One Canopy
Tree Planting Strategy
2024-2028

Council Presentation

Committee of the Whole: March 7, 2023

Agenda

- Why plant more
- Strategic Plan alignment
- Guelph's urban forest benefits
- Canopy cover and goals
- How we get there
- Financial implications
- Next steps

Our vision

Protect the urban forest and the benefits it provide to the community

Enhance all aspects of management

Engage all stakeholders

Transition from reactive to proactive management to reduce risk and cost while increasing benefits and support

Why plant more

- The current canopy cover is vulnerable to pests, disease, climate change, and development

- Increasing and diversifying urban forest cover is essential for human health, ecosystem integrity, and economic growth

- Guelph's tree canopy is not evenly or equitably distributed

- City's efforts alone will not reach the target

Strategic Plan alignment

Sustaining our future

- Plan and design an increasingly sustainable city as Guelph grows

- Mitigate climate change by reducing Guelph's carbon footprint

Powering our future

- Help businesses to succeed and add value to the community

Building our future

- Maintain existing community assets and secure new ones

Navigating our future

- Improve local transportation and regional transit connectivity

Working together for our future

- We work together for our community

Guelph's urban forest

23.3 per cent
canopy cover

2,973,000
million trees

$803 million
in replacement value

6,455 tonnes
of pollutants
156 tonnes
of carbon dioxide

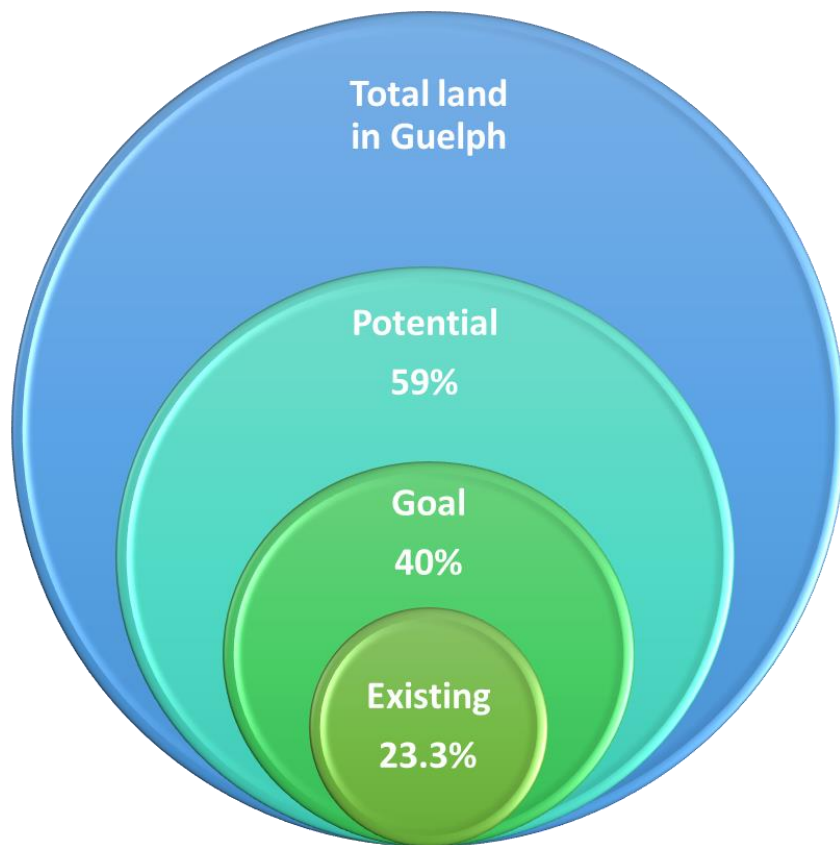Home energy savings of
$1.9 million

400,000
cubic metres
of run off

Objectives

- Increase canopy cover
- Improve forest structure and function
- Increase quality of sites for optimal tree growth
- Increase resilience to climate change and other threats
- Increase coordination across City departments and external agencies
- Engage, educate, and empower community members
- Invest in cost effective green infrastructure
- Advance environmental justice and equity
- Prioritize tree planting based on benefit needs
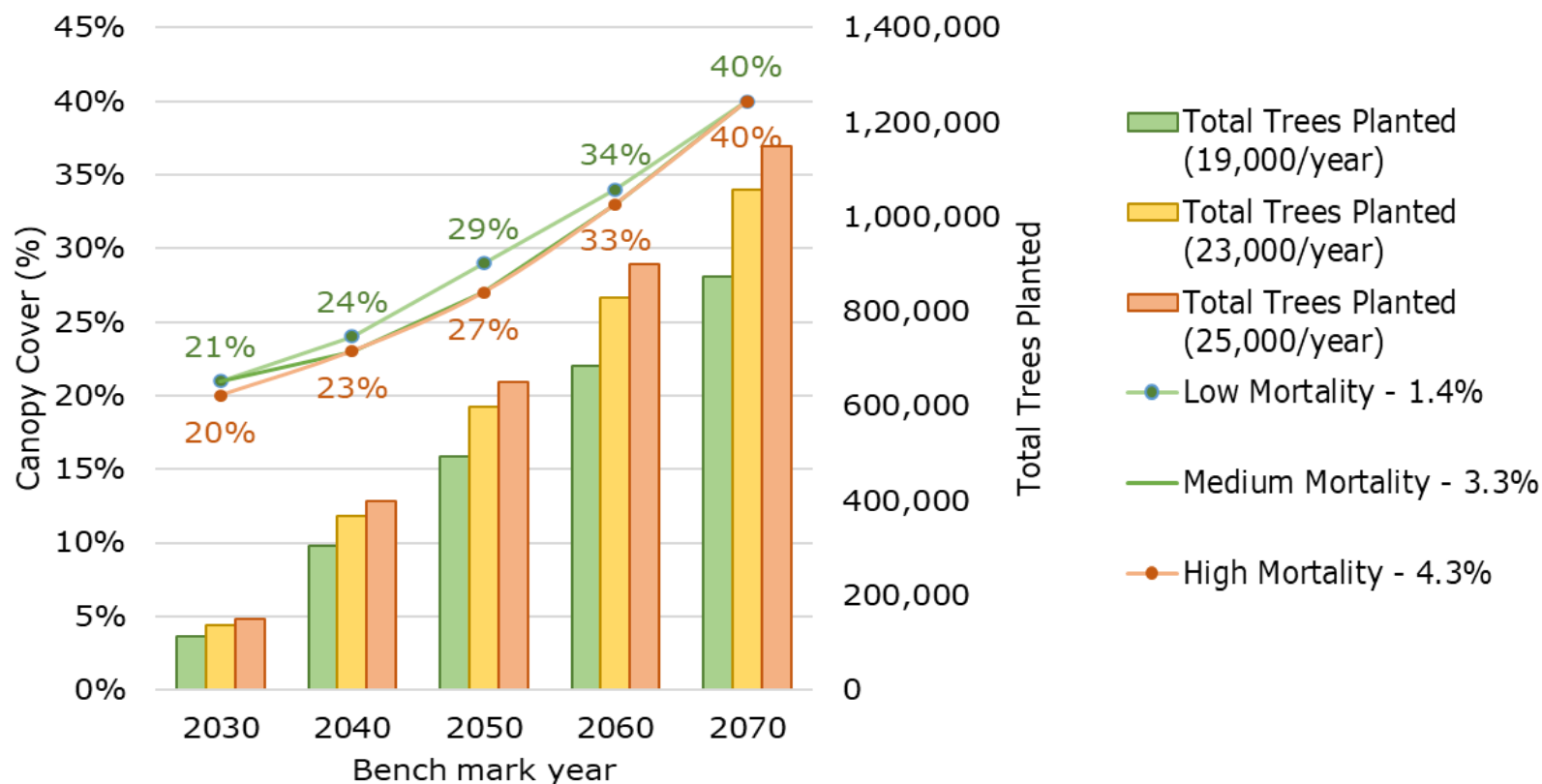- Monitor and manage

