



# The Corporation of the Town of Milton

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Report To: Council

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From: Kristene Scott, Commissioner, Community Services

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Date: November 15, 2021

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Report No: COMS-009-21

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Subject: Urban Forestry Management Strategy 2015-2024 Update

**Recommendation:** THAT the Urban Forestry Management Strategy 2015-2024 status updates as outlined in Schedule A be received;

AND THAT the Town of Milton 2021-2026 Urban Forestry Management Strategy' identified as Schedule B be approved.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The 2015-2024 Urban Forestry Management Strategy (UFMS) received by Council in 2014 identified 17 key recommendations.
- An interim review of the UFMS has been conducted internally to confirm and validate the forestry services and direction considering available resources.
- This report provides a status update on the UFMS recommendations and a proposed 5-year Management Strategy.
- Over 5,000 street and park trees have been planted through the town's annual program since the UFMS was tabled and Milton's urban forest continues to grow as a result of various volunteer initiatives, developer works, park developments, and Conservation Halton and Regional programs.
- Since 2015, plantings have been conservatively estimated at around 20,000 to 25,000 trees (various sizes and locations) throughout the Town of Milton.
- Staff continue to experiment with a variety of species and planting strategies based on environmental factors and site specific constraints.

## REPORT

### Background

In 2014 Town staff engaged Urban Forest Innovations Inc. (experts in the Urban Forest Management field) to review "the state of the union" in terms of the Town's urban forest management approach. From that review, the Urban Forest Management Strategy 2015-2024 (UFMS) was created and received by Council through COMS-025-14.

Seven strategic objectives were identified in the UFMS including:

## Background

1. Allocate adequate human, financial and operational resources dedicated to urban forest maintenance, monitoring and planning;
2. Increase the proportion of proactive urban forest management and reduce the amount of reactive management needed;
3. Increase urban forest structural and species diversity, and increase the number of native, non-invasive tree species tolerant of urban forest stressors such as climate change, pests and diseases;
4. Acknowledge the importance of the urban forest in future high-level planning documents, and create and implement policies that support its protection and enhancement;
5. Expand the knowledge base about current conditions of the Town's urban forest;
6. Increase awareness among Town resident, staff and representatives about the wide range of benefits provided by the urban forest, and about how to manage it to ensure its long-term sustainability, and;
7. Expand stewardship initiatives, increase community engagement, and develop more partnerships that support the urban forest.

Within the strategy, 17 Key Recommendations were tabled (along with their respective budget and resource impacts) and identified as high, medium and low priority.

Staff has been working on the implementation of the recommendations since 2015 and much progress has been made on ensuring that the Town of Milton has a healthy urban forest.

## Discussion

Having followed the management recommendations of the UFMS to the fullest extent budgets and resources would allow, staff report ENG-020-18 provided a review of current practices and future direction of the Urban Forestry Management portfolio and outlined the projects being pursued and the services administered to manage Milton's urban forest.

Both the UFMS 2015-2024 report and ENG-020-18 (2018 Fall Forestry Update) provided detailed background information on Milton's Forestry Management approach.

The UFMS 2015-2024 recommended an interim review of the key recommendations and themes to confirm and validate services and direction considering available resources.

Schedule A, '2015-2024 Town of Milton Urban Forestry Management Strategy Status Update' summarizes the recommendations being pursued by staff. Schedule B, 'Town of Milton 2021-2026 Urban Forestry Management Strategy' outlines the Management Plan for the next (5 years).



## Discussion

The Forestry Portfolio has evolved from a primarily reactive management approach to a more “proactive” approach as more resources have become available and annual programs introduced. Much has been accomplished in a short time however there is more work to be done to achieve all recommendations and improve service levels concerning the Town’s “green” assets.

Over 5,000 street and park trees have been planted through the Town’s annual program since the UFMS was tabled. Milton’s urban forest continues to grow as a result of various volunteer initiatives, developer works, park developments, and Conservation Halton and Regional programs. In all, the number of plantings since 2015 have been conservatively estimated at around 20,000 to 25,000 trees (various sizes and locations) throughout the Town of Milton. Staff continue to experiment with a variety of species and planting strategies based on environmental factors and site specific constraints.

## Financial Impact

The 2021-2026 Urban Forestry Management Strategy attached as Appendix B is expected to be largely delivered using existing approved resources within the Town’s operations division. Should incremental funding be required for any particular initiative, approval will occur in accordance with the Town’s Budget Management Policy (Policy 113).

Respectfully submitted,

Kristene Scott  
Commissioner, Community Services

For questions, please contact: Doug Sampano, Phone: Ext. 2547  
Director, Facilities, Operations  
& Environment

## Attachments

Schedule A - 2015-2024 Town of Milton Urban Forestry Management Strategy Update  
Schedule B - Town of Milton 2021-2026 Urban Forestry Management Strategy



CAO Approval  
Andrew M. Siltala  
Chief Administrative Officer

### Recognition of Traditional Lands

The Town of Milton resides on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the HuronWendat and Haudenosaunee people. The Town of Milton shares this land and the responsibility for the water, food and resources. We stand as allies with the First Nations as stewards of these lands.

