

2010 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Sustaining and Expanding the Urban Forest – Multi-Year Service Plan

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, in 2009, Urban Forestry developed an eight year financial and implementation plan designed to enhance and maintain Toronto’s urban forest in the most cost effective manner. The Plan is characterized by and includes funding for 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 through maintenance of city street trees on a systematic block pruning basis;
- Plant More Trees: Increase long term canopy potential through planting of more trees.

Beginning in 2009 and phased in over eight years, the plan will achieve (1) a seven year average pruning cycle by reducing the tree service delay and transitioning to a more efficient area tree maintenance program; (2) increased tree planting delivered on a cyclical basis throughout all parts of the city and (3) a more effective tree protection and forest health care program.

Urban Forestry Service Plan – Financial Plan

The Urban Forestry Service Plan represents a total new annual investment of \$21.971 million and is recommended to be funded through a combination of reserve funds and property taxes with a target of full property base tax funding by 2016.

New Investment for the Urban Forestry Service Plan

(\$000's)	2009 Funding	2010 New Funding	2011 New Funding	2012 New Funding	2013 New Funding	2014 New Funding	2015 New Funding	2016 New Funding	Total New
Tree Protection	0.686	0.138	0.346	0.079	0.400	0.114			1.763
Tree Maintenance	3.853	1.782	5.861	5.448	(4.036)	0.850	0.425	0.425	14.608
Tree Planting	1.180	0.507	0.238	0.870	2.389	0.416			5.600
TOTAL	5.719	2.427	6.445	6.397	(1.247)	1.380	0.425	0.425	21.971
CUMULATIVE TOTAL	5.719	8.146	14.591	20.988	19.741	21.121	21.546	21.971	133.823

(\$000's)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Reserve Fund	4.149	6.255	10.214	11.963	9.673	5.973			48.227
Property Tax Funding	1.570	1.891	4.377	9.025	10.068	15.148	21.546	21.971	85.596
TOTAL	5.719	8.146	14.591	20.988	19.741	21.121	21.546	21.971	133.823
Increased Tax Funding	1.570	0.321	2.486	4.648	1.043	5.080	6.398	0.425	21.971

Urban Forestry Service Plan - Implementation Plan

The implementation of the Urban Forestry Service Plan is prioritized based on associated liabilities to the City, public expectations and economic impacts with new funding for tree planting as well as pro-active protection and maintenance strategies to allow trees to achieve full life expectancy.

The 2009 Approved Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation included \$4.539 million gross and \$1.570 million net in base and new funding for maintaining and sustaining the urban forest. The 2010 Recommended Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation includes \$2.427 million gross and \$0.321 million net in base and new funding for improving tree protection and proactive maintenance of existing street trees while increasing the level of tree planting.

When fully implemented, the proposed Plan will have received \$1.763 million new funding for Tree Protection, \$14.608 million new funding for Tree Maintenance and \$5.600 million of new and base funding for Tree Planting for a total new annual investment of \$21.971 million over eight years to Urban Forestry.

The following sections discuss the required investment and service level targets of the three key pillars of the Urban Forestry Service Plan: Tree Protection, Tree Maintenance and Tree Planting.

Tree Protection

Tree health and lifespan have been significantly reduced in recent years due to inadequate tree protection. In 2008, less than 50% of development and construction related applications that have the potential to destroy or injure trees were responded to within acceptable time frames. As a result, many applications proceed without any tree protection agreements in place and/or tree protection agreements are not adequately enforced.

The new investment in tree protection will result in trees achieving fuller life expectancy and longer contribution to the urban canopy. The objective of this program 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 within acceptable timeframes.

The addition of \$0.686 million gross in 2009 focused on the improvement for the review process for construction and development near trees to ensure they meet legislated tree protection requirements. The addition of \$0.138 million in 2010 is the annualized salary portion of the eight permanent staff hired in late 2009 and will result in an additional 1,395 applications reviewed and site inspections being completed within time line by the end of 2010.

In addition, there have been significant forest health care issues (such as 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 trees of thousands of trees. By 2013, the new planned funding will result in a dedicated Forest Health Care program, which will regularly monitor threats to the urban forest and implement effective control measures.

In total, the Urban Forestry Service Plan recommends a new investment of \$1.763million for improved protection of trees. Collectively, improved tree protection and forest health care will result in tens of thousands of trees achieving fuller life expectancy and longer contribution to the urban forest canopy.

