on recommendations developed and supported by many stakeholder sessions, crossing many divisions of the City. The twenty-six recommendations are grouped in three categories: Urban Forest Planning (9 recommendations); Outreach and Partnership (5 recommendations) and Operational Excellence (12 recommendations). The recommendations are listed in Schedule A, B and C for reference and are outlined in detail within the Urban Forest Management Strategy, also attached for reference.

FINANCIAL: The acceptance of this strategy has no immediate impact or financial ask, although by receiving the strategy and directing staff to move forward with implementation of the recommendations will result in budget requests coming forward through an annual implementation plan as well as any associated budget requests through the normal budgeting process.

LEGAL: There are no direct legal considerations associated with this matter.

COMMUNICATIONS: Engineering & Operations will continue to work with Corporate Communications in the development, rollout, and implementation of the City's Urban Forest Management Strategy.

CLIMATE LENS: The strategy helps move the city closer to greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets through additional tree planting, establishment of forests, and setting canopy targets for the City's urban growth boundary. Diversification of species, and planting of species predicted to be suitable for future climate will increase the urban forest's resilience to climate change.

Does this proposal move the City of Fredericton closer to its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets of 50% reduction by 2030 and net-zero by 2050 in line with the City's Corporate Energy & Emissions Plan and/or Community Energy Emission Plan?

	□ No change in GHG emissions			
	\square Moves us away from GHG targets but there are trade-offs with other Council or Municipal Plan priorities (<i>identify which priorities</i>)			
Does this proposal improve the City of Fredericton's resilience to the impacts of climate change in ine with our Climate Change Adaptation Plan?				

☐ Moves us away from climate resilience but there are trade-offs with other Council or Municipal

SPOKESPERSON: Richard Hall, City Forester/Assistant Manager, Parks & Trees Landon Black, Consultant, Stantec

Prepared by: Richard Hall, City Forester/Assistant Manager, Parks & Trees

Approved by: Dylan Gamble, Director, Engineering & Operations

☐ No change in resilience

Plan priorities (identify which priorities)

Mike Walker, Assistant Director, Engineering & Operations

/Attachments:

- 1) Schedule A: Urban Forest Planning (9 Recommendations)
- 2) Schedule B: Outreach and Partnership (5 Recommendations)
- 3) Schedule C: Operational Excellence (12 Recommendations)
- Urban Forest Management Strategy, Stantec Consulting Ltd., October 9, 2024, Project Number 161414297

Schedule A: Urban Forest Planning Recommendations

Recommendations	Ownership
Parks and Trees to support Planning and Development in reviewing and improving the tree planting and landscaping standards required by the City's Zoning By-law.	Planning and Development
Develop a policy to ensure Capital Planning considers the importance of green infrastructure and prioritizes tree protection rather than compensation for removal.	Parks and Trees
Manage the urban forest to maximize climate adaptation and resilience.	Shared – Environmental Strategist & Program Manager (Corporate Services Department) with Parks and Trees
Develop a tree planting prioritization framework to work alongside the fundamentals of Capital Planning Policy and Climate Change Adaptation Plan.	Parks and Trees
Establish appropriate urban forest canopy cover targets for City's Urban Growth Area based upon measurement of the tree canopy in relation to building footprint percentage.	Shared - Planning and Development with Parks and Trees
Develop a public forested areas management policy.	Parks and Trees
Consider street tree planting requirements for new public streets.	Shared – Planning and Development with Parks and Trees
Enhance the urban forest along corridors such as trails and watercourses to increase forest connectivity.	Parks and Trees
Select a site and plant a fruit forest.	Parks and Trees

Schedule B: Outreach and Partnerships Recommendations

Recommendations	Ownership
Develop an interdepartmental urban forest working group.	Shared
Re-establish the purpose of the Tree Commission to maximize its impact.	Shared – Tree Commission with Parks and Trees
Braid knowledge with Sitansisk and other First Nations.	Shared – Sitansisk and Manager of First Nation Relations (City Administration)
Pursue targeted stewardship initiatives, partnerships, and funding sources.	Parks and Trees
Create and maintain a public education program.	Shared – Communications with Parks and Trees

Schedule C: Operational Excellence Recommendations

Review the plantable area data in the field and develop a system for tracking the inventory of plantable area. Consider low impact development (LID) solutions to stormwater, where practical, to provide adequate water to boulevard trees. Parks and Trees Continue to focus on proactive maintenance. Parks and Trees Maintain the existing street tree inventory. Continue to monitor and manage urban forest pests and pathogens. Parks and Trees Monitor and manage invasive tree species on public lands. Parks and Trees Plant additional trees adjacent to trails and recreational areas. Parks and Trees Reforest non-recreational open spaces. Create a program for tree planting on private lands. Increase the annual street tree planting rate to 750-1000/year. Parks and Trees Parks and Trees Parks and Trees	Operational Excellence	Ownership
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Train all Parks and Trees staff to assist the Fredericton Fire Department with wildland firefighting support Parks and Trees	•	Parks and Trees

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Admin Report - Urban Forest Management Strategy.docx
Attachments:	- Urban Forest Management Strategy_ppt_161414297_CIC.pptx - Admin Report Urban Forest Management Strategy.docx
Final Approval Date:	Oct 9, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Gamble, Dylan

Hart, Steven