



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

OFFICE OF ENGINEERING & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

MISSION STATEMENT: Committed to delivering cost-effective and efficient services for the residents of the Town of Amherstburg with a view to improve and enhance their quality of life.

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Author's Phone: 519 736-3664 ext. 2312	Date to Council: April 24, 2023
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To: Mayor and Members of Town Council

Subject: 2017-2022 Tree Maintenance Program

1. RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that:

1. The report from the Manager of Roads and Fleet dated March 31, 2023, regarding the 2017-2022 Tree Maintenance Program **BE RECEIVED as information.**

2. BACKGROUND:

At the August 21, 2017 Council Meeting, Administration provided Council with a report on the Street Tree Inventory Project. This report is to provide Council and Administration with information on the status of the Town's Street Tree Inventory that was completed in 2017. The 2017 Tree Inventory included trees in Parks and on Town owned properties.

The Street Tree Inventory was completed by the certified Arborist which the Town retains under a seasonal contract and was done utilizing the following criteria:

Location

This information was collected by utilizing a mobile device geo-referenced with the Town's GIS system. The tree locations were accurately plotted in the field using aerial photography and MPAC property line layers built into the GIS system.

Species

The tree species were collected using common names for ease of potential users.

Condition

Tree condition was collected using the following categories:

- Good – Indicates the tree appears healthy and has no visible structural issues (split limbs, significant decay, etc.)
- Fair – Indicates the tree is showing signs of decline or may have structural issues that may be a concern in the future. **(It should be noted that the trees in this classification will likely become Priority 1, 2 or 3 in the next 5-10 years depending on the issues identified with each tree).**
- Priority 1 – Indicates the tree requires removal as soon as possible as they present a hazard to the public as well as smaller trees that are dead.
- Priority 2 – Indicates the tree requires removal within the next 4-6 months before they become hazardous.
- Priority 3 – Indicates the tree requires removal within the next 12 months before they become hazardous.

Size

The size of the tree refers to the diameter of the tree measured 1.3 m above the ground. This method of measurement is standard in the forestry field. The measurement is commonly known as diameter at breast height (DBH).

Hydro line presence

The presence of hydro lines assists in determining what steps must be taken to safely work on a tree, as well as what species of replacement tree is suitable for the location.

Ownership – Shared Trees

The tree ownership was broken down to three categories:

- Town – The trees is clearly on Town property.
- Shared Town – The tree originated from Town property but the trunk has now grown onto private property. There are 166 Shared Town trees.
- Shared Owner – Tree originated from private property but the trunk has now grown onto Town property. There are 112 Shared Owner trees.

Additional Comments

This section provided for any further relevant information or concerns encountered during the field inspection and survey.

Survey Results

The completed street tree survey provides a great deal of valuable information. The Town is fortunate that it has a fairly young street tree population and therefore removal costs should remain relatively low over the next 10-15 years.

The following information was obtained during the tree inspection and survey:

2017	
<u>Tree Conditions</u>	<u>Ownership</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good – 3,630• Fair – 343• Priority 1 – 46• Priority 2 – 71• Priority 3 – 91	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Owned – 3,903• Shared Town – 166• Shared Owner – 112
2022	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good – 4,381• Fair – 434• Poor - 47	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Owned – 4,550• Shared Town – 167• Shared Owner - 98

Notes:

- 2022 numbers are from September 2022 and do not include new planted trees from the Fall of 2022.
- 2022 Ownership excludes trees in poor condition.

3. **DISCUSSION:**

Since the 2017 Tree Inventory Project, the Roads and Fleet Division has completed the following tree maintenance:

Tree and Stump Removals

In 2017, the Roads and Fleet Division hired a contractor and removed the trees that were identified as Priority 1 trees. These trees required removal as soon as possible as they presented a hazard to the public.

