



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Community & Recreation Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Beth Gignac, Director Community & Recreation Services

Date to Council: Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Report Number: CRS-2025-19

Subject: Urban Forestry and Naturalization Master Plan Status Update

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That CRS-2025-19 Urban Forestry and Naturalization Master Plan Status Update **be received.**

Background

As part of an amendment to the 2024-2028 PWES Capital Works Plan, Council approved the Urban Forestry and Naturalization Management Plan as detailed in report [PWES-2024-38](#) titled "Amendment to the 2024-2028 PWES Capital Works Plan, Urban Forestry and Naturalization Master Plan" which was received by Council at their July 23, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council (Motion: RCM-174-24).

At the November 26, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council, the Urban Forestry and Naturalization Master Plan (UFNMP) Award of Consulting Services was awarded to Dillon Consulting Ltd the amount of \$197,696.50 excluding HST as per By-law 2024-103.

Comments

In December 2024, members of Administration from the PWES and CRS teams met with Dillon Consulting to review the services and the associated schedule for the project. It was specifically noted to Dillon Consulting that the UFNMP refers only to trees and naturalization areas on Town-owned properties.

The services included:

- Recommending short, medium and long-term strategies to enhance and protect the Town's Urban Forest for the next 20 years;
- Documenting the benefits of enhanced urban forestry in reducing the impacts of climate change;
- Reviewing and documenting a comprehensive inventory of the Town's existing canopy coverage, while determining a target urban forestry canopy coverage;
- Identifying key areas for potential urban forestry expansion on both public and private properties, including integration within new developments;
- Identifying key areas for naturalization to support vegetation requirements and community interests in public spaces and parks;
- Providing planning recommendations and objectives to achieve the Town's goals to reduce the impacts of climate change through successful tree planting programs and forest restoration on both public and private properties;
- Outlining robust best management practices and technique for enhancing and maintaining the urban forest, including protection, replacement, and monitoring;
- Identifying key communication strategies with stakeholders, the public and Indigenous communities;
- Delivering a robust engagement program, designed to ensure meaningful engagement with stakeholders and;
- Emphasizing the benefits to communities from investing in urban forestry.

The UFNMP project is nearing 75% completion and, as such, Administration is providing this status update and a summary of the Focus Areas within the Plan. It is anticipated that the final UFNMP will be provided to Council for consideration in early Q2, 2026.

The Focus Areas of the UNFMP outlined in this report have been derived through the development of a Baseline Summary Report and Benchmark Analysis which included the following:

- Review of municipal policies and standard operating procedures
- Forest and naturalized area inventory resulting in the addition of a new GIS layer
- Review of tree planting strategies including standards, specifications and specifies diversity plans
- Soil Volume and Quality requirements for quality tree planting
- Review of best locations for naturalization
- Review of best practices for monitoring and maintenance for naturalization
- Review of the restoration requirements for Fairplay Woods
- Review of relevant legislative requirements in the Province of Ontario
- Review of the Planning Act and the Town's Official Plan, Secondary Plans, Zoning By-laws and Site Plan Controls regarding urban forestry development

Furthermore, the following consultation occurred:

- Workshop May 20, 2025 – attendees Administration and local conservation experts
- Introductory Information Session June 11, 2025 – Caldwell First Nation, Chippewa of the Thames First Nation
- Public Information Centre June 25, 2025 – members of the public

Additional consultation will occur once an initial draft of the UFNMP is available and will include a review of the Plan by the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA), a Public Information Centre and Indigenous communities.

Summary of Draft Focus Areas

UFNMP will provide draft recommendations and implementation guidance in each of the 10 (ten) Focus Areas listed below:

1. Urban Forestry Resources – an evaluation of skill requirements and operating and capital budget estimates
2. Inventory and Information Management – guidance on the development of an inventory database for all Town-owned trees, plantable spaces/sites and naturalization areas

3. Urban Forest Maintenance – standards on monitoring and maintenance on the health of the tree canopy including guidance on standards regarding invasive species, pest and disease management
4. Monitoring – development of key urban forest metrics
5. Guidelines and Specifications – includes tree-planting standards, growing media, seed mixes, species selection, plant density and native plants for naturalized areas and tree replacement
6. Municipal Policies and By-laws – draft of Public Tree By-Law and Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Policy
7. Tree Protection – development of tree protection specifications to enhance the urban forest
8. Tree Maintenance and Pruning Standards – guidance on tree structural pruning program for young trees and a cyclical street tree maintenance cycle
9. Urban Forest Enhancement – criteria for tree planting prioritization on Town-owned lands and/or other lands where opportunities for tree planting restoration partnerships exist
10. Outreach, Stewardship and Partnerships – identification of opportunities to create and/or formalized education and urban forest/naturalization partnerships

The UFNMP will be accompanied by a draft Public Tree By-Law and a draft Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Policy for concurrent consideration by Council as part of the UFNMP final report.

Next Steps

Administration plans to bring forward a draft of the UFNMP for Council's initial review in mid-Q1, 2026 with additional consultation with ERCA, a Public Information Centre and an invitation for review to Indigenous communities.

After the review period, a final draft of the UFNMP, Public Tree By-Law and Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Policy will be brought forward to Council for consideration in early Q2, 2026.

Consultations

Development Services
Public Works & Engineering Services
Community & Recreation Services
Friends of Tecumseh Forests

Financial Implications

Financial implications for short-, medium- and long-term implementation of the UFNMP will be developed pending Council's consideration of the final Plan and as part of the annual budget process.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2023-2026 Strategic Priorities
☐	Sustainable Growth: Achieve prosperity and a livable community through sustainable growth.
☒	Community Health and Inclusion: Integrate community health and inclusion into our places and spaces and everything we do.
☐	Service Experience: Enhance the experience of Team Tecumseh and our citizens through responsive and respectful service.

Communications

Not applicable ☒

Website ☐

Social Media ☐

News Release ☐

Local Newspaper ☐

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Beth Gignac, BA Hons
Director Community & Recreation Services

Reviewed by:

Phil Bartnik, P.Eng.
Director Public Works & Engineering Services

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
None	None