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TO: Chair and Members of the Standing Committee on Environmental Protection, Water and Waste Management

DESTINATAIRE : Président et membres du Comité permanent de la protection de l'environnement, de l'eau et de la gestion des déchets

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FILE NUMBER: ACS2019-PIE-EDP-0012

SUBJECT: Urban Forest Management Plan Update and Implementation

OBJET: Mise à jour et exécution du Plan de gestion de la forêt urbaine

PURPOSE

When the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) was approved in June 2017, staff were directed to “report back to Committee and Council on the implementation of the Urban Forest Management Plan and recommended next steps by Q1 2019”. The purpose of this memorandum is to give a brief overview of the UFMP, why it is important, and how it was developed. In addition, the IPD outlines the plan’s

implementation to date and moving forward. The full UFMP, which includes detailed descriptions for all recommendations, can be found at www.ottawa.ca/urbanforest.

BACKGROUND

“Putting Down Roots for the Future” is a 20-year strategic UFMP for the City of Ottawa. The plan was approved by Council in June 2017 and has 26 recommendations for growing Ottawa’s urban forest and making it healthier, more diverse and resilient. The UFMP and its recommendations have been developed based on input from City staff, external stakeholders, and members of the public. Assessments of the current status of urban forest management and the city planning framework, as well as accepted best practices were also considered. The UFMP is intended to provide the strategic and technical guidance required to achieve urban forest sustainability in Ottawa over the coming decades.

Ottawa's urban forest includes trees and their habitat on public and private property within the City’s urban boundary. The urban forest is a shared resource that provides a wide range of benefits and services to the entire community. Ottawa’s strategic UFMP is fundamental to realizing the long-term benefits of our urban forest over time.

The 20-year UFMP is broken into five four-year management periods. At the end of each management period staff will assess deliverables, outline new action items for the next four-year period, and report back to Committee and Council.

The UFMP’s 26 recommendations are assigned to the first two four-year management periods and they include many new projects and initiatives to improve urban forest management in Ottawa. Staff in both Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development and in Public Works and Environmental Services will implement the recommendations jointly.

A list of the UFMP recommendations is contained within Document 1. Detailed information on the development of the UFMP can be found within the June 2017 staff report, [ACS2017-PIE-EDP-0012](#).

DISCUSSION

The implementation of the first four-year management period of the UFMP (2018-2021) is currently underway. Projects currently underway include:

Tree By-law Review – The objective of this project is to review and update both the Urban Tree Conservation By-law (privately owned trees) and the Municipal Trees and Natural Areas Protection By-law (city owned trees). Staff will also investigate the need

for a Heritage Tree By-law, program, or registry in Ottawa. In addition, this project will involve the development of city-wide tree compensation guidelines, as well as identifying and formalizing incentives for tree conservation and tree planting. This high priority project will be completed by the end of this year and presented to Committee and Council by Q2 2020. (Includes UFMP Recommendations 8, 14, and 24.)

Forested Areas Maintenance Strategy – The City of Ottawa’s Forested Areas Maintenance Strategy (FAMS) is completed. This strategy provides guidance for the establishment of proactive inventory, monitoring, maintenance, and reforestation programs for City-owned forested areas whether they are part of an existing park, woodlot, ravine, or are larger forests such as the Marlborough Forest. The FAMS aims to improve the health, resilience and safety of city-owned forests and promote stewardship activities through outreach and education programs. (UFMP Recommendation 12)

Urban Forest Canopy Cover Study - The purpose is to establish appropriate urban forest canopy cover targets for Ottawa based on an accurate assessment of existing and potential canopy cover. In addition, a tool will be developed to assist in the prioritization of tree planting efforts. The City of Ottawa has partnered with the National Capital Commission and the City of Gatineau to complete the first phase of this study. The current canopy cover assessment for the National Capital Region will be complete this spring and presented at an NCC-hosted event in April. The next phase of the project, which includes target setting and tree planting prioritization, will be completed in 2020. (UFMP Recommendation 4)

Significant Woodlands – In December 2016, City Council approved new policies for significant woodlands (currently under appeal). In its decision, Council also directed staff to work with industry and community stakeholders on: (a) updating the City’s Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines to address urban natural heritage system features in the context of all Provincial Policy Statement and Official Plan policies; (b) reviewing the Official Plan policies for protection of natural heritage system features in urban expansion study areas and developing communities. These initiatives are intended to balance the policies for protection of urban natural heritage features against the PPS and Official Plan policies for efficient land use. This is scheduled to be completed in 2019. (UFMP Recommendation 7)

Assumption of Trees in New Developments – In new developments, trees are not immediately added to the City’s tree inventory and are therefore not included in the City’s lifecycle maintenance programs early on. This can be detrimental to their structural development and survival. Staff has mapped the current processes and

begun discussion with stakeholder groups regarding the feasibility to receive georeferenced data of tree planting locations and species for inclusion in the City's tree inventory. Improvements in the city's assumption process are also being explored. Updating the City's tree inventory with new tree locations is a crucial step to ensure the assumption of trees by the City and proper and timely care of the newly planted trees. (UFMP Recommendation 11)

Improve Policy Implementation through Internal Outreach and Engagement – The purpose of this effort is to expand awareness among City staff and other stakeholders who make decisions that affect the existing and future urban forest. This will be done by ensuring that staff are aware of the policies that are in place, mechanisms for implementing them, and how their implementation supports other City-wide strategies and plans. Urban forest staff will be implementing this on an ongoing basis by meeting regularly with internal stakeholders whose work can benefit and/or impact trees and by participating in large-scale policy initiatives such as the review of the City's Official Plan. (UFMP Recommendation 6)

In addition to continuing the work described above, this year, staff will be commencing work on the recommendations described below. New resources are required to implement several of these recommendations (as noted). This will be reviewed later this year in the context of future Council priorities and budgets.