In 2018, the Roads and Fleet Division prepared tender documents for the Tree and Stump Removal Program with the assistance of the contract Arborist. This tender was for a 2 year term. Based on the Tree Inventory, all Priority 2 Trees (2018) and Priority 3 Trees (2019) were removed as per the plan provided to Council. There were five priority 3 trees that were missed in 2019 and were removed in 2020.

Since all of the Priority 1, 2 and 3 Trees identified in the original tree inventory were removed, the contract Arborist was instructed to complete an Annual Fair Tree Inspection where all trees in the fair category are reviewed to determine if there has been any further decline and to make recommendations for removal if required. Furthermore, when appropriate, and due to deterioration, the contract Arborist or the Manager of Roads and Fleet will re-classify trees that were formerly in Good condition to the Fair condition. This will ensure that the trees in Fair condition are inspected annually to confirm there is no further decline or safety and liability issues. Trees identified during the Annual Fair Tree Inspection which pose a safety or liability concern are marked for removal in the following year.

The following table outlines the numbers of trees removed from 2017 to 2022:

Year	Number of Trees Removed
2017	Priority 1 - 46
2018	Priority 2 - 71
2019	Priority 3 - 91
2020	43
2021	66
2022	50
Total	365

Therefore, the total number of trees removed since 2017 is 365 trees.

Attached is list of trees that have been identified in the 2022 Annual Fair Tree Inspection for removal in 2023. There are 47 street trees and park trees listed for removal in 2023. The Manager of Roads and Fleet is preparing the tenders for Tree and Stump Removal as the current contract expired in 2022.

Tree Trimming Program

In 2018, then Roads and Fleet Division commenced a Tree Trimming Program with the assistance of the contract Arborist. From 2018 to 2021, the Tree Trimming program focused on trees that required trimming for the first time through. In 2022, the Trimming Program started back to Year 1 as identified in Town of Amherstburg – Town Tree Trimming Plan.

The Roads and Fleet Division has prepared a tender for the 2023 Tree Trimming Program as the current contract expired in 2022.

In 2023, the contractor will be focused on Year 2 as provided on the attached map entitled Town Tree Trimming Plan.

Tree Planting Program

The Tree Planting Program attempts to plant a tree for every tree removed. In addition, this program also plants trees for any resident that requests a tree in their front yard. The Town's Tree Planting Program ensures the tree is planted on Town's right of way which will ensure that the tree is protected by the Town's Public Tree By-Law.

In addition to the Town's Tree Planting Program, the Town has changed the method to which developers of subdivisions manage the tree plantings in newly created subdivisions. The developers are required to provide a value per lot to cover the cost of purchasing and planting. The monies collected cover the cost of planting trees once the entire subdivision is built out.

The following table outlines the number of trees that have been planted over the past 6 years within the Town's right of way through the Town's Tree Planting Program or Development Tree Plantings:

Year	Town Tree Plantings	Development Tree Plantings	Total Tree Plantings
2017	38	53	91
2018	56	51	107
2019	100	134	234
2020	39	113	152
2021	58	164	222
2022	120	266	386
Total	411	781	1,192

In 2021, Council approved an increase to 2 plantings for each tree removed as recommended through the Amherstburg Environmental Advisory Committee and this directive took effect in the 2022 operating year. Further to the 2 for 1 planting, in 2021 the contract Arborist spent time identifying and mapping locations along the right of ways that would be appropriate for a tree planting. The future tree planting locations are provided on the Town Future Tree Planting Plan. The Town utilized this plan to plant the additional 60 trees as per the 2 for 1 Tree Planting initiative. The areas covered in 2022 were Alma Street to Simcoe Street and from the Detroit River to Victoria Street South.

