

(EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

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To address these challenges, the Program has established the following service objectives for the next three years:

(...)

To implement the Urban Forestry Service Plan to expand and sustain the urban forest;

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The 2009 Recommended Operating Budget provides \$6.769 million in base and new funding for priority initiatives that address the Program's challenges and objectives and advance the Mayor's Mandate and Council's policy agenda. Priority initiatives include:

(...)

Sustaining and expanding the urban forest and increasing the tree canopy from 17% to 34% as outlined in the *Climate Change Adaptation, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan* (\$6.144 million gross and \$1.570 million net);

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The Recommended New/Enhanced Service Priorities, totalling \$5.378 million gross and \$0.050 million net revenue, promote the objectives of the Program in improving access to recreation programs, address Council's priorities to expand and sustain urban forestry and advance the Mayor's Mandate and policy agenda. They include:

(...)

Improving maintenance of commercial trees and trees on city streets (\$2.283 million gross and \$0 net);

Improving the process for review of applications for construction and development that have the potential to injure or destroy trees (\$0.686 million gross and \$0 net);

Improving public spaces by supporting growth of the Commemorative Tree and Bench Program (\$0.060 million gross, \$0 net);

Transfer of tree planting from the Capital Budget to the Operating Budget (\$1.605 million gross, \$0 net);

(...)

Maintenance of an additional 18,000 trees on city streets, in parks and natural areas, as well as replacement of 270 damaged commercial trees which are set in sidewalks or in the containers in sidewalks (\$2.283 million gross and \$0 net);

(PART II – 3 year service overview and plan)

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Service Demands: The aging urban forest has resulted in an overall increase in numbers of tree failures. The delay for tree service has grown creating non-compliance with industry standards, increased liability to the City and delays in Council approved

initiatives.

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Urban Forestry:

4. Sustain and expand the urban forest canopy from 17% to 34% in the next 40 years.

The City's Official Plan makes a commitment to ensuring that Toronto's urban forest is enhanced and in a state of good health. This is reinforced by the *Climate Change Adaptation, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan* which further commits to increasing the tree canopy from 17% to 34%. In order to achieve this target, the Program will be providing effective protection of trees, proactively maintaining trees and managing natural areas, and planting more trees.

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Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan

The 2009 Recommended Operating Budget provides base and new funding of \$6.144 million gross and \$1.570 net to begin increasing the tree canopy from 17% to 34% as outlined in the *Climate Change Adaptation, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan*. The following highlights the funding provided in the 2009 Recommended Operating Budget for this purpose:

Ongoing Tree Maintenance: 2009 Recommended Operating Budget provides \$3.853 million gross and \$1.570 million net for Urban Forestry to begin a planned and proactive tree maintenance program on trees on city streets, in parks and natural areas, as well as commercial trees which are set into sidewalk or in containers in the sidewalk. This funding will also ensure that the ravines and natural areas are inspected and immediate tree hazards removed.

Tree Protection: The 2009 Recommended Operating Budget allocates \$0.686 million gross and \$0 net for the improvement of review process for construction and development near trees to ensure that they meet legislated tree protection requirements.

Planting of New Trees: The 2009 Recommended Operating Budget funds \$1.605 million gross and \$0 net for planting new trees and shrubs.

(PART V: RECOMMENDED NEW SERVICE PRIORITY ACTIONS)

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Enhanced Service Priority Actions – Council Approved

Climate Change: Area Maintenance – Trees on City Streets (\$2.000 million gross, \$0 net)

The 2009 Recommended Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation includes \$2.000 million gross and \$0 net for maintenance of trees on city streets. Reserve Fund resources have been allocated to offset the cost of this initiative which will allow Urban Forestry to begin to maintain trees on a systematic block pruning or community by community basis. As the program is established, demand-based requests and responses will be minimized and crews will only provide emergency responses to hazards and

potential for property damages that cannot wait for the newly established maintenance cycle to address damaged trees or dangerous limbs.

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Climate Change: Commercial Tree Maintenance (\$0.283 million gross, \$0 net)

The 2009 Recommended Operating Budget provides \$0.283 million gross and \$0 net to be funded from the Environment Protection Reserve Fund for maintenance of commercial trees that are set in sidewalks or containers in sidewalks. These trees grow in harsh environments resulting in a high mortality rate. This funding will be directed towards maintaining approximately 300 additional commercial trees and replacing approximately 270 additional commercial trees. **An addition of two permanent staff positions will be required to support this initiative.**

Climate Change: Improved Development Review & Tree By-law Enforcement (\$0.686 million gross, \$0 net)

The 2009 Recommended Operating Budget provides \$0.686 million gross and \$0 net to ensure that the Program has adequate staff resources to support the enforcement of the City's Tree Protection by-laws, review applications for construction and development near trees in order to meet legislated tree protection requirements and perform tree protection inspection. **This initiative will require additional 8 full-time permanent staff positions and will be funded by the Environment Protection Reserve Fund in 2009.**

Improved Public Spaces: Commemorative Tree and Bench Program (\$0.060 million gross, \$0 net)

The 2009 Recommended Operating Budget includes \$0.060 million for a permanent Administrative Support position to be 100% funded by donations, which will provide support to the Commemorative Tree and Bench Program. The Commemorative Tree and Bench Program allows the public to pay tribute to a person(s) or occasion by purchasing a park bench or tree for installation in a public park. The dedicated administrative support position will help increase the efficiency of the program by performing activities such as preparing certificates and processing tax receipts on a timely basis as well as assisting the supervisors in scoping appropriate locations.