**SCHEDULE A**  
**2015-2024 Town of Milton**  
**Urban Forestry Management Strategy Recommendations**  
**2021 Status Update**

<b>Forestry Management Recommendations</b>	<b>Status Update - 2021</b>
<p>1. Continue to implement the Adaptive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Management Strategy as per Council Report ENG-028-13.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Urban program of all ash removals complete (Approximately 4000 urban trees along roads, in parks and along pathways).</li><li>• Rural program of all ash removals complete (Approximately 4300 trees along rural roads).</li><li>• 130 Ash trees continue to be treated and will be removed as required; trees removed will be replanted in the following spring.</li></ul>

<p>2. Review staffing resources available for Urban Forest Program Administration and Management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town uses a combination of in-house and contractor works to address growing forestry service requests and programs.</li> <li>• All staff working on trees are Certified Arborists or under the direction of a Certified Arborist(s).</li> </ul>
<p>3. Investigate and implement a Tree Risk Management Strategy which includes a Priority Tree Risk Assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency works contract in place with priority removals completed based on safety.</li> <li>• Staff leading tree work are Tree Risk Assessment Certified (TRAQ).</li> <li>• Hazard Assessments undertaken before forestry projects proceed.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Implement a Comprehensive Young Tree Establishment and Maintenance Program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced pruning program for juvenile trees to improve health and minimize branch damage.</li> <li>• Service requests tracked and managed.</li> <li>• Watering strategies implemented during drought periods, programs for stake removals and mulching to improve overall health.</li> </ul>

<p>5. Require scheduled Young Tree Maintenance prior to acceptance of plant material in new developments (developments both by Developers and the Town).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forestry staff review all development phases with the developer’s landscape architect responsible for each phase.</li> <li>• Engineering and Parks Standards Manual maintenance requirements and are applied.</li> <li>• All developer works or service requests are logged and forwarded to the respective developer and their consultants for rectification and standards compliance.</li> </ul>
<p>6. Tree Protection Policies and Actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site plans and subdivision plans are reviewed to protect existing forestry assets.</li> <li>• Staff work with a number departments on various concerns such as hazards and tree disputes related to property matters as required, to protect Town trees.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Tree inventories and assessments to aid in Forestry Management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 2017 inventory was completed to appropriately plan rural EAB, dead, hazard tree mitigation for a 3 year term (2019-2021); this enabled staff to successfully mitigate all EAB, dead, hazard trees under Town control within all rural road ROW’s (project completion this fall).</li> <li>• The tree inventory assists staff with ensuring diversification of species in the urban forest.</li> </ul>

<p>8. Upgrade all tree planting and maintenance contracts using Best Industry Standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement specifications include detailed information, to ensure quality stock, planted properly, by qualified contractors for all tree planting contracts.</li> <li>• Maintenance tenders have been updated to ensure that the most qualified contractors are working on Town trees.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Update 2014 Engineering and Parks Standards Manual (EPSM) to be consistent with Best Management Practices and Industry Standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPSM was updated in 2017 to accommodate currently accepted science.</li> <li>• Annual Town tenders have the most up-to-date practices and standards. Any refinements from the 2017 EPSM will be incorporated in the next iteration and applied accordingly.</li> </ul>
<p>10. Establish Appropriate Levels of Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working closely with the Region on arterial roads to ensure “right tree, right place” as Regional Roads can be challenging for tree growth (high level of compacted soils, low organic matter, salt spray and drift from winter operations, higher exposure to winds, etc.).</li> <li>• Working closely with developers for better delivery of the urban forest assets (including streets, parks, woodlots and natural / naturalized areas) conveyed to the Town.</li> <li>• Over 800 juvenile street and park trees planted each year.</li> <li>• 1,000 saplings planted each year through volunteer and partnership programs.</li> <li>• Developers, Conservation Halton and the Region collectively plant an additional 3,000 trees per year (approx.) in Milton.</li> </ul>



<p>11. Investigate options to improve and expand the existing Town-owned Tree Inventory and implement a Tree Asset Management System.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A scoped tree inventory was conducted in 2009, and updated in 2017 to include rural right-of-way hazards, EAB, elm and dead trees to mitigate risk along the rural road right-of-ways.</li> <li>• The 2017 inventory assists with planning new planting sites in urban areas and is utilized as a tool to ensure species diversification is appropriate (goal to have no more than 6% of the same species in given area – to reduce the risk of an EAB type event from occurring again).</li> </ul>
<p>12. Expand promotion, outreach and education with regards to the Urban Forest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forestry staff work closely with the Strategic Communications team on various issues and programs (drought alerts, community planting days, community clean-up days, etc.) and have enhanced public education and outreach regarding forestry programs.</li> </ul>
<p>13. Establish an Ad Hoc Forestry Working Group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitioned to inter-divisional coordination. Structures and programs are in place to address immediate and acute issues.</li> </ul>
<p>14. Support Community Based Events (Volunteering, etc.) and develop volunteer network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs take place in spring and fall (Good Neighbours Day Clean-up, Tree Planting Days with Conservation Halton and Sustainable Milton, TD Tree Days, SWM Pond Walks, and other initiatives as they arise) to encourage and support various forestry initiatives.</li> </ul>

