


## The City of London Urban Forest Vision

Our Vision for the City of London Urban Forest:

*The City of London truly reflects the nickname "The Forest City". Its abundant urban forest is resilient, diversified and healthy. This well maintained network of green infrastructure and natural capital provides the citizens of London with a safe and secure environment while preserving and enhancing environmental, aesthetic, economic, social, cultural and psychological benefits.*



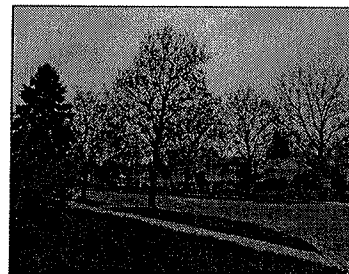
## The Urban Forest

The urban forest refers to all trees within the municipal boundary, regardless of land use type, whether public or private. Trees in private yards, street boulevards, parks, woodlands, wetlands, ravines and fields are included in this term.



City of London

The urban forest includes trees in man-made environments and trees in "natural" ecosystems.



Man-made environments include street trees, manicured park and yard trees, and trees in hard surface environments such as the downtown core and large parking lots.

Trees in "natural" ecosystems include woodlands, wetlands, and other natural areas. These ecosystems generally include native tree and understorey vegetation.





# Benefits of the Urban Forest

Urban forests and related vegetation provide various environmental, community and economic benefits.

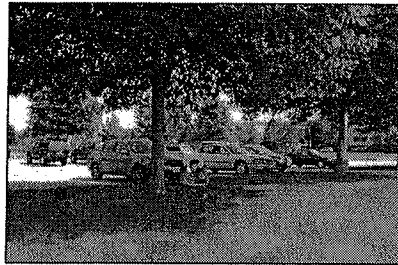
### Environmental benefits:

- Trees moderate temperatures
- Trees moderate stormwater runoff
  - Trees reduce air pollution
- Trees provide habitat for animals
- Trees contribute to biodiversity



### Community benefits:

- Trees improve social connection
- Trees create walkable communities
- Trees reduce sun exposure and heat related illness
  - Trees improve mental well-being



### Economic benefits:

- Trees lower energy costs
- Trees increase property values
- Trees improve retail business
- Trees lower health care costs
  - Trees market a City

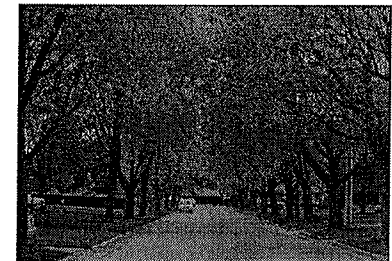
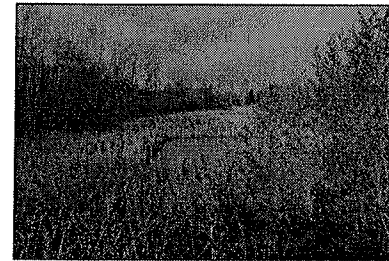
### London's urban forest is estimated to:

- Have a structural value of \$1.5 billion
- Remove 370 tonnes of pollutants/year
  - Saves \$4.5 million of reduced health care costs
- Contributes to \$1.7 million in energy use savings/year



# Urban Forest Vision & Guiding Principles

The vision for "The Forest City" is an abundant urban forest that is resilient, diversified and healthy. This includes a well maintained network of green infrastructure and natural capital that provides citizens with a safe and secure environment while preserving and enhancing environmental, aesthetic, economic, social, cultural, health and psychological benefits.



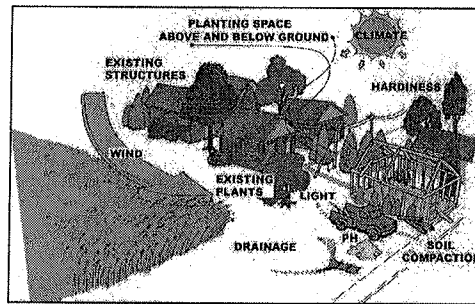
Guiding principles aimed to achieve the urban forest vision:

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Protect | 1) Protect and maintain London's urban forest on public and private land where it is providing the benefits of the 'right tree in the right place' and is supporting the integrity of natural features. |
| Enhance | 2) Expand and manage the urban forest strategically to maximize the social, environmental and economic returns.   |
| Monitor | 3) Foster continual improvement through adaptive management based on research and measurement of the urban forest.  |
| Engage  | 4) Partner with the community to achieve urban forest goals.  |

## Right Tree, Right Place

The concept of "right tree in the right place" is fundamental to urban forest management.