New Service Priority Actions – Council Approved

Tree Planting Adjustment from Capital to Operating Budget (\$1.605 million gross, \$0 net)

The City must comply with Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) standards which exclude natural assets, such as trees and shrubs, from being treated as capital assets. As a result, specific tree and shrub acquisition projects in the capital budget of all City Programs have been transferred to the

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respective operating budgets, and the increased cost to the operating budget has been offset by the Environment Protection Reserve Fund. The Parks, Forestry and Recreation 2009 Recommended Operating Budget includes an adjustment to reflect \$1.105 million in tree planting costs that will no longer be funded through Capital Budget and \$0.500

million in donations for the Tree Advocacy Program, for a total of \$1.605 million net.

(PART VI: ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION)

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Planting of Trees

The City must follow the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) standard that excludes natural assets, such as trees and shrubs, from being treated as capital assets. As a result, tree and shrub acquisition projects in the capital budget of all City Programs have been transferred to the respective operating budgets, and funding from the Reserve Fund will offset these costs in 2009. In recent years, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Capital Budget has included a Tree Advocacy project providing \$1.500 million (\$1.000 million debt funded, \$0.500 million from donations) for tree planting and \$0.105 million of funding was included in the Environmental Initiatives project for trees and shrubs to naturalize parkland areas. These amounts are now transferred to the Parks, Forestry and Recreation 2009 Operating Budget, with funding from the Environmental Protection Reserve Fund of \$1.105 million.

Sustaining and Expanding the Urban Forest

City of Toronto's Official Plan and the objectives expressed in Parks, Forestry and Recreation's document entitled "Our Common Grounds" commit to ensuring that Toronto's urban forest is enhanced and maintained in a state of good health. This is reinforced by the Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan (the "Climate Change Action Plan") which further commits to doubling the tree canopy from 17% to 34% by the year 2050.

In order to achieve these objectives, significant investment is required to develop and implement the Tree Canopy Strategy, characterized by three key pillars:

- **Improve Protection of Trees:** Maximize tree canopy potential by ensuring healthier trees and avoiding unnecessary tree damage or removal;
- **Proactively Manage and Maintain Trees:** Maximize tree canopy potential by ensuring healthier and longer lived trees; and
- **Plant More Trees:** Increase long term canopy potential through planting of more trees.

The strategy is prioritized based on associated liabilities to the City, public expectations and economic impacts. As such, the initial investment in 2009 will be directed at improving tree protection and beginning proactive maintenance of existing street trees. Once the benefits of a healthy urban forest have begun to be realized, the program will then include an increased level of tree planting. The 2008 base funding provided for tree protection, tree maintenance and tree planting and allowed for approximately 5,486 development applications to be reviewed, approximately 32,987 trees to be maintained with an average pruning cycle of 39 years, and about 7,000 replacement trees to be planted. In addition, an estimated 4,050 new trees were planted along streets through capital funds provided by Transportation, approximately 3,121 trees planted in parks, streets and ravines through capital funds provided by Toronto Water and around 93,273 small trees and shrubs planted in natural areas through capital funds provided by Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Toronto Water and Transportation.

The 2009 Recommended Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation includes \$4.539 million gross and \$1.570 million net in base and new funding and \$1.605 million transferred from Capital to the Operating Budget for maintaining and sustaining the urban forest.

In addition to funding provided for Parks, Forestry and Recreation, several other ongoing sources of funding will contribute a total of \$2.720 million for tree planting in 2009, in particular, \$2.000 million from Toronto Water and \$0.720 million from Transportation. Furthermore, additional \$0.075 million for tree planting is included in the 2009 Recommended Operating Budget for the Exhibition Place. In total, \$8.939 million will be allocated from various sources towards maintaining and sustaining the urban forest in 2009.

A multi-year implementation and financing plan is required to sustain and expand the urban forest and, in particular, make progress toward the objective of increasing the tree canopy from 17% to 34% by 2050. Urban Forestry's current annual base budget of funding of \$26.347 million will need to be increased by an estimated \$25.000 million in the next 5 to 10 years to enable the Program to move towards achieving this objective. The implementation plan will be informed by the results of a comprehensive study that will assess the current structure, distribution, health and diversity of the urban forest and the land base availability and site quality available for establishing canopy potential for the future urban forest.