Tree Protection & Plan Review		
	Expenditures (\$Million)	# of Applications Reviewed and Site Inspections Within Time Line (approx.)
2008 Base	1.372	5,486
2009 New Funding	0.686	
2010 Annualization	0.138	1,395
2010 Base	2.196	6,881

Total New Annual Investment 2009-2016	1.763		
2016 Target	3.135	13,947	<i>plus</i> Forest Health Care Program Implemented

Tree Maintenance

The Urban Forestry Service Plan outlines a transition from reactive based tree maintenance to a proactive and efficient area tree maintenance program with a target objective of a seven year average pruning cycle. When the area maintenance plan is fully implemented the tree service delay will be at approximately three months.

In 2009, Urban Forestry received an additional \$3.853 million in new funding for tree maintenance and specifically to develop a proactive based urban forest management program. The first phase in 2009 has proven to be very successful with an additional 18,430 trees maintained. The further investment of \$1.782 million of new funding in 2010 will result in approximately 8,701 additional trees being maintained for a total of 60,118 trees maintained annually.

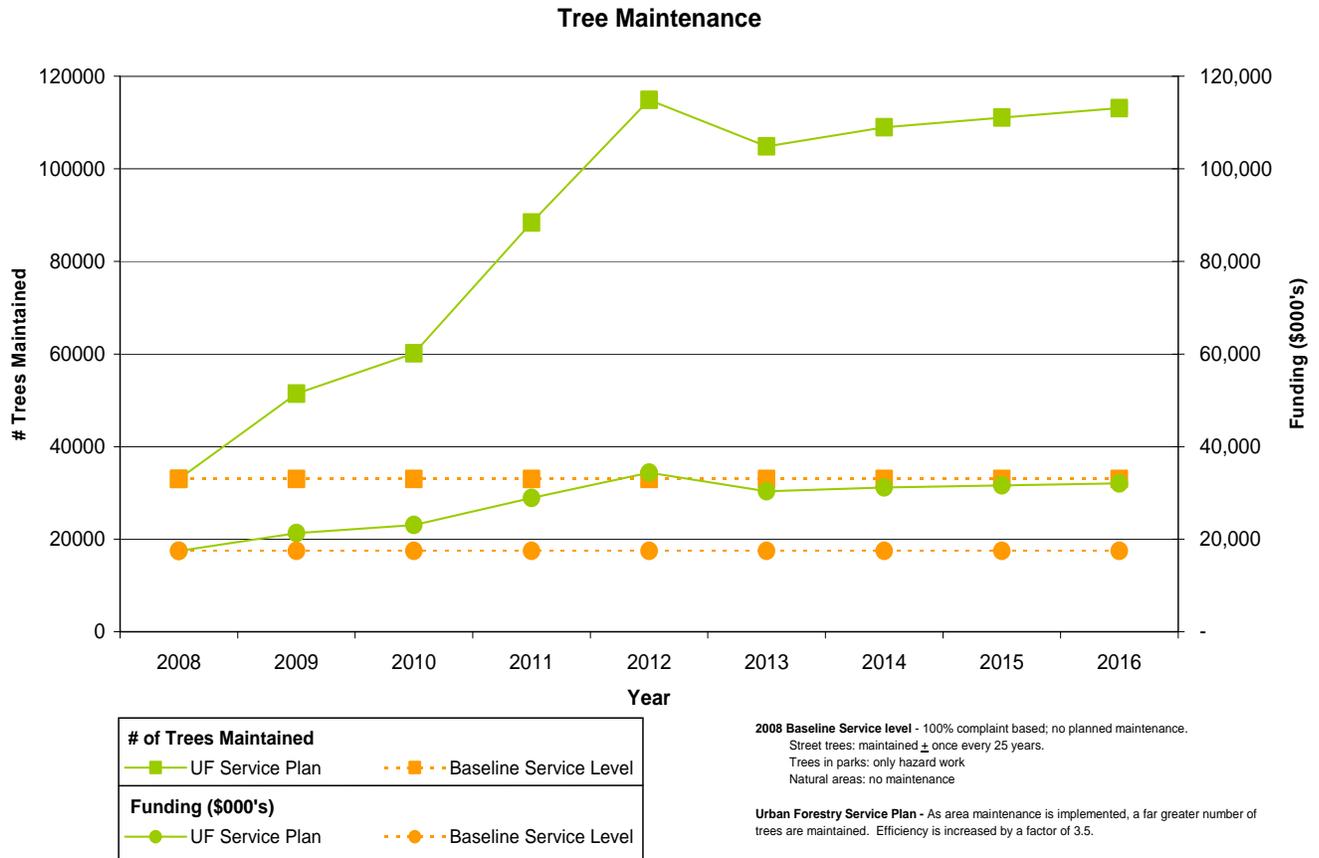
In total, phased in over eight years, the Urban Forestry Service Plan recommends a new investment of \$14.608million annually for tree maintenance. As the program is established, it is anticipated that complaint based service requests and responses will be reduced to allow staff to address hazards or potential for property damage that can not wait for the newly established maintenance cycle.

