

# CITY OF ROCHESTER URBAN FOREST MASTER PLAN

## PURPOSE:

THIS PLAN IS A GUIDE TO MAINTAIN, PROTECT, AND ENHANCE ROCHESTER'S ALREADY EXTENSIVE TREE CANOPY COVER RESOURCE AND THE MULTITUDE OF ASSOCIATED BENEFITS.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The process began with a canopy assessment on both public and private property.

Total canopy provides approximately 66 million dollars in annual benefit to the City of Rochester

Tree benefits include: Storm water mitigation, pollution reduction, carbon sequestration, reduced energy consumption, urban heat island mitigation and improved human health and wellbeing.

Creation of Tree Plotter canopy assessment tool. Helps us to identify areas for tree planting priority based on 8 different criteria that will help address human health, underserved populations, storm water mitigation, air quality, water quality and urban heat island effects.

The master plan includes a variety of long term goals, strategies and priorities to achieve optimal levels of urban forest management, sustainability, and equity in a comprehensive and systematic manner.

**CURRENT CANOPY COVER**  
**28%**  
(65% PRIVATELY OWNED; IMPERVIOUS SURFACES 28%)



THREE PUBLIC MEETINGS, TWO PUBLIC SURVEYS, TWELVE DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED.

## CREATION OF THE PLAN

### Engagement

Involved 12 City departments related to landscape and maintenance, city code and policy, planning design and development, data and information technology and community outreach and education.

Meetings with Rochester Area Builders along with three public meetings and two POLCO surveys related to existing urban forest, resources, management, increased canopy cover, tree planting, forestry staffing, funding, and adoption of citywide canopy cover goal.

### Benchmarking

Data from the Arbor Day Foundation, Tree City USA, and A 2014 Urban & Community Forestry Census of Tree Activities by R. Hauer and W. Peterson were compared with Rochester's urban forest. The US Forest Service's Urban Forest Audit System was also completed.

Strategic actions were established and from those goals were prioritized.



# URBAN FOREST MASTER PLAN COMPONENTS

CURRENTLY 20 YEAR PRUNING CYCLE. INDUSTRY MINIMUM 7 YEARS.



CANOPY COVER GOAL: 35% BY 2035

CITY TO PLANT 60% OF THE 84,000 OR 50,400 TREES



## Goals and Actions

### Tree Management Policy

Align resources and planning efforts across departments by adopting policies that provide for optimal tree growth, updated tree ordinances, implementation of tree preservation policy and heritage tree provision, and creation of a tree manual with BMPs for developers, planners, and residents.



### Capacity, Training and Authority

Implement recommendations supporting employee certifications and the establishment of an urban forestry workgroup. Establish staffing levels appropriate to maintain public trees and implement goals and both monitor and enforce commercial tree planting requirements.

CITY OF ROCHESTER AVERAGE SPENT PER TREE: \$13.03 VS NATIONAL AVERAGE OF \$44.85



## Budget and Funding

Rochester spent an average of \$13.03/tree over the last 6 years, while an analysis of similarly sized cities across the US showed average spending of \$44.85/tree. This creates a deficit of approximately \$24.50/tree annually. The UFMP recommends increased funding to more adequately maintain current tree population. Industry standards recommend a 7-year pruning cycle. Cost to maintain existing tree inventory at this level would require 3 arborists, 1 crew chief, and seasonal staff in addition to necessary equipment, with an estimated initial cost of \$700,000 and an additional \$415,000 annually. Implementing the canopy cover goal and achieving a 7-year pruning cycle would create the need for 15 additional staff, including 13 arborists, 1 administrative position, and 1 volunteer coordinator.

ADDITIONAL STAFF NEEDED WOULD TOTAL 15 INCLUDING 13 ARBORISTS 1 ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION AND 1 VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR



### Assessments and Plans

Continue and complete inventory of all trees. Monitor tree loss, work toward goal of no net loss of trees, and work to develop a citywide master tree planting plan. Adopt canopy cover goal of 35%, requiring the planting of 84,000 additional trees citywide (60% planted by city). Quantify ecosystem benefits and appraised value of public tree resource by conducting a cost benefit analysis of all public trees. Identify high value natural areas and establish plans for conservation and preservation of these areas..



### Community Engagement

Continue citizen engagement and work toward removal of any barriers to future engagement. Develop outreach materials and update website to enable information sharing and consider hiring a volunteer coordinator.



### Green Asset Management

Minimize tree/infrastructure conflicts, diversify tree inventory, coordinate with others to maximize tree planting projects, and establish procedures for replacement of damaged trees resulting from other projects. Verify strong procedures and policies for tree care operations.

Additional recommendations include funding to support natural area management. Suggestions to increase funding sources include the creation of special assessment districts, parcel tax, general obligation bond, stormwater utility fee, pest control fee, tree work and land development application fee, utilization of carbon offsets, and parking benefit district.

### Next Steps

Discuss further at council study-session.

Bring the plan to city council meeting for a vote to adopt.

20-year plan implementation with 35% canopy goal adoption will result in 50,400 trees being planted in the first 14 years (35% by 2035). This will require increasing current staffing levels by four arborists to address pruning needs within 1-2 years. Tree planting to meet canopy cover goals plus additional maintenance requirements would call for adding one additional employee each year in years 3-14.

QUESTIONS:  
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