The Program will also perform 'pilot' shade audits and develop shade plans for priority playgrounds and waterplay facilities to assess existing shade provision and patterns of use at these facilities.

The following sections discuss the three key pillars of the Tree Canopy Strategy: Tree Protection, Tree Maintenance and Tree Planting and recommended 2009 funding levels.

Tree Protection

The 2009 Recommended Operating Budget allocates \$0.686 million gross and \$0 net for the improvement of the review process for construction and development near trees to ensure that they meet legislated tree protection requirements. This initiative will require additional 8 full-time permanent staff positions and will be funded by the Environment Protection Reserve Fund.

Current Service Level

Tree health and lifespan have been significantly reduced in recent years due to inadequate tree protection. Less than 50% development and construction related applications that have the potential to destroy or injure trees are responded to within acceptable timeframes. As a result, many applications proceed without any tree protection agreements in place and/or tree protection agreements are not adequately enforced. Only reported infractions are dealt with resulting in unnecessary tree damage and significantly increasing the potential for tree failure. Currently, approximately 5,486 applications are reviewed and site inspections conducted annually.

In addition, there have been significant forest health care issues (such Asian Long Horned Beetle , Emerald Ash Borer, Gypsy moth, etc.) that have arisen over the last several years. Each of these invasive species has the potential to damage or destroy tens of thousands of trees if not protected. In order to address these immediate threats, existing

resources across forestry have been redirected from tree maintenance further decreasing overall tree health.

New Service Level

The addition of \$0.686 million recommended for 2009 will focus primarily on increasing the number of applications reviewed and processed. New funding will result in additional 1,395 applications reviewed and site inspections completed within time line each year. This will improve compliance with the City's Tree Protection By-laws.

The Program's objective is to achieve a target of reviewing 100% of the development and construction applications and associated inspections of applications that have the potential to destroy or injure trees. This will also support associated follow-up corrective action or prosecution, if required, as well as increased public education. Collectively, improved tree protection will result in tens of thousands of trees achieving fuller life expectancy and longer contribution to the urban forest canopy.

Tree Maintenance

Current Service Level

Maintenance is currently delivered in response to demands and complaints regarding tree maintenance requirements. As a result, large areas of the urban forest receive little to no maintenance resulting in trees developing poor form and health. In turn, trees do not achieve full life expectancy.

Industry standard for tree maintenance is a regular cycle of 5 to 10 years. Currently, trees across Toronto's urban forest are pruned on average every 39 years. Furthermore, the response time to the demands and complaints for tree service is reported at approximately 12 months and can drastically increase as a result of extreme weather.

New Service Level

Current annual service level for pruning and removal is approximately 32,987 trees per year. An addition of \$3.853 million in new funding recommended in 2009 will allow the Program to move towards planned and proactive tree maintenance with a systematic maintenance cycle. Approximately 18,430 additional street trees will be maintained in 2009.

Tree Planting

Current Service Level

Currently, there are approximately 7,000 bare root tree replacements planted annually resulting from a combination of reactive replacement of trees that have been removed and requests from the public who would like a street tree planted. In addition, approximately 2,200 small trees and shrubs were planted in natural areas in 2008. Additional trees are planted through the funds from Transportation and Toronto Water, as well as through donations to the Tree Advocacy Program.

New Service Level

The Parks, Forestry and Recreation 2009 Recommended Operating Budget includes an adjustment to reflect \$1.105 million in tree planting costs that will be funded by the Environment Protection Reserve Fund instead of through Capital Budget and \$0.500

million in donations for the Tree Advocacy Program, for a total of \$1.605 million net. This funding will allow for approximately 58,273 trees to be planted and ensure that 2008 level of tree planting is maintained.

Capital Funding

A total of \$1.039 million is included in the 2009 Capital Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation to acquire fleet and equipment necessary to increase tree preservation and the maintenance of the urban forest. Future requirements for new equipment are included in the Program's future years Capital Plan and Forecast.

Multi-Year Implementation and Financing Plan

A multi-year implementation and financing plan is required to sustain and expand the urban forest and, in particular, achieve the objective of increasing the tree canopy from 17% to 34% by 2050. In the 2009 Approved Capital Budget, \$48.000 million was allocated to the Environment Protection Reserve Fund to support doubling of the tree canopy. The 2009 Recommended Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation includes \$6.144 million gross and \$1.570 million net for this purpose, partially supported by \$4.074 million from this Reserve Fund.

Urban Forestry's current annual level of funding of \$26.347 million will need to be increased by an estimated \$25.000 million in the next 5 to 10 years to enable the Program to move towards

achieving the objective of doubling the tree canopy by 2050.

It is recommended that the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Chief Financial Officer report to the Budget Committee prior to the 2010 Capital and Operating Budget cycles on a proposed multi-year implementation and financing plan for sustaining and expanding the urban forest.

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The 2009 Recommended Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation addresses and includes funding for the Plan's recommendation to double Toronto's tree canopy by 2050. Other recommendations will have financial implications for the Program and will be addressed in future years.