It is important to ensure suitable tree species are selected to match the intended function and available growing space conditions. This applies to city street and park trees as well as woodlands.



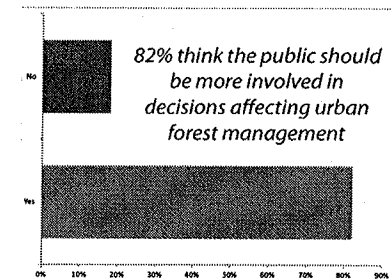
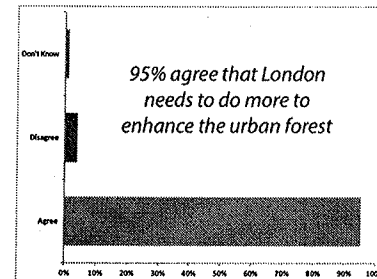
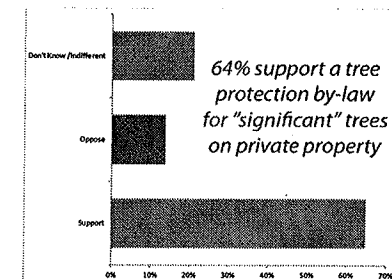
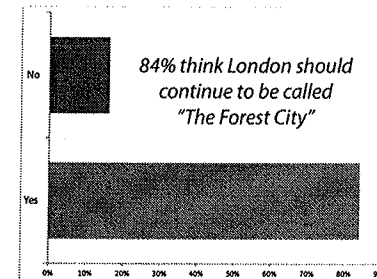
Important considerations when selecting suitable species include:

- Tree function - What major benefits are the trees expected to provide?
- Form & size - Understanding the space constraints trees will experience at maturity is critical to selecting the right species.
- Site conditions - Important to select species that will thrive under a given set of conditions.
- Human activity - Important that tree species are resilient to the types of human activity that they will be exposed to.
- Insects & disease - Selecting species that are resilient to insects & disease anticipated in the area is critical to long-term health.

## Community Input

Public and stakeholder consultation was completed over five months to identify concerns and the vision the City has for the urban forest. This included interviews with 30 City staff, interviews and questionnaires with 15 external stakeholder groups, and an online public survey. A total of 1,758 individuals completed the online survey with 592 of these respondents providing written comments.

### A snapshot....



The top 3 most important urban forest concerns in London were:

- 1) Tree preservation & protection
- 2) Lack of tree cover
- 3) Protection of heritage/historic trees

Residents and stakeholders understand that the urban forest is a significant asset of their community.

The most important characteristics of the urban forest were identified as:

- Attractive streets
- Shade along streets and sidewalks
- Shade in parks
- Pleasant appearance of trees
- Diversity of species

# Community Input

Examples of recommendations developed to address specific issues:

**Issue:**

The City needs a more extensive urban forest. Specifically, the community identified parking lots, shopping streets, recently developed residential streets, and commercial/industrial areas as needing more trees.

**Recommendations:**

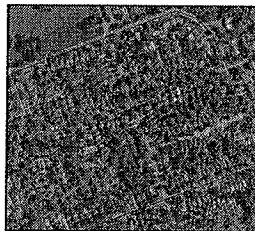
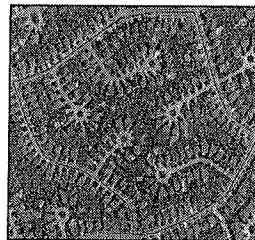
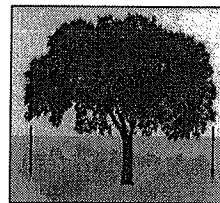
Establish leaf cover targets by land use types and implement them through planning, policy, and community engagement.

Develop a tree establishment program driven by leaf cover targets, maintenance capacity, and "right tree, right place" principles.

Leaf cover (aka canopy cover) is an important concept of urban forest management as it is a measure of the amount of forest that grows in an area. It is relatively easy to monitor, and serves as a good indicator of the general health and value of the urban forest.

