



Town of Newmarket
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Urban Forestry Management Plan Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2019-82

Department(s): Public Works Services

Author(s): Ruurd van de Ven

Meeting Date: September 23, 2019

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Urban Forestry Management Plan dated September 23, 2019 be received; and,
2. That the Urban Forestry Management Plan be adopted; and,
3. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

The purpose of the Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP) is to provide long term guidance to improve and support the Urban Forest in the Town of Newmarket.

Background

The Town's Official Plan (OP) was adopted by Council in 2006. Section 9 relates to Natural Heritage Systems and preserving the Town's woodlots and natural heritage features. The OP also acknowledges the current low forest cover in the Town and the need to maintain and enhance all elements of the natural heritage system. In addition, it has policies that limit development and alterations to areas adjacent to woodlots.

In November 2016, York Region Council adopted the York Region Forest Management Plan. The Newmarket UFMP supports the York Region Forest Management Plan's overarching goal: Increasing tree canopy cover by setting targets for total canopy cover of 35 per cent by 2031 and 40 per cent by 2051 region wide.

In 2016, an Urban Forest Study was completed by the Town, York Region (YR), Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA), and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). The findings of this study have contributed to the reasoning and rationale of the UFMP. It also identified the need for a structured approach to caring for the urban forest.

Discussion

Newmarket's trees, both public and private, have a collective value of approximately \$364 million. Caring for and managing such a vast investment requires a solid plan. This report summarizes the Plan into five sections: benefits, recommendations, 5 year goals, and guiding principles.

Benefits

Trees provide many benefits to the community, such as managing stormwater, enhancing air quality, and enriching recreational and human social interactions. In Newmarket alone, these social and environmental benefits provide a total value of \$1.3 million annually. Managing this large resource requires planning and foresight. The UFMP provides a guideline for the many elements of Urban Forestry Management which need to come together to maintain and enhance Newmarket's urban canopy.

The Plan identifies current practices, the ideal situation, and recommended opportunities for improvement for the following areas of interest:

- Urban Forest Tree Inventory
- Tree Maintenance Plan
- Tree Establishment and Planting Plan
- Tree Protection
- Invasive Species & Noxious Weeds Management Plan
- Outreach and Public Engagement Plan

Recommendations

The UFMP takes all the parts together and creates a cohesive structure ultimately resulting in a healthy urban forest and an increase in the total tree canopy cover to 35% by 2031. The 14 recommendations below will ensure that the UFMP will succeed over the next 20 years, making Newmarket *even Greener* for present and future residents with a healthy urban canopy, by sharing the social, economic, and environmental value of trees through education, innovation, partnerships, and policies. The Plan recommends that the Town:

1. Obtain software to manage workflow and maintain history on work performed on trees in Town;
2. Recognise trees in a Town asset management program (Green Infrastructure).
3. Expand Natural Heritage Coordinator position to include:
 - Invasive species management; and

- Manage encroachments onto Town owned Natural Heritage lands.
4. Dedicate staff to forestry related work 12 months of the year.
 5. Consider future growth and a future business unit structure, including:
 - Natural Heritage Coordinator;
 - Operator (Arborist);
 - Park Attendant (Arborist apprentice).
 6. Consider a new position in conjunction with Planning and Engineering Services to replace the Town's Consulting Arborist who reviews and comments on development applications, including:
 - Tree inspections before and after development;
 - Determining tree values for securities;
 - Required site work; and
 - Review of the Public Tree By-law and Private Tree Cutting By-law (if created).
 7. Create a Forestry Operational Manual, this will provide guidelines for pruning, fertilizing, mulching, tree risk assessment, tree removal and tree planting.
 8. Develop an Encroachment Policy/By-law onto Town owned Natural Heritage lands.
 9. Develop a Master Planting Plan utilizing the Urban Soil Index approach, including:
 - Plant pollinator friendly trees as part of the Bee City Strategy; and
 - Look for new planting sites as part of increasing our total canopy cover.
 10. Foster alliances with internal departments: Engineering, Planning, Public Works (Water and Roads), Legal, Finance, Customer Service, etc. in regards to tree related topics, such as: tree planting, tree preservation, public education, tree protection during all construction projects, including any Town generated projects such as road, water/waste water and park rehabilitations.
 11. Foster alliances with outside organizations such as LSRCA, York Region, other local municipalities, LEAF, Trees Canada, Invasive Species Centre, etc. in regards to tree and invasive species related topics, such as tree planting, invasive species management, etc.
 12. Coordination of tree planting with stormwater management and LID measures implemented by the Town (i.e. using tree pits/planting pits in a row to manage and clean storm water). This will require Forestry staff working with the Senior Climate Change Specialist to change/implement 'innovative' stormwater management solutions – such as Deep Root and Silva cells that allow for root growth around and under infrastructure in highly urbanized and paved over environments.
 13. Develop an overarching strategy with all levels of government to deal with all invasive species that are present now and that may arrive in the future, this strategy will include:
 - Working with Engineering staff and the Climate Change Specialist for Newmarket to develop joint strategies;
 - Identify their locations and enter them into GIS (EDDMapS);
 - Identify best management practices for each plant/bug/species;
 - Implementing the strategies.

14. Develop a public outreach and engagement program to increase public awareness and visibility of the UFMP and the natural environment.

5 Year Goals

The UFMP provides short term goals over the next five years with six achievable goals:

1. Develop municipal guidelines and regulations for sustainable streetscape and subdivision design that ensure adequate soil quality and quantity for tree establishment and reduce conflict between natural and grey infrastructure.
2. Create a Forestry Operational Manual.
3. Conduct proactive tree risk assessments on municipal lands to reduce the need for emergency responses.
4. Create a Master Planting Design Plan.
5. Create a Pollinator Strategy (required by our Bee City designation).
6. Increasing public awareness and appreciation of the value of trees and woodlands.

Guiding principals

The UFMP provides long term guiding principals over the next 20 years with four guiding principles:

1. Recognize the urban forest as a critical municipal asset and green infrastructure.
2. Managing tree biodiversity to increase ecological resilience and minimize the impacts of climate change.
3. Sustainably manage the urban forest through continuous improvement, adaptation and innovation.
4. Increasing tree canopy cover by setting targets for total canopy cover of 35 per cent by 2031.

Conclusion

The purpose of the Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP) is to provide long term guidance to improve and support the Urban Forest in the Town of Newmarket.

The UFMP will guide the Town over the next 20 years in increasing our total canopy cover, preserving, protecting and maintaining trees.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

The UFMP is directly linked to the strategic pillar of Environmental Stewardship. Leading proactive planning and action related to climate change and other environmental initiatives. Particularly the implementation of tree canopy management.

Consultation

Starting in April of 2017, several meetings were held in consultation with Town staff across different departments such as Planning, Engineering, Communications and By-laws. In addition to this consultation, LSRCA and York Region provided valuable input and guidance. These meetings formed the framework for the Plan as well as it solidified relations among Town staff and the outside agencies.

Human Resource Considerations

The UFMP currently has no HR impacts, but it proposes new job descriptions and possible new positions pending budget approval.

Any future staffing impact will be presented in future budget requests.

Budget Impact

The UFMP was developed with approved 2018 capital budget funds.

The implementation of the recommendations of the UFMP that require funding will be requested through future budget requests

Attachments

Appendix A – Town of Newmarket Urban Forestry Management Plan

Approval

Ruurd van de Ven
Supervisor, Forestry

Jeff Bond
Manager, Parks and Property Services

Chris Kalimootoo
Director, Public Works Services

Peter Noehammer
Commissioner, Development & Infrastructure Services

Contact

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