

Additional Implications

There is a risk that additional diseases and pests, or numerous pests at the same time will increasingly impact the Urban Forest in the future. To mitigate this risk, a maximum of 40% of the \$350,000 annual contribution will be spent annually. This will allow a contingency in case of urgent issues affecting the Urban Forest. If Dutch Elm Disease (DED) increases significantly, or a new pest arrives with large scale impacts, such as Emerald Ash Borer, additional funds will likely be required, similar to Cottony Ash Psyllid in past years.

DED response plan activities, such as the rapid removal of large mature elm trees, as well as additional surveillance are required to prevent disease spread and require a significant amount of additional resources. The City has been proactive by providing an annual contribution of \$350,000 to an Urban Forestry and Pest Management Reserve that supports the required rapid response. As DED becomes endemic within the community, there will continue to be a need for additional resources for Administration to respond to future positive cases of DED and other emerging insect and disease threats. Administration will be bringing forward options for additional contributions to the reserve of \$250,000 in 2024 and \$250,000 in 2025 for consideration within the 2024/25 Budget.

As the City continues to apply for additional external funding to support Urban Forest enhancements and natural infrastructure projects (e.g., Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund), Parks requires project management support to take advantage of these funding opportunities. If the City is successful at attracting additional grant dollars, implementing the work requires dedicated staff resources; deferring this funding could lead to lost opportunities to coordinate and implement activities that receive external funding, or lead to the inability to leverage external funding in the first place.

If the funding for a dedicated project manager is delayed, the City will continue with inadequate funding to support the Pathways to a Sustainable Urban Forest: Implementation Plan, which was passed in principle by City Council in 2022. In particular, this project manager would support the development of a Tree Protection Bylaw, which has received support from City Council to develop.

In addition to having insufficient resources to implement priority activities associated with the Plan, not funding this project at this time would result in the forfeit of a portion of the federal Natural Infrastructure Funds that have been approved to support Urban Forestry initiatives. If left unfunded, Action 3.4: Implement the Urban Forestry Management Plan from the Green Pathways implementation plan cannot be achieved.