Suggested leaf cover targets by land use type:

Land Use Type	Current Leaf Cover	Target Leaf Cover
Agriculture	13%	15%
Commercial	10%	15%
Institutional	18%	20%
Industrial	12%	15%
Low density residential	27%	35%
Medium and high density residential	19%	25%
Natural area and open space	55%	60%
Citywide	25%	32%



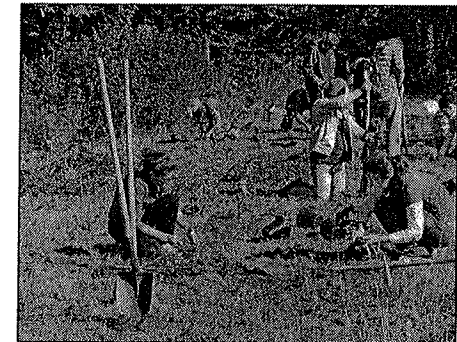
Examples of leaf cover in two neighbourhoods: 5% (top) and 39% (bottom).

# Community Input

Examples of recommendations developed to address specific issues:

**Issue:**

Volunteer tree planting provides a valuable contribution to London's urban forest and have created collaborative efforts that unite community members, however there are opportunities for improvement.



**Recommendations:**

Identify plantable space opportunities that are currently under utilized such as the edges of sports facilities, passive use turf grass (including City parks), public walkways, transportation corridors, vacant City lands, pumphouses, City owned farmland outside the Urban Growth Boundary, cul-de-sac bulbs and make these areas available for volunteer planting projects

Build a 5-year planting plan that identifies areas and objectives for volunteer planting projects on City-owned property

Raise public awareness of the SPARKS Neighbourhood Matching Fund for neighbourhood initiated projects

Provide annual funding to support both UTRCA and ReForest London planting projects. These organizations are currently able to leverage additional funding at approximately 5:1.

Monitor the performance of newly planted species and assess their performance.

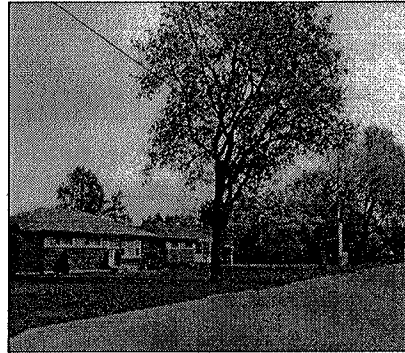
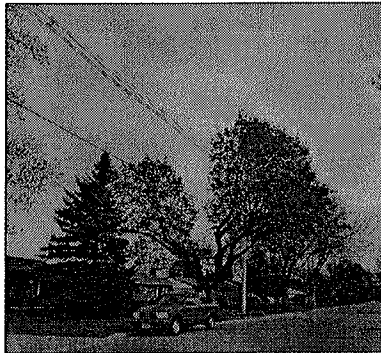


## Community Input

Examples of recommendations developed to address specific issues:

**Issue:**

Tree pruning practices, particularly around hydro lines, is a commonly expressed concern of residents



**Recommendations:**

Establish quality specifications for London Hydro tree maintenance crews to use.

Establish a scheduled life cycle and area-based tree maintenance cycle that includes rural areas.

Identify pruning dependant and high failure potential species within the street tree population, and consider for replacement with more reliable species.

Apply "right tree, right place" best practices to select trees most suitable for the site.

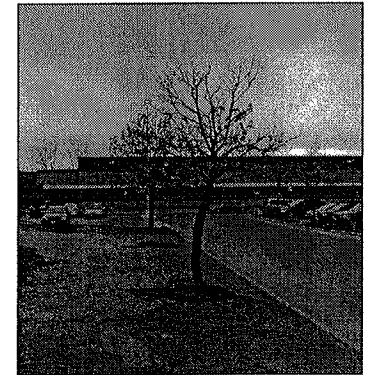


## Community Input

Examples of recommendations developed to address specific issues:

**Issue:**

Long term survival and growth of trees is sometimes compromised by quality of planting sites, tree species choices, maintenance (particularly in the early years), etc.



**Recommendations:**

Apply "right tree, right place" best practices to select trees most suitable for the site.

Include species-appropriate minimum soil volumes in all tree planting specifications.

