



Legislation Text

File #: 14-0655, **Version:** 1

Resolution recommending City Council adopt the Urban and Community Forest Management Plan Attached for your review and action is a resolution recommending City Council adopt the Urban and Community Forest Management Plan.

Ann Arbor's urban and community forest is made up of the trees, shrubs and woody vegetation growing along city streets; in city parks; and on institutional and private property. It is a defining and valued characteristic of the city that residents affectionately call "Tree Town," helping to make it a desirable place to live, work and play.

The city has approximately 6,900 trees in mowed areas of city parks and over 41,000 trees growing along city streets. These publicly-managed trees provide over \$4.6 million in benefits to the community each year, including reducing stormwater run-off, improving air and water quality, and beautifying the city. The City has a long history of care and management of the urban and community forest however, serious challenges over the last decade, like the emerald ash borer, have impacted the city's ability to sustainably care for and manage the urban and community forest placing the health and condition of the city-managed trees at risk.

In 2011, a planning process was undertaken to develop the city's first Urban and Community Forest Management Plan (UCFMP) to provide a framework to effectively manage the urban and community forest as a sustainable asset, consistent with the values and needs of the community. Through a multi-tiered and comprehensive public engagement process stakeholders, community leaders, residents, Environmental Commission members, and city staff participated in the development of the UCFMP. Public workshops, on-line surveys, focus groups, A2 Open City Hall, and an Advisory Committee were used to gather input during the planning process. This input helped to identify and focus plan goals and provided a means of vetting ideas, exploring implementation options and establishing priorities among multiple-management activities. The public engagement process was successful in making the UCFMP a community-driven plan that is responsive to the issues, needs and desires of the community.

The overarching goal of the UCFMP is to sustainably protect, preserve, maintain and expand Ann Arbor's tree canopy and urban and community forest. The targets, supporting goals and recommendations outlined in the UCFMP help to achieve the overarching plan goal and also further goals in the City's Sustainability Framework adopted by City Council in February 2013.

Prepared by Kerry Gray, Urban Forest and Natural Resource Planner

Whereas, Ann Arbor's urban and community forest is a defining and valued characteristic of the city that residents call "Tree Town," making it a desirable place to live, work and play; and

Whereas, Ann Arbor's urban and community forest is made up of the trees, shrubs and woody vegetation growing along city streets, in public parks; and on institutional and private property; and

Whereas, Ann Arbor's urban and community forest provides millions of dollars in benefits to the

community each year, including reducing stormwater run-off, improving air and water quality and beautifying the city; and

Whereas, Events over the last decade, like the emerald ash borer, have impacted the city's ability to sustainably care for and manage the urban and community forest putting the city-managed trees at risk; and

Whereas, A planning process was undertaken to develop the city's first Urban and Community Forest Management Plan (UCFMP) to effectively manage the urban and community forest as a sustainable asset, consistent with the values and needs of the community, while maximizing its benefits; and

Whereas, Through a multi-tiered and comprehensive public engagement process stakeholders, community leaders, residents, Environmental Commission members, and city staff shaped the scope, content and direction of the UCFMP; and

Whereas, The 17 recommendations in the UCFMP provide the framework for the development of a sustainable urban and community forest; and

Whereas, The UCFMP identifies measurable targets, actions and recommendations to further goals in the City's Sustainability Framework; and

Whereas, As with all projects requiring significant city investment, relevant components of the UCFMP will be presented to City Council in the future for ultimate authorization;

RESOLVED, That the Environmental Commission recommends that City Council adopt the Urban and Community Forest Management Plan to demonstrate the city's commitment to conserve, protect, enhance and restore the community's aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.