Tree Maintenance - Forestry Operations

	Expenditures (\$Million)	# of trees Maintained (approx.)	Average pruning cycle (yrs)
2008 Base	17.437	32,987	39
2009 New Funding	3.853	18,430	
2010 New Funding	1.782	8,701	
2010 Base	23.072	60,118	

Total New Annual Investment 2009-2016	14.608		
2016 Target	32.045	113,115	7

The graph below illustrates how tree maintenance service levels will proportionally increase relative to the increases in budgeted maintenance. In 2013, when the new maintenance cycle for street trees is established, the financial plan projects a decrease of \$4.036 million for Tree Maintenance due to service efficiencies once the newly established maintenance schedule for street trees is implemented.



Under the proactive tree maintenance program, trees will receive regular maintenance that encourages tree health, natural form, maintains structural integrity helping them to achieve full life expectancy with a goal of an average 7 year cycle by 2016.

Tree Planting

In 2008, there were approximately 6,750 bare root tree replacements planted annually resulting from a combination of reactive replacement of trees that had been removed and requests from the public who would like a street tree planted. Additional trees were planted through funds from contributions from other sources including Transportation, Toronto Water and donations to the Tree Advocacy Program.

The Service Plan shows a total new investment of \$5.600 million for tree planting over eight years. Of the \$5.600 million, \$1.175 million is a transfer from the PFR Capital Budget; \$0.075 million is dedicated to tree planting in Exhibition Place with the remaining \$4.350 million dedicated to a new planting program that will result in a minimum of 10,000 additional trees planted annually when fully implemented by 2016. The types of trees planted would include larger size trees suitable for streets and parks as well as smaller trees and shrubs in natural areas resulting in a cost per tree ranging from \$20 to \$500 per tree.

The 2010 Recommended Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation includes \$.507 million for a new Tree Planting Program – Phase 1 which will result in approximately 3,000 new trees being planted annually.

In addition, there is \$0.250 million gross and zero net for tree planting in the Bayview area. On July 19-26, 2005, City Council approved that \$0.700 million in proceeds from the sale of 1900 Bayview be used “primarily for the purpose of planting trees in this area”. Total funding for this initiative is earmarked in the Land Acquisition Reserve Fund (XR1012) of which \$0.250 million will be spent in 2010, with the remaining funding spent in 2011 and 2012. The 2010 portion of funding will result in the planting of 605 additional trees in Wards 22, 25 and 26 to replace those trees that were lost as a result of city land sale and development at 1900 Bayview Avenue.

In total, the Urban Forestry Service Plan recommends an addition of \$5.600 million new and base funding over 8 years. Of the \$5.600 million, a new investment of \$4.350 million annually will result in a minimum of 10,000 additional trees being planted each year. The types of trees planted would include larger size trees suitable for streets, parks and other available planting spaces, as well as smaller trees and shrubs in gardens and naturalized areas. The objective is to review sites and plant trees on a planned 7 to 10 year cycle, taking advantage of opportunities on City land and on property owned by planting partners. An area will be evaluated every 7 to 10 years, in terms of the age and tree species that currently exist on City property. Tree planting will be planned accordingly to achieve a diverse, mixed age tree population.

Tree Planting	Expenditures (\$Million)	# of Trees Planted (approximate)*
2008 Base	0.894	6,750
2009 Addition to Base Funding (transfer from Capital Budget in 2009 - excludes donations)	1.105	52,614
2009 Base Total**	1.999	59,364
2010 Base (includes 180k in donations)	2.179	60,100
2010 New Funding - Tree Planting Program - Phase 1	0.507	3,000
2010 - 1900 Bayview	0.250	605
2010 Recommended Base Total**	2.936	63,705
Total New Annual Investment 2009-2016	4.350	10,000
2016 Target		73,100

* Number of trees varies by size of tree including saplings, standards and balled and burl aped and can range in cost from \$20 to \$500 per tree.

**Each year, additional trees are planted with contributions from other sources including Transportation, Toronto Water and donations to Trees Across Toronto. In 2010, there is a plan to plant an additional 45,295 trees from contributions from other sources including Transportation and Toronto Water for a total of 109,000 trees.

Conclusion

The end result of these programs is a healthier enhanced Urban Forest, with an associated increase in public satisfaction, and reduced liability to the City associated with tree failures and ultimately doubling of Toronto’s tree canopy.

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