

## ***Trees and Forests Advisory Committee:*** **Suggestions from the Educational Initiatives and Outreach Subcommittee** **For the Urban Forestry Communications Strategy**

### **Introduction**

The 2014 *City of London Urban Forest Strategy* (UFS) sets out four guiding principles: Plant More, Protect More, Maintain Better, and Engage the Community.

The Educational Initiatives and Outreach Subcommittee of the Trees and Forests Advisory Committee has provided suggestions, outlined below, to assist the city in **Engaging the Community**.

The suggestions would aid the city in addressing two of its strategic goals:

**Strategic Goal 15:** Consult and cooperate with citizens at the neighbourhood level to embrace citywide urban forest goals and objectives

**Strategic Goal 17:** Facilitate public understanding of urban forest management

### **Urban Forest Strategy: Action Items to be Addressed**

The UFS (2014) includes the following action items:

**15.2** *Prepare tree care or tree information cards for species-specific practices like tree watering and species identification, and identifications of their locations using the tree inventory. Send cards out at seasonally appropriate times to residents who have those trees on the boulevard in front of their house.*

**17.5** *Develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy. Ensure that the strategy is coordinated by Corporate Communications and all City departments participate in its development so that initiatives are coordinated and can be rolled out smoothly in the appropriate season (e.g., green-waste recycling in the fall, water conservation during the summer months, tree cutting permit to avoid the bird nesting season, etc.).*

**17.6** *Make the City website and staff directory more accessible/navigable to make it easier for the public to contact staff with questions or concerns about the urban forest.*

### **Suggestions:**

The suggestions provided below have been developed by the Educational Initiatives and Outreach Subcommittee to address the action items above from the Urban Forest Strategy.

We feel that undertaking some or all of these initiatives would aid the city in meeting its goals.

The members of this subcommittee and/or TFAC can assist with the development of the suggested resources (items 3-6). ReForest London is able to assist with the development and implementation of item 8.

1. For the City of London to develop an annual program with clear budget for educational activities
2. For the City of London to accept input from TFAC (see accompanying document, “Suggestions for the City of London’s Website Relating to Trees and Forests”) to improve the City of London website
  - Trees and Forests webpage modifications
  - Improve access to information on the TreeMe grant program
  - Provide information regarding tree by-laws on pages for businesses
3. Determine if the London Free Press would be willing to collaborate with the City of London and TFAC to publish a series of seasonally relevant articles on tree care topics
  - Suggested topics include mulching, watering, stakes and tree collars (newly planted trees), why you shouldn’t move firewood
  - May wish to include promotion of the TreeMe program, and/or how to get free trees
  - Potentially post PDFs of the articles on the City of London website
4. Produce fact sheets and/or tri-fold pamphlets with information on a range of tree care topics
  - Suggested topics include common tree care mistakes, and harms of ‘volcano’ mulching
  - Target one set of pamphlets at the public
    - Develop a list of locations that would be willing to distribute them (e.g. landscape supply stores, garden centres)
  - Develop a second set of these pamphlets/fact sheets with more technical information for relevant companies that operate in the city (e.g. landscapers, arborists, etc.)
    - Issue physical copies of these to relevant businesses
  - Provide PDFs of these document on the City of London Website
5. Undertake a “roving tree tag” initiative to temporarily place oversized tags on trees in parks across London with information on trees
  - Suggested topics include tree care, London’s urban forest, and the value of trees
  - Inspired by the ReForest London “Hug Me” tree signage campaign a few years back
6. Display electronic billboard(s) with brief messages about tree-related topics
  - Suggested topics include watering, and don’t move firewood
  - Similar to the oak wilt billboard that was previously displayed
7. Hold an annual information session for landscapes and other related contractors
  - Suggested topics include: By-laws, TreeMe, Tree protection during construction (and associated penalties)
8. Hold an annual information session on tree care for the broader public
  - This could be part of the new Signal Boost Initiative at the Westminster Ponds Centre