Annual Contract Arborist Projects

The contract Arborist completes the following items for the Towns Tree Maintenance Program:

1. Updates the Tree Inventory by deleting the trees that have been removed in the prior year and adds the new tree plantings including trees in the subdivisions and Town Properties and Parks.
2. Completes the Annual Fair Tree Inspections and identifies trees for removal in the next year. The contract arborist inspects trees on Town owned properties, Parks and Street Trees.
3. Assists in managing the contracts for the Tree Maintenance Program including the Trimming and Tree and Stump Removals.
4. Prepares an Annual Town Tree Planting Program list as well as prepares a tree planting list for newly constructed housing subdivisions. In addition, the contract Arborist will provide a condition rating for newly planted trees. The contract Arborist provides a list of all newly planted trees that did not "take" and require replacement. The Manager of Roads and Fleet would then reach to the contractor or developer to have the tree replaced within the one-year maintenance period.
5. Completes summer student training on the chipper unit so that the summer students can assist Roads staff with tree maintenance. In 2023, the contract Arborist will complete chipper and chain saw training for Roads staff.

6. Meets with residents that have issues with the Town trees located in the front or side yard. The contract arborist will provide guidance to the residents and administration on the future maintenance plan.
7. Prepares Tree Evaluations and Tree Reports for when developers and residents request to remove a tree for the development of their properties. The proponent is responsible for the cost of the value of the tree, cost of removal and the cost to plant new trees as determined necessary by the CAO per the Town Public Tree By-Law 2018-106.
8. Additional projects to improve the Tree Inventory as needed.
 - a. In 2023, it is planned to go through unopen road allowances and alleys to inventory the trees. These areas were never included in the original tree inventory. The ice storm experienced earlier this year highlighted the fact that the trees in alleys and unopen road allowances are the responsibility of the Town and could present as liability to the Town if the Town does not have a maintenance plan.
 - b. The recent ice storm has damaged a number of trees. The contract Arborist will be utilized to complete a review of the tree inventory and provide recommendations for tree trimming and potential tree removals depending on the damage to the tree.

Originally, the budgeted money for the contract Arborist was part of the Annual Tree Maintenance Program in the operating budget and would be used to maintain the Town Tree Inventory on an annual basis. The budget was moved to salaries in order to continue to use the arborist who has a working knowledge of the Town's Tree Inventory. As stated, the contract Arborist assists Town staff in completing updates to the tree inventory in order to keep the information current and up-to-date. In the future, if the availability of the contracted Arborist changes, the budget in salaries for the contract arborist would need to be moved to the Tree Maintenance Program to hire a consultant to continue the maintenance of the Tree Inventory and to provide tree inspections and reports as this work cannot be completed by anyone currently on staff.

4. RISK ANALYSIS:

The Tree Maintenance Program provides the Municipality with a proactive program which demonstrates the Town's due diligence in preventing damage to properties and personal injury as a result of tree failure. Without an appropriate tree maintenance program, the health of the street tree population may be negatively impacted. Routine maintenance will also help to maintain the health of the Town's street tree population.

5. **FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

The financial impact of the 2023 Tree Maintenance Program is as follows:

Public Works Budget Centre – Operations Budget	
Tree Trimming	\$75,000
Tree and Stump Removals	\$50,000
Tree Planting	\$50,000
Arborist Services	\$20,000
Total Cost of Tree Maintenance	\$195,000

It should be noted that the change to the policy to plant two trees for every tree removed will have significant budgetary impacts in future years as these trees reach maturity, related to their maintenance and removal. This will continue to compound, year over year with increasing plantings, as trees are removed necessitating increased investment.

6. **CONSULTATIONS:**

There were no consultations.

7. **CONCLUSION:**

The Tree Maintenance Program improves the overall health of the Town's trees as well as demonstrates the Town's due diligence in preventing damage to properties and personal injury because of tree failure.

Eric Chamberlain
Manager of Roads and Fleet

Attachments:

List of 2023 Tree and Stump Removals
Map of Tree Trimming Program Areas
Map of Future Planting in Urban Areas

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2017-2022 Tree Maintenance Program.docx
Attachments:	- 2023 Tree Removal List.docx - TreeTrimmingPlan_overall.pdf - Future Trees.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 18, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Tracy Prince



Valerie Critchley



Kevin Fox