

Subject: Urban Forest Strategy**APPROVALS:****Annette Antoniak**_____
Director_____
Chief Administrative Officer**Recommended Motion:**

THAT the Urban Forest Strategy, dated April 2019, be adopted as a guiding document to support Parks Operations and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo over the next 20 years; and

THAT Administration work with staff and key stakeholders to transition from development to implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy.

Summary:

This Urban Forest Strategy provides strategic direction for managing and enhancing the environmental, social, and economic benefits of the urban forest. As the first document of its kind for the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, it lays out a vision for the future of the urban forest, through the establishment of core principles, strategic objectives, and recommendations that will be implemented over the next 20 years.

Background:

While primarily focused on the Urban Service Area of Fort McMurray, the core principles and information presented are applicable throughout the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The urban forest is a critical factor in supporting human health and well-being and contributes to the overall quality of life in communities. Some of the benefits of supporting the sustainability of an urban forest include:

- reduced energy costs through the provision of shade
- increased property value for home owners
- stormwater runoff reduction resulting in lower infrastructure costs
- quality of life benefits such as cleaner air
- the psychological and physical benefits of living near green space

The Urban Forest Strategy was developed collaboratively with input from staff, stakeholders and the public, and represents a diversity of ideas, values and interests. Additional input and feedback into this plan also included field visits, policy context review, and identification of best practices.

Budget/Financial Implications:

- Total cost for plan development \$85,775
- Operational and capital costs related to the implementation of the plan will be developed and supported through 2020 and beyond budget planning process.

Rationale for Recommendation:

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo 2018-2021 Strategic Plan identifies development of a longer-term fiscal strategy that incorporates sustainment of infrastructure and implements recommendations from the 2016 Horse River Wildfire Lessons Learned Report. The development and implementation of an Urban Forest Strategy is a key deliverable for both initiatives and supports the main goal of Responsible Government.

Strategic Priorities:

Responsible Government

Attachments:

1. Urban Forest Strategy

Urban Forest Strategy Presentation