Establish Internal and External Urban Forestry Working Groups – The purpose of these working groups is to implement an ongoing mechanism to facilitate communication on urban forestry issues between staff across departments and to promote cooperation among staff to work together to achieve urban forest objectives. In addition, this will facilitate cooperation and information exchange between the City and external stakeholders, encouraging collaboration to achieve urban forest objectives. As the Tree By-law Review moves towards completion, City staff will work with various departments and with external stakeholders to form these groups. No additional resources required. (UFMP Recommendation 2)

Develop an Urban Forest Inventory Collection and Maintenance Plan – As the City's tree inventory approaches completion, a formal process to collect and maintain tree inventory data in an up-to-date and usable condition is required. This will avoid inventory obsolescence and improve the quality of tree inventory data collection. In addition, this will increase the utility of tree inventory as a public engagement and education tool. Completion is subject to additional resources. (UFMP Recommendation 3)

Expand Stewardship and Develop an Outreach and Engagement Strategy – Create a staff position focused on facilitating communication, engagement and stewardship related to the urban forest with a range of groups including schools, community groups, residents and industries. Develop an urban forestry outreach and engagement strategy to ensure that the community (including residents, businesses, large private property owners and institutions) is aware of the City's vision and objectives of the urban forest, and the ongoing initiatives being implemented to realize this vision. Completion is subject to additional resources. (UFMP Recommendations 22 and 23)

Develop New and Update Existing Guidelines for Tree Planting: This will ensure that tree planting is undertaken using consistent, high-quality standards and specifications for greenfield areas, existing urban conditions, and urban hardscapes. These guidelines will be a resource for City staff, contractors, and residents for effective and successful tree planting in urban Ottawa. Completion is subject to additional resources. (UFMP Recommendation 9)

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the UFMP's first management period is currently on track. However, in order to stay on track, resources are required to complete several additional recommendations starting in 2019 and 2020. These will be determined later this year in the context of future Council priorities and budgets. Staff will report back to Committee and Council at the end of the UFMP's first management period in 2022.

Original signed by

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and

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Supporting Documentation

Document 1 – Summary of UFMP Recommendations

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#	Description of Recommendation	Lead ¹	Mgt. Period	Resources
Urban forest management program structure and administration				
1	Adaptive management ²	NSRA	All	Existing staff
2	Internal & External Working groups	NSRA	1	Existing staff
3	Urban Forest Inventory Collection & Maintenance	FMU	1	Additional resources area required (consulting and staffing)
4	Urban Forest Canopy Study	NSRA	1	Secured through 2017 Budget
5	Asset Management	NSRA/ FMU	All	Existing resources to be used initially. Additional resources may be required over time.
Planning for the urban forest				
6	Improve policy implementation through internal outreach and engagement	NSRA	All	Existing staff
7	Significant Woodlands	NSRA	1	Existing staff
8	Review of Tree By-laws: a. Municipal Tree By-law b. Urban Tree Cons By-law c. Heritage Tree By-law	FMU NSRA NSRA	1	Existing staff to undertake review. Additional resources may be required for implementation of any changes.

¹ NSRA is the Natural Systems and Rural Affairs Unit of Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development and FMU is the Forest Management Unit of Public Works and Environmental Services.

² Recommendations to be completed within the first management period (2018-2021) are shaded in grey.

#	Description of Recommendation	Lead ¹	Mgt. Period	Resources
9	Tree Planting and Establishment Guidelines: a. Greenfield Areas (Street Tree Manual) b. Existing Conditions c. Urban Hardscapes	NSRA FMU FMU	1	Additional resources may be required (staffing)
10	Outreach, enforcement, and monitoring of policies and by-laws	NSRA/ FMU	2	Additional resources may be required pending outcome of #8.
Maintaining and growing the urban forest				
11	Assumption of trees in new developments	FMU	1	Existing staff
12	Forested Areas Maintenance Strategy	FMU	1	Existing staff to develop strategy. Additional resources may be required for implementation.
13	Review City tree planting programs	FMU	1	Additional resources may be required (staffing)
14	Tree Compensation Guidelines	NSRA	1	Existing staff
15	Review lifecycle maintenance program	FMU	2	Existing to staff to undertake review. Additional resources may be required to implement any changes.
16	Assess maintenance for newly planted trees	FMU	2	Additional resources may be required (staffing)
17	Urban tree waste utilization strategy	FMU	2	Existing staff

#	Description of Recommendation	Lead ¹	Mgt. Period	Resources
18	Assess tree risk management – City trees	FMU	2	Additional resources may be required (staffing)
19	Pest and Disease management strategy	NSRA/ FMU	2	Existing resources to develop the strategy. Additional resources may be required for implementation.
20	Neighbourhood planting plans	FMU	2	Existing staff to develop planting plans. Additional resources may be required for planting site inventory.
21	Tree nursery stock growing contracts	FMU	2	Existing staff
Urban forest outreach, education, stewardship and partnerships				
22	Expand Community Engagement, public education	FMU	1	Additional resources required for staffing.
23	Outreach and engagement strategy	FMU	1	Dependant on resources required for #22.
24	Incentives for tree conservation	NSRA	1	Existing staff
25	Neighbourhood stewardship plans	FMU	2	Dependant on resources required for #22.
26	Outreach to tree care, landscaping, private and institutional landowners	FMU	2	Existing staff