

MEMORANDUM

TO: Steve Powers

FROM: Craig Hupy, Interim Public Services Area Administrator

DATE: June 28, 2012

SUBJECT: Urban & Community Forest Management Plan Development Update
Tree Planting Update

The city's Field Operations Forestry unit is responsible for managing an urban forest of over 49,000 trees growing along public streets and in mowed areas of parks; these trees provide over \$2.9 million in net benefits each year, including managing stormwater, improving air and water quality, lowering energy costs and increasing property value.

Urban & Community Forest Management Plan Update

The development of the city's first Urban and Community Forest Management Plan (UCFMP) is well underway. The UCFMP will provide a framework for sustainably managing Ann Arbor's urban forest as an asset, consistent with the values and needs of the community.

Ann Arbor is a diverse community with highly engaged citizens, who may have differing expectations about the urban forest and what the plan should contain. To that end, prior to initiating the UCFMP development process, a comprehensive public engagement strategy was developed. Project staff has followed the public engagement strategy throughout the plan development process. The strategy outlines how the community will be engaged during different stages of the process. During the UCFMP planning process the following groups have been/will be engaged:

- **General Public/Community:** Engaging through public meetings, on-line surveys and other new media tools during key stages of the process.
- **Stakeholders** - Engaging through 3 Focus Group Sessions, public meetings and other media tools during key stages of the process. Stakeholders consists of representatives from groups that have a vested interest in urban forest issues, including residents, neighborhood associations, businesses, city boards/commissions, public agencies/institutions, city departments, environmental/non-profit groups.
- **Advisory Committee-** Engaging through regularly scheduled meetings throughout process. The Advisory Committee is composed of representatives from the Stakeholder groups that were chosen to represent a diverse range of perspectives. The purpose the committee is to advise the Working

Group on the scope, content and direction of the UCFMP. Members of the Advisory Committee include neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations, businesses, and public agencies.

- **Working Group-** Comprised of city staff and the consultant staff from SmithGroup JJR. The Working Group is responsible for reviewing content and developing the plan with input from the Advisory Committee, Stakeholders and general public/community.

The UCFMP development process began with a series of public engagement activities to assist with project scoping, as well as to ensure that community priorities related to trees, the urban forest and the plan were known. These activities included two public workshops, an on-line survey and stakeholder focus groups. The results of the initial public outreach activities were compiled into a chart, where common themes were identified.

Utilizing the results of the initial public outreach activities, the Project Team drafted a vision statement and goals for the plan. They were then reviewed and revised by the city staff Working Group and the Advisory Committee, and presented for comment to the Stakeholder groups during a second focus group session. A final draft version of the vision statement and plan goals has been developed based on the comments and feedback.

The project is currently in the **recommendation development** phase which has included, benchmarking and research on recommendation options, selection of options and development of recommendations and action steps. During this step, the Working Group and Advisory Committee have been involved in creating and reviewing draft recommendations. The Stakeholder Groups reviewed and commented on recommendation topics during a third focus group session.

The Project Team is currently revising the draft recommendations for final comment by the Working Group and Advisory Committee. The final draft recommendations, along with the vision statement and goals will be presented to the general public/community for input in mid-late September 2012. The Project Team is investigating a variety of avenues for public outreach to receive the greatest response and engagement by the community. Information about development of the UCFMP including, Advisory Committee meeting summaries, Stakeholder focus group summaries and the common themes chart can be found on the city's urban forestry page at www.a2gov.org/urbanforestry.

