

# City of Hamilton Urban Forest Strategy

*December 8, 2020*

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# Hamilton Urban Forest Strategy – Why Now?

## Urban forest benefits

- Ecosystem services, aesthetics, environment, health, recreation, economic, quality of life

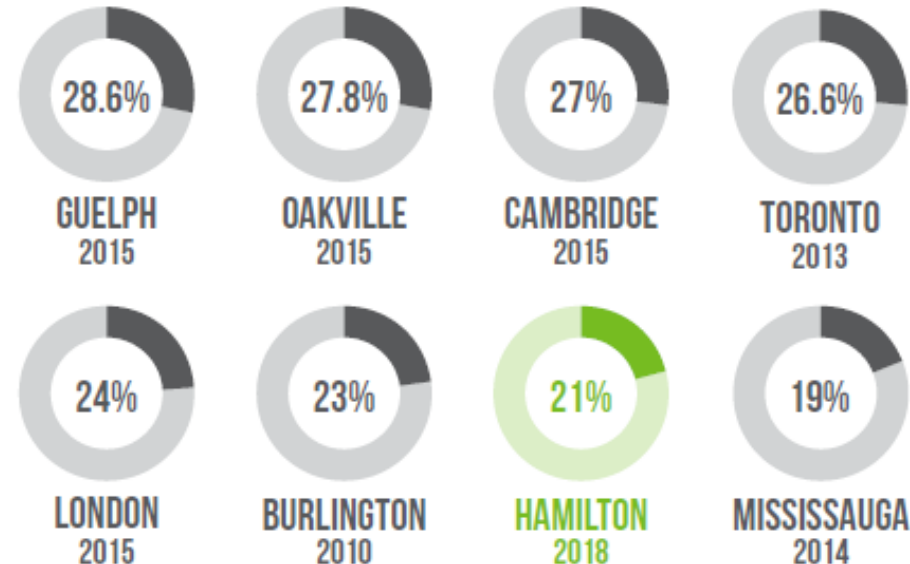
## Asset management

- Trees and forests are municipal infrastructure

## Tree canopy cover target: 30%

- Commitments in OP and policy

### CANOPY COVER IN NEARBY CITIES



*Source: Available canopy studies (online)*



# Why Municipalities Struggle to Increase Urban Forest Growth

Outdated planning models in which:

- Urban trees framed as costs rather than assets
- Success metrics focused on planting (capital) rather than ongoing asset management (operations)
- Simplified financial returns of trees
- Narrow focus on built infrastructure and engineering solutions to complex urban problems

*Source: [Dark Matter Laboratories](#), 2020*





# UFS SUPPORTS OTHER STRATEGIC PLANS

STORMWATER  
MANAGEMENT

TRANSPORTATION  
AND GROWTH  
PLANNING

CLIMATE CHANGE

PUBLIC AND  
COMMUNITY  
HEALTH

ENVIRONMENT  
AND BIODIVERSITY

Stormwater  
Management Master  
Plan

Growth Related  
Integrated  
Development  
Strategy (GRIDS 2)

Hamilton Community  
Climate Change  
Action Plan

Healthy Schools  
Approach

Natural Heritage  
System Official Plan  
Policies

Flooding and  
Drainage Master  
Servicing Study

Official Plan and  
Zoning By-laws

Hamilton Community  
Energy Plan

Clean Air Hamilton

# UFS Timeline

## PHASE ONE

January to December 2018  
Background Information Review  
Data Collection and Analysis

## PHASE THREE

January 2019 to October 2020  
Draft Report Preparation

## PHASE TWO

May 2018 to December 2019  
Public Engagement

Activities:

May 17, 2018 – Stage 1 Internal and External Stakeholder Workshops

May 29, 2018 – Public Open House

June – September 2018 – Online Survey

April 17, 2019 – Stage 2 Internal and External Stakeholder Workshops

June 5, 19, and 24, 2019 – Public Workshops

## PHASE FOUR

Fall and Winter 2020-2021  
Draft Report Review and Public Engagement  
2021  
Final Report and Council Approval



# 2018 i-Tree Study Results

## Structural (Replacement) Value of the Urban Forest:

\$2.13 billion

## Air Quality Improvements

Pollution Removal: 255.9 metric tonnes/year  
(\$1,128,664/year)

Oxygen Production: 13.46 thousand metric tonnes/year

## Stormwater Management

Avoided Runoff: 815,639 m<sup>3</sup>/year  
(\$1,896,128/year)

