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Citizens Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario
City of Oakville
City of Thunder Bay
City of Toronto
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Urban forests are a vital part of the landscape of urban forestry. The discipline stems from research conducted by Erik Jorgensen at the University of Toronto in 1965. His work first recognized that urban trees provide economic and health benefits of urban forests. A great deal has improved in the urban forest sector over the last 50 years.

### Need for effective management frameworks

Several municipalities across Ontario have developed sound urban forest management programs that include all or some of the following activities:

- **Urban forest inventory and component mapping.
- **An Urban Forest Management Plan.
- **An Urban Forest Strategy.
- **By-laws.
- **Community engagement and education.
- **Tree nurseries.

Many municipalities have not yet attempted this work and still lack the policies, resources, and political will needed to support a healthy urban forest.

- **There is a lack of coordination and integration of urban forest management programs.
- **Most of the urban forest exists on private property and the majority of the land available for new plantings is privately owned.
- **Municipalities are not regularly adopting budget or policy tools needed to support tree establishment and maintenance on private property in a substantive way.
- **Urban forests are too a key priority in planning decisions related to development and redevelopment.

### Support for trees as private property

- **Not-for-profit organizations and community groups are playing an increasingly important role in managing the community in urban forest stewardship.

### Coordinated, multilevel governance

- **Ontario’s species subclimates and extreme weather events have exposed the public to high levels of risk which have driven public response capacity.
- **Mitigating the impacts of these threats through urban forest management will serve as a model for senior government coordination.

### Provincial leadership

The provincial government has engaged in issues related to proactive and reactive management efforts in urban forest threats (e.g. Emerald Ash Borer and extreme weather events) and extreme weather events and invasive species subclimates in collaboration with other emergency management organizations.

- **There is no coordinated multi-level government urban forestry program to address risk mitigation associated with extreme weather events and invasive species subclimates.

### Accessibility of urban forest

- **Science and research activities in other parts of the world, specifically the United States (e.g. USDA Forest Service), have supported urban forest planning and management providing protocols and information, and in general raised the level of public awareness about the urban forest.

- **The lack of use of similar urban forest science and research support in Ontario, and Canadian science on urban forestry information that is readily available to the public.
- **Environmental stakeholders and the general public have been slow to accept the results when communicated by an economic authority.
- **The value of urban forests in cities across Canada’s 10 forest regions.

### Call to Action

**The Urban Forest Call to Action was developed in consultation with diverse urban forest stakeholders. It identifies strategic priorities and recommends actions that will assist current and future stakeholders in their efforts to grow, protect, and sustain healthy urban forests.**

**Strategic Priorities**

- **Identify critical research questions and knowledge gaps.
- **Develop and document a database of urban forest monitoring, research, and management practices.
- **Engage the provincial government in the development of an Ontario Urban Forest Strategy.
- **Coordinate action for new plantings is privately owned.
- **Sustain urban forest stewardship across the province.
- **Develop a provincial scale.

**Outcomes**

- **An online network map is published, maintained, and utilized by urban forest stakeholders across the province.
- **Develop a toolkit of strategies for obtaining citizen science and civic ecology information for the general public and media.
- **Identify barrier(s) and recommendations for use by all stakeholders in the development of an Ontario Urban Forest Strategy.
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**Elements**

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The Story So Far

Call To Action

The Urban Forest Call to Action was developed in consultation with diverse urban forest stakeholders. It identifies strategic priorities and recommends actions that will assist current and future stakeholders in their efforts to grow, protect, and sustain healthy urban forests.

Strategic Priorities

• Develop and maintain a current list of specific policy recommendations for the provincial government.
• Track progress on provincial policy recommendations.
• Encourage action on priority policy recommendations for developing and sharing consistent messaging for use by all stakeholders.
• Develop an advocacy toolkit to support stakeholders in their urban forest advocacy efforts.

Action

• Undertake research and share information that promote sustainable approaches to urban forest planning and management.

Outcomes

• A better list of provincial policy recommendations is utilized and contributed to by the stakeholders and partners.
• Progress is made and tracked on provincial policy recommendations.
• Useful advocacy tools are identified, developed, disseminated, and used by stakeholders in pursuing support and funding for urban forests.

Coordinated action in urban forestry at a provincial scale.

The Urban Forest Call to Action was developed in consultation with diverse urban forest stakeholders to enhance the management of urban forests.

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• Several municipalities across Ontario have developed sound urban forest management programs that include all or some of the following:
• Urban forest inventory and mapping
• Urban Forest Management Plan
• An Urban Forest Strategy

• All of these management frameworks serve as a model for senior government coordination.

2.

Support for trees as private property

• Not-for-profit organizations and community groups are playing an increasing, important role in managing the urban forest in Ontario.

• Several municipalities have not yet implemented this work and still lack the tools, resources, and political will needed to support a healthy urban forest.

3.

Coordinated, multi-level property management

• Several municipalities across Ontario have developed sound urban forest management programs that include all or some of the following:
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Provincial leadership

The provincial government has established a new role within the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to coordinate multi-level property management efforts to urban forests.

5.

Assessment of the urban forest

• Science and research activities in other parts of the world, specifically the United States (e.g., USDA Forest Service), have supported urban forest planning and management programs and improved public understanding, and in general raised the level of public awareness about the urban forest.

• A great deal has improved in the urban forest sector over the last 50 years.

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Key Findings and Recommendations

- **Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC)**
  
**Issue**
  
- Property
  
**Support for trees on private property**
  
- Provincial leadership
  
**Management frameworks**
  
- • Ministries have not yet attempted this work and still lack the resources, policies, and political will needed to support a healthy urban forest.
  
**Gaps**
  
- • There is a large variance in standards of best management approaches to urban forests.
  
**Support for trees as private property**
  
- • Not for profit organizations and community groups are playing an increasingly important role in engaging the community in urban forest stewardship on private lands.
  
**Coordination, multi-level governance**
  
- • There is no coordinated multi-level government urban forestry program to address risk mitigation associated with extreme weather events and invasive species outbreaks in collaboration with other Emergency Management Organizations...
  
**Provincial leadership**
  
- • The provincial government has engaged in issue driven and reactive management efforts to urban forest threats (e.g., Emerald Ash Borer and Invasive species outbreaks). A great deal has improved in the urban forest sector over the last 50 years.
  
**Research on the urban forest**
  
- • Science and research activities in other parts of the world, specifically the United States (e.g., USDA Forest Service), have supported urban forest planning and management, provided policy guidance, and, in general, raised the level of public awareness about the urban forest.
  
**Provincial Forest Strategy**
  
- • All municipalities across Ontario have developed sound urban forest management programs that include or are some of the following:
  
**Municipalities**
  
- • Municipalities have not yet attempted this work and still lack the resources, policies, and political will needed to support a healthy urban forest.
  
**Support for municipalities, landowners, community groups, and other stakeholders in managing Ontario’s urban forests**
  
- • Demands and share international and local best practice in urban forests.
  
**Undertake research**
  
- • Identify critical research questions and gaps in knowledge for urban forests.
  
**Government**
  
- • Support municipalities, landowners, community groups, and other stakeholders in managing Ontario’s urban forests.
  
**TO DO**

- • Develop and maintain a current list of specific policy recommendations for the provincial government.
  
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- • Encourage action on priority policy recommendations by developing and sharing consistent messaging for use by all stakeholders.
  
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**Interagency collaboration and multi-level action**
  
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**Stakeholder collaboration**
  
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THE NEED FOR GREEN

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