Tree Planting Update

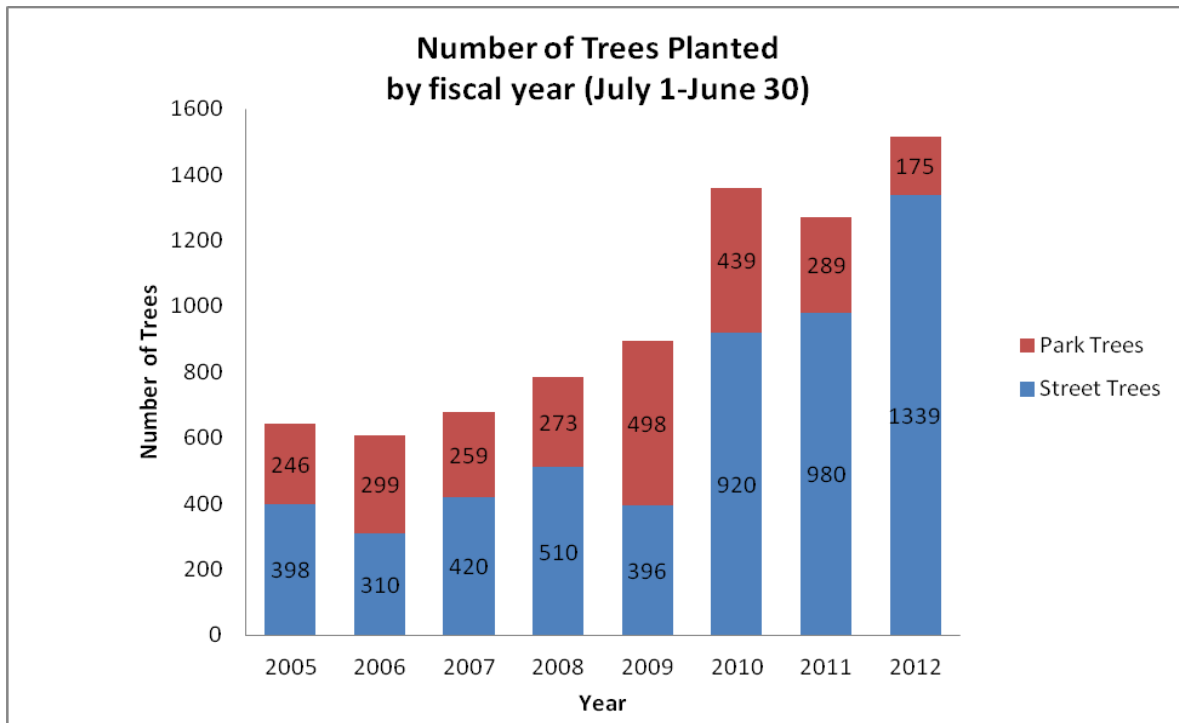
Over the last 7 years, the city has planted over 7,750 trees along city streets and in mowed areas of parks (see graph below) which has helped to replace many of the ash trees lost to emerald ash borer. To facilitate a systematic approach to yearly tree planting activities, city staff develops a tree planting plan for the upcoming fiscal year. The planting plan contains a list of potential areas for street tree planting. The areas are selected using the following criteria along with information from the street tree inventory, the urban tree canopy analysis, field visits and resident requests:

- Areas of the city with low tree canopy cover
- Areas of the city with large amounts of impervious surfaces (roads, rooftops, sidewalks)

- Areas of the city with an aging tree canopy where trees are dying and need to be interplanted with new trees to help maintain the canopy
- Areas of the city that had been impacted by the emerald ash borer that have not been replanted
- Areas of the city where construction activity may have impacted the tree canopy

The planting plan contains more locations than can be practically planted during a fiscal year, but this provides flexibility, as not all potential planting locations may be suitable for planting. Each planting season, specific sites are selected from the planting plan; City staff then visit each potential planting site to determine if it is suitable for planting.

In FY12, with the funding from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality’s (MDEQ) State Revolving Fund Program, over 1200 trees have been planted along city streets. The terms of the loan require the city to use an outside contractor and for the FY12 program Marine City Nursery was selected through a competitive bid process. Marine City Nursery planted trees in the fall 2011 and spring 2012 and are responsible for watering during the first year and providing a one-year guarantee.



The goal for FY13 is to plant 1000 trees along city streets. The City has been approved for another MDEQ State Revolving Fund loan for tree planting and in July City Council will be asked to approve a contract with Margolis Companies to plant 1000 street trees.

For information on tree planting and to view the FY13 Tree Planting Plan visit www.a2gov.org/trees.

If there are further questions – please contact Ms. Kerry Gray, Urban Forestry & Natural Resources Planner at kgray@a2gov.org.