Identify opportunities to create improved plantable space through City infrastructure projects.

Develop a native tree seed project to promote use of locally adapted seed of native species for new tree plantings.

Focus on species selection for long-lived, climatically adapted and low maintenance species in manicured parks and boulevards to reduce the cumulative maintenance burden from new plantings over time.

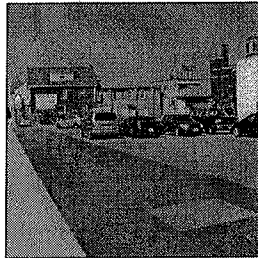
Expand the testing and use of innovative methods of accommodating trees in locations with limited rooting capacity that will allow air and water to reach the roots and prevent soil compaction.

Prepare tree care or tree information cards for specific practices like tree watering and species and identify their locations using the tree inventory. Send cards out at seasonally appropriate times to residents.



## Community Input

Public and stakeholder consultation was completed to identify and understand the concerns and visions the community has for the urban forest. Some examples of your suggestions include:



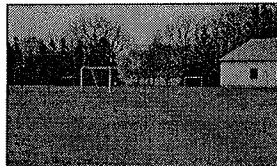
*"More trees downtown would be great. In fact, reclaiming a few parking lots and turning them into small urban parks..."*

*"I think that greener parking lots are one of the areas that require the most attention. Most parking lots in the city are barren lands surrounding buildings, both commercial and residential. Underground parking with living walls and/or green roofs should be encouraged..."*

*"Either place overhead wires underground so that trees can grow without the unsightly "pruning", or allow the branches to grow naturally with the overhead wires amongst the branches as in many other cities in Canada and the U.S..."*

*"To support downtown revitalization, I would like to see more trees on Dundas on the block between William and Adelaide. I would also like to see a tree planted at the bus stop on Dundas at the corner of Dundas and William. I think the trees in London are one of London's most attractive features and should be maintained at all costs..."*

*"Soccer fields, public parks need to provide more shade since parents watching children play, spectators for soccer, softball, are there for hours in the hot sun. With our summers getting more torrid, it becomes a health and safety issue..."*



*"I hope that the \$10.00 tree program that has happened twice in April of this year and next continues, it is a great program and I have taken advantage of it both years..."*

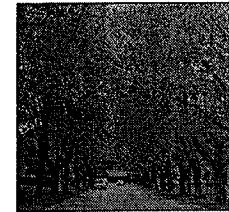
*"I think people would be more inclined to water trees on public land if they were given a break on their water bills..."*

*"City needs leaf cover target so that enough preservation and planting actually occurs..."*



## The Strategy

The Urban Forest Strategy consists of a series of 18 strategies and their associated action items, with priority, time frame, and responsibilities identified. Strategies are organized according to the guiding principles.



### PROTECT AND ENHANCE :

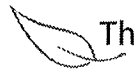
1. Ensure City departments operate with common goals and objectives, and adequate staffing.
2. Preserve and enhance local natural biodiversity.
3. Enhance and enforce municipal policies.
4. Achieve appropriate leaf cover across the community.
5. Develop a tree establishment program driven by leaf cover targets, maintenance capacity, and "right tree, right place" principles.
6. Maintain publicly owned trees to maximize current and future benefits provided to the site.
7. Establish a diverse tree population citywide as well as at the neighbourhood level.
8. Improve urban forest health.
9. Increase funding to support and sustain urban forest management.

### MONITOR :

10. Complete a comprehensive urban forest inventory and apply to management decision-making.
11. Monitor existing and potential leaf cover
12. Undertake research to improve urban forest performance and encourage adaptive management.

### ENGAGE :

13. Cooperate with large private landholders to embrace citywide urban forest goals.
14. Cooperate with local nurseries, landscapers, etc. to embrace citywide urban forest goals and objectives.
15. Cooperate with citizens at the neighbourhood level to embrace citywide urban forest goals and objectives.
16. Cooperate with the business community to embrace citywide urban forest goals and objectives.
17. Facilitate public understanding of urban forest management.
18. Cooperate with neighbouring communities on regional urban forest management issues.



# The City of London Comparative Air Photos

Downtown

Sarnia Road

Veterans Memorial  
Parkway

Ridout Street S  
(Beechwood)

Commissioners  
Road