<p>15. Recognize the value of the Urban Forest in broad Town Strategies, Official Plan, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased urban forest representation working through Development Services and various stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<p>16. Pursue partnerships with agencies and organizations to expand Urban Forest Stewardship Activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town currently has partnerships in place with the following stakeholders for various tree planting activities:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Halton</li> <li>• Anne J. MacArthur Public School</li> <li>• Sustainable Milton</li> <li>• TD Canada Trust</li> <li>• Union Gas</li> <li>• Field and Stream Rescue Team</li> <li>• Enbridge Pipelines Inc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Various groups approach the Town annually and are encouraged to participate with current stakeholders on existing projects.</li> </ul>
<p>17. Recognize the Town’s “Heritage Trees” and explore potential for a Heritage Tree Register.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pending - limited staff time was available with existing resources to pursue this initiative as proposed by the UFMS.</li> </ul>

**SCHEDULE B**  
**Town of Milton**  
**2021-2026 Urban Forestry Management Strategy**

<b>Forestry Management Recommendations</b>	<b>Strategy 2021-2026</b>
<p>Continue to implement the adaptive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) management strategy as per Council report ENG-028-13.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to treat and remove the remaining 130 urban ash trees as required (successional approach). Remove and replace trees as they decline in health.</li> <li>• Transition EAB control budget into an overall Pest Control budget to deal with Gypsy Moth and other pests and diseases that arise throughout the Town.</li> </ul>
<p>Review staffing resources available for Urban Forest Program Administration and Management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work towards an 80% “programmed” proactive approach (i.e. cyclical pruning, watering, mulching, stake removals, etc.) and a 20% reactive approach (service requests, emergency removals, etc.) using a combination of in-house and contractor resources.</li> <li>• Continue to utilize community groups, various partners, schools and volunteers with the goal of planting 1,000 saplings each year to augment town tree plantings (800 juvenile trees/year).</li> </ul>

<p>Investigate and implement a Tree Risk Management Strategy which includes a Priority Tree Risk Assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review mature tree stands in Milton (streets and woodlots) to assess Tree Risk and incorporate mitigation measures such as pruning and trimming.</li> <li>• Conduct cyclical reviews of mature tree stands in 5-10 year review cycles.</li> </ul>
<p>Implement a Comprehensive Young Tree Establishment and Maintenance Program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce standardized watering regimes.</li> <li>• Implement cyclical stake removals to improve growth and mulching top ups to retain moisture.</li> <li>• Continue with cyclical pruning and transition in to a specific 5-10 year program to improve tree health.</li> </ul>
<p>Require Scheduled Young Tree Maintenance prior to acceptance of plant material in new developments (developments both by Developers and the Town).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue development review practices on a status quo basis.</li> </ul>
<p>Tree Protection Policies and Actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review best practices in other municipalities and consider proposing a Public Tree By-Law, to better protect Town owned trees.</li> </ul>

<p>Tree Inventories and Assessments to aid in Forestry Management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a tree risk assessment study in “Old Milton” (where large mature trees are located).</li> <li>• Conduct woodlot assessments to aid in forming appropriate management programs.</li> </ul>
<p>Upgrade all Tree Planting and Maintenance Contracts using Best Industry Standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly review best industry standards and implement best practices.</li> </ul>
<p>Establish Appropriate Levels of Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive down “reactive works” and increase a “proactive works” approach through the introduction of comprehensive management programs.</li> <li>• Continue working with the public and Council regarding assumed vs unassumed subdivisions and their respective “green assets”.</li> </ul>
<p>Investigate options to improve and expand the existing Town-owned tree inventory and Implement a Tree Asset Management System.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a “Forestry Maintenance Management System” to tie tree data to town work orders.</li> </ul>
<p>Expand promotion, outreach and education with regards to the Urban Forest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue working with Strategic Communications staff to promote forestry programs, initiatives and public education messages (i.e. website updates, FAQs, social media communications, etc.).</li> </ul>

<p>Support community based events (volunteering, etc.) and develop volunteer network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand efforts to engage the community and other stakeholders / partners to support various forestry and environmental initiatives.</li> </ul>
<p>Recognize the value of the Urban Forest in broad Town Strategies, Official Plan, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in various corporate projects to promote the value of the urban forest and ensure its inclusion and recognition in broad Town strategies.</li> </ul>
<p>Pursue partnerships with agencies and organizations to expand Urban Forest Stewardship Activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently engage the community and other stakeholders / partners to offer consistent community based stewardship activities and events.</li> </ul>
<p>Recognize the Town’s “Heritage Trees” plus explore potential for a Heritage Tree Register.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with volunteers and various stakeholders to establish a “Heritage Tree” register (trees of a large caliper size and in good condition).</li> </ul>