The City of Tulsa's urban forest includes over 5.2 million public and private trees. These trees provide beauty and shade, as well as benefits to air quality, water quality, energy savings, wildlife, socioeconomics, and public health.

This Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP) provides a guide for managing, enhancing, and growing the tree resource over the next 20 years along with long-range objectives for building an urban forest that is resilient, safe, and connected to the community.

The structure and organization of the UFMP is based on understanding what we have, what we want, how we achieve our goals, and evaluating how we are doing. This structure, referred to as adaptive management, provides a good conceptual framework for managing urban forest resources and is commonly used for resource planning and management (Miller, R.W., 1988).

The plan development process involved a comprehensive review and assessment of the existing urban forest, including composition, value, and environmental benefits. The process explored community values, existing regulations, and policies that impact public and private trees. There are multiple stakeholders, internal and external, who play a role in the planning, design, care, and advocacy for the community forest. These stakeholders included park managers, elected officials, agency personnel, the local utility, regional nonprofits, and neighborhood groups, who contributed to the development of this Plan.

With this foundation and an established urban forest, Tulsa is poised to realize increasing environmental benefits and value from its community trees.
**Tulsa's Urban Forest Benchmark Values**

**Urban Forest**
- Number of All Trees: 5.2 Million
- Replacement Value of All Trees: $5.3 Billion
- Average Trees Per Acre: 41

**Most Common Trees**
- Celtis (Hackberry/Sugarberry): 16%
- Ulmus (Elm): 15%
- Carya (Hickory): 8%

**Tree Canopy Cover**
- Overall Canopy Cover: 26%
- Impervious Surfaces: 29%
- Maximum Urban Tree Canopy: 54%

**Annual Benefits**
- Property Values: $102.8 Million
- Avoided Stormwater Runoff: $18.4 Million
- Carbon Dioxide Reduced: $6.6 Million
- Energy Saved: $4.3 Million
- Air Quality Benefits: $86,503

**Total Annual Benefits**: $132.2 Million

**Long-Term Benefits**
- Stored Carbon: $153 Million
How Do We Achieve Our Goals?

A few of the primary recommendations that support the goals include:

- Increase canopy cover, especially along roads and in areas with high environmental need.
- Revise standards for Landscaping Requirements to increase success in establishment, promote shade over impervious surfaces, and incentivize tree preservation.
- Promote design and construction standards that increase success in establishment of trees soil volume, planting space, and pervious surface.
- Develop a city-wide public tree inventory in partnership with multiple agencies to better understand the composition and condition of trees in parks, along roads, at schools, and in privately managed public open spaces to facilitate strategic management.
- Enhance outreach and education efforts to inform residents about tree benefits and proper tree care.
- Develop volunteer leadership and increase philanthropic opportunities.

A complete list of objectives is provided in the section “How Do We Achieve Our Goals?”, along with strategies and tactics that will support the success of the UFMP.

What Do We Want?

A primary emphasis for the UFMP is to identify appropriate collaborative strategies to ensure that critical tree care needs can be addressed in a timely, cost-effective, and efficient manner. This includes the proactive identification of risk and mitigation measures to promote public safety and reduce liability. Trees are living organisms, constantly changing and adapting to their environment and increasing in size over time. Because of this, trees have specific needs at various life stages, including training for proper structure when they are young and increased monitoring and proactive risk management as they mature. Deferring maintenance can have a significant effect on the overall health, structure, value, and lifespan of a tree. In addition, deferred maintenance often results in higher costs and less beneficial results, including increased risk potential. As a result, the UFMP identifies goals for optimizing urban forest programming and existing funding, along with personnel training.
A **resilient** urban forest that is diverse in species and age distribution, where new trees are planted strategically to optimize establishment, tree health, and benefits.

A **safe** urban forest that is regularly inventoried, to proactively identify structural defects and trees in poor condition, managed by well trained tree care personnel. Safety and health issues are addressed in a timely and efficient manner.

An urban forest that **connects** the whole community to nature, where tree canopy and tree benefits are distributed equitably, for all Tulsa residents to enjoy, and where information and resources about Tulsa's trees are easily accessed and shared.

**Keystones**

- Ensure tree benefits for future generations through a sustainable planting program.
- Align policies with the community vision for canopy establishment.
- Explore additional funding sources to reach desired level of services.
- Achieve 30% urban tree canopy within 20 years.

**Goals**

- Maintain public trees proactively.
- Develop a tree risk management strategy.
- Monitor the resource for exotic and invasive pests and diseases.
- Develop training for tree care personnel based on industry best management practices.

**Recommendations**

- Implement a coordinated outreach and education campaign.
- Connect urban forestry partners through a single vision.
- Encourage public and private participation in urban forest management through volunteerism.
- Increase tree canopy coverage so that all people can enjoy the benefits of trees equitably.
- Focus on neighborhood-based initiatives and solutions to urban forestry issues.

**How Are We Doing?**

The success of the UFMP will be measured through the realization of goals and demonstrated through increased value and environmental benefits in the urban tree resource.

The Plan identifies methods of measurement and timeframes for each of the strategies. These include annual plan review, periodic evaluation of tree canopy based on aerial imagery, and ongoing communication with key stakeholders.

Five components of tracking progress include:

- Annual Plan Review
- Resource Analysis
- Canopy Analysis
- State of the Urban Forest Report
- Community Satisfaction

Perhaps the greatest measurement of success for the UFMP will be its level of meeting community expectations for the planting, care and preservation of the community tree resource. With the continued engagement of Tulsa's many urban forest stakeholders, proactive management, and strategic tree planting, Tulsa residents can expect to receive increasing benefits from the urban forest for years to come. This UFMP provides a roadmap, enabling Tulsa to realize a shared community vision of an urban forest that is resilient, safe, and connected.