Tree canopy cover goal

Total land in Guelph

Potential
59%

Goal
40%

Existing
23.3%

Goals

- Enhance and expand the tree canopy

- Educate and engage and empower

- Monitor and adapt

Achieving our goal

How do we get there

Progressing towards 40% by 2070:

- Strategically fund, plan and plant more trees

- Leverage and expand existing progress, efforts, funding and programs

- Collaborate with, empower and support the community in their tree planting efforts

- Monitor and adapt as we progress

Enhance and expand

- Develop a sustainable funding model

- Develop a strategic planting plan

- Leverage existing and develop new tree planting programs

- Leverage or develop new policies or bylaws

Educate, engage and empower

- Increase number of community participants in City tree planting events

- Increase number of community participants independent of the City (on private or other public lands)

- Increase collaboration and partnerships

Monitor and adapt

- Monitor and measure progress and the canopy cover

- Continue to report our progress and state of the urban forest to Council and the community

- Celebrate our successes

Financial implications

- With the estimated annual cost requirement of $3.6 million verses a current annual budget of $687 thousand, an additional $2.9 million annually will be required to meet the 40 per cent tree canopy cover.

- This is a high-level estimate that will be refined as it is incorporated into the overall corporate plan and multi-year budget process.

- The rate of return for trees outweighs the costs of planting and maintenance

Next steps

- Up to 80,000 of varying sizes trees need to be planted every year across the city for the next 46 years

- Sustained commitment from the City and the community to work collaboratively

- Aside from protecting and managing the existing canopy cover, the Strategy requires planting more trees on City, private and other public lands, planting better, and allowing the time for trees to reach their potential

- Implementing planting strategy will provide benefits for future generations

- Inaction would be detrimental

Thank you for your consideration