

February 8, 2016

Chair and Members
Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee
City of London

2016-19 Multi Year Budget – Urban Forest Strategy

After reviewing the forestry strategy it is very clear that urban forestry includes all trees and forests that are within the city therefore, to implement the strategy, it is important to have and maintain an adequate assessment, in order to manage the forest. The draft London Plan contemplates this:

"320_ Progress toward meeting these targets will be monitored as follows: A tree canopy cover analysis will be prepared every five years to determine if tree canopy targets are being achieved. An analysis of the structure, function, and value of the Urban Forest will be prepared at least once every ten years. An inventory update and analysis of trees in boulevards, rural streets, manicured portions of parks and municipal properties, will be completed at least once every ten years."

I consider the proposed multi-year budget inadequate for implementing the Council approved urban forest strategy as it does not provide sufficient financial support for its implementation. As stated on page one of the Council adopted City of London Urban Forestry Strategy: Implementation Plan

"Implementation of the Strategy requires a serious commitment to both human and financial resources if the goals and targets are to be met. Additionally, the Plan will require a commitment from all City departments to consider the urban forest as a unique and valuable asset that requires a higher level of priority in City programs than in the past. Fully implementing the Plan will also require participation from citizens, private organizations, and other public agencies."

When I review the budget in detail, it does not reflect the objectives of the strategy. As well, the budget of the forestry section competes with the priorities for parks. In my opinion as an economist, there should be a separation between the budget of the forest section and parks department, for there to be financial autonomy, and **to allocate more resources for a forest inventory of all forested areas larger than five hectares. An inventory is necessary to evaluate and maintain existing forests and to real estimates for most appropriate projects to manage the city's forest.**

If we really want a change to counteract the loss of forest in the city of London, we have to be aware of its value and benefit that causes a city trying to be healthy. Council should at a minimum support Case #3 – Urban Forest, of the Strategic Initiatives.

Sincerely,

Erick Arellano
Forester-Economist