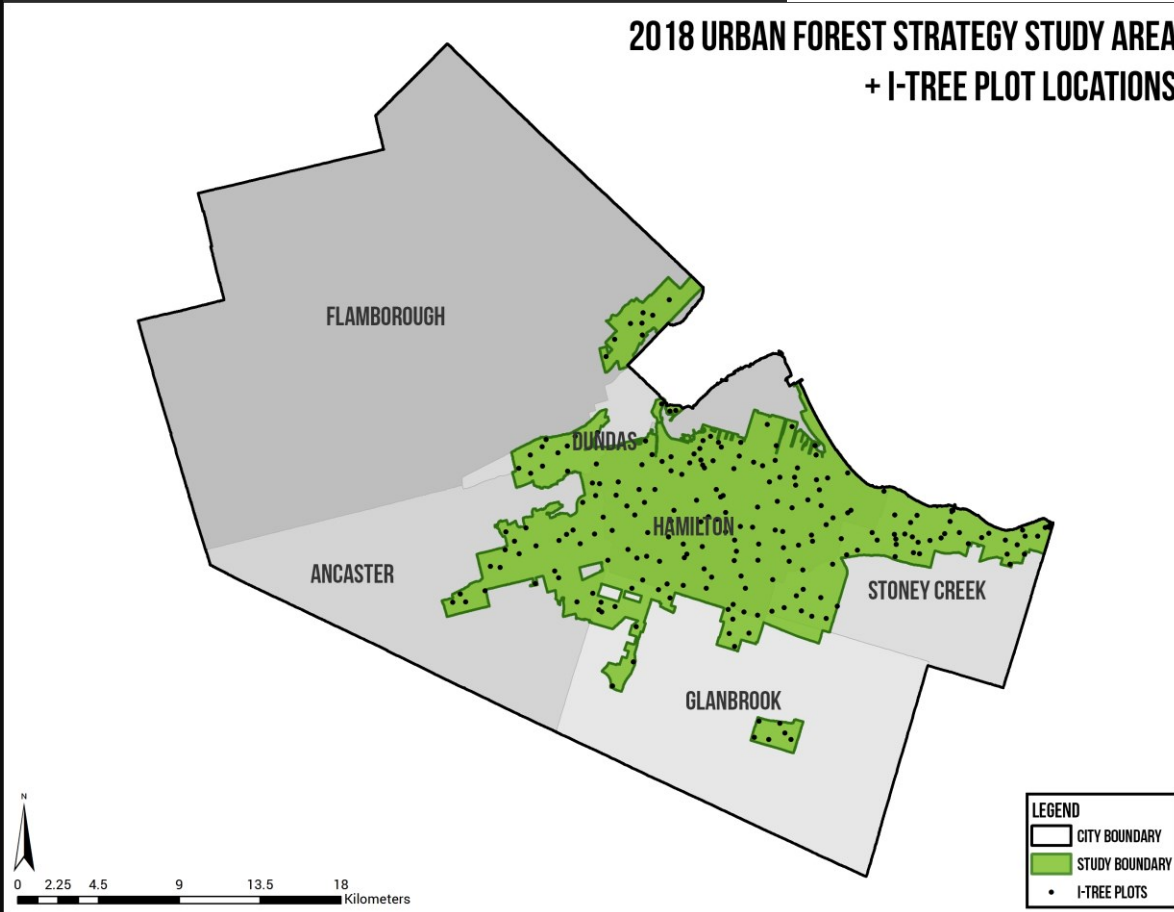
## Climate Change Mitigation

Building Energy Savings: \$3,630,000/year

Carbon Storage: 395.1 thousand metric tonnes  
(\$45.4 million)

Carbon Sequestration: 13.41 thousand metric tonnes  
(\$1.54 million/year)

2018 URBAN FOREST STRATEGY STUDY AREA  
+ I-TREE PLOT LOCATIONS





*5 Themes*  
*25 Actions*

**An Urban Forest  
Strategy for  
Hamilton**

**INSPIRE**  
(6)

**ACT**  
(8)

**PROTECT**  
(4)

**GROW**  
(4)

**ADAPT**  
(3)



# INSPIRE

**Guiding Principle:** *To engage and inspire the community with a bold vision for Hamilton's urban forest.*

1-2 years

- Develop comprehensive communications and outreach strategy.
- Create Outreach & Partnerships Coordinator position.
- Work with development community, identify champions, recognize innovation.
- Develop partnerships.
- Annual State of the Urban Forest Report.
- Evaluate engagement strategies (measurable indicators).



# ACT

Guiding Principle: *“Goals are good. Action is better.” (Vibrant Cities Lab)*

1-2 years

- Establish inter-departmental UFS working group.
- Improve implementation of plans required through development application review.
- Complete land cover and canopy cover mapping
- Standardized tree planting details for city projects.
- Minimum canopy cover targets for new development proposals.





# ACT

Guiding Principle: *“Goals are good. Action is better.” (Vibrant Cities Lab)*

3-5 years

- Improve the integration of trees through applicable policies, plans and guidelines.
- Identify the drivers of canopy change.
- Review urban forest management and governance structure.





# PROTECT

**Guiding Principle:** *Trees are a valued city asset and an essential part of Hamilton's infrastructure.*

3-5 years

- Improve public and private tree preservation.
- Complete a climate change vulnerability assessment for Hamilton's natural systems, including the urban forest.

5-10 years

- Develop and implement an Invasive Species Management Strategy.
- Develop service standards and emergency response plans.





# GROW

A photograph showing two children, a girl in a floral shirt and yellow boots, and a boy in a green hoodie and dark pants, both wearing dark boots, planting a tree. They are pouring soil from black plastic pots into a hole in the ground. The background shows a garden with other plants and a brown wheelbarrow.

**Guiding Principle:** *Regular investments in tree planting and maintenance programs will optimize long-term benefits and reduce risk to people, property and the health of the urban forest.*

## 1-2 years

- Increase tree establishment over the next five years.
- Develop and share a best practices manual for tree protection, planting and preservation.
- Complete a tree planting priority analysis to guide a city-wide tree planting strategy.

## 3-5 years

- Fund active management of natural areas in Hamilton to support native biodiversity and forest health.



# ADAPT



**Guiding Principle:** *Urban forest management is evidence-based and responsive to change.*

## 1-2 years

- Implement a forest health monitoring program in Hamilton.

## 3-5 years

- Implement a forestry asset management system.

## 5-10 years

25. Update urban forest inventories and studies every 10 years or in response to significant environmental change.





## Next steps

- Post draft UFS for public comment (Jan/Feb 2021)
- Finalize and adopt UFS
- Implementation
- Annual State of the Urban Forest Reports