

Urban and Community Forestry Addendum

This document exists to further define Illinois urban forestry priorities for action and is written to be an Addendum to the Illinois Forest Action Plan. Although urban forestry is addressed in the current Illinois Forest Action Plan (IFAP) (originally titled, *Illinois Statewide Forest Resources Assessment and Strategies*), the original IFAP had minimal input from program managers, scientists, practitioners, and stakeholders within the arboriculture and urban forestry sector.

Introduction:

Urban forests provide significant economic, health, social, psychological and environmental benefits to humans and wildlife. Trees are an appreciating asset and mature properly placed trees provide maximum ecosystem services. Trees are part of our urban infrastructure. It is important to invest in and protect the health and diversity of this critical infrastructure in order to maintain our quality of life and the ecosystems on which we rely. Work with state, regional and local partners to integrate trees into sound planning practices to improve the environment and provide for connectivity of fragmented landscapes.

The quality and quantity of the Illinois urban forest is in jeopardy. There is a substantial need to focus efforts on practices and policies which can sustain and improve the urban forest from the state to the individual property owner. Management strategies for urban forestry should be integrated at all levels – state governmental, regional planning, local governmental, and citizen-based.

Communities throughout Illinois are experiencing stressors such as increased flooding, reduced air quality, reduced economic security and non-integrated development. Urban trees are often overlooked as a vital resource and without proper management can become a liability. By proactively protecting and caring for the urban trees throughout Illinois many of these stressors can be eliminated, environmental conditions improved, and quality of life enhanced. Targeted action based on sound science is critical components of urban and community forest management and includes insect, disease and invasive species management.

Accurate information on the composition and health of the urban forest over time is an extremely important administrative and policy development tool. There currently is not a statewide urban forestry assessment of the tree resources within the municipal forests of Illinois. There is a need to establish this baseline data and then create urban and community forest canopy goals and management strategies based on the data. This data and associated administrative decisions will help enhance and protect the urban forest enabling the municipalities to effectively function in providing benefits and services. With a statewide inventory, new goals may emerge and existing goals be set at a higher priority.

Unlike less populated neighboring states in the USFS NE State and Private Forestry region, Illinois' State of Illinois Urban Forestry Program has one full time FTE and no dedicated full-time field staff. Neighboring states average staff levels are 4.4 employees. Additional staff is required to enable the administration of the State Forestry Program to be effective and thrive. Most programs within the DNR – ORC have dedicated staffing. Efforts need to be made and goals achieved to provide for fulfillment of

staffing needs of the State Forestry Program and thereby strengthen the State Forestry Program from the State level to the local level.

The Illinois Urban Forestry Program and its partners provide education and outreach to a wide range of forestry professionals and non-professionals. Partners include: professional organizations such as the International Society of Arboriculture, Illinois Arborist's Association, Illinois Landscape Contractors Association, Illinois Nurserymen's Association, Society of Municipal Arborists, American Public Works Association, IASWCD and many not-for profit organizations. Federal and state agencies work on various aspects of urban and community forestry. The USDA Forest Service and Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources serve as lead agencies in Urban and Community Forestry. The state and federal Environmental Protection Agencies focus on trees for environmental services such as air and water pollution control. The USDA APHIS the U.S. and Illinois Dept. of Agriculture focus on monitoring the invasive species such as the Emerald Ash Borer gypsy moth and others. It is in tandem with these organizations and agencies that urban forestry professionals manage the urban forest effectively.

For a strong urban forestry program in the State of Illinois, partnerships are essential. These partnerships provide the sharing of expertise, resources and perspectives that help to unite statewide efforts and support. These partners provide education and outreach to Illinois citizens, industry and municipalities through workshops and annual conferences. They often initiate ground level action campaigns and conduct regional landscape initiatives that help promote urban forestry as a profession and a way of life.

Without these partnerships there will be no strong support base to reach out to decision makers who can develop laws and funding strategies for the urban forest is also critical to the strength of the State urban and community forestry program. This support base needs to be inclusive from federal to local levels. Funding resources provide the impetus for the State, regional, local government units of and landowners to provide the needed care and planting of trees to maintain the urban forest. Funding can be Federal, State, local, private, or even individual, to support the urban and community forest.

The goals contained within this addendum represent the above initiatives and needs of the state urban and community forestry program.

This Addendum has been officially adopted by the Illinois Forestry Development Council with the following eight priorities and detailed action items:

1.0 Improve and Expand Forest Composition and Health

1.1 Conduct an Assessment of the Illinois Urban Forest---State and Local

1.1.A. Conduct and make accessible a State urban forest assessment including the use of LIDAR or other imagery which will allow for a complete understanding of the species matrix, age classifications, locations and planting opportunities and their changes over time. Make this information accessible to State, regional and local forestry managers for the development of a strategy for the management, planting and protection of the urban forest at all scales, utilizing cloud based technology for information sharing wherever possible.

1.1.B. Identify key areas in the state where canopy enhancement is needed.

1.1.C. Identify gaps in local and regional inventory data. Work with the local homeowners and landowners to complete the tree inventory.

1.1.D. Work with communities who have a public property tree inventory to conduct a stratified sample of private property trees to determine the community-wide forest composition and health. Utilize this information to:

- i. educate property owners on maintenance, diversity, risks, etc.
- ii. educate the public about tree trails, tree history, the benefits of trees,
- iii. develop or improve tree protection ordinances.
- iv. bring awareness of and protection to important trees in the community such as witness trees, trees of significant size, trees of historical significance, memorials, etc.

1.1.E. Collect data from all public and quasi-public agencies such as park districts, forest preserve districts, arboreta, golf courses, educational properties, corporate campuses, hunt clubs.

1.1.F. To monitor the long term health and integrity of Illinois urban and community forests, establish a mandate of a statewide urban forest assessment every 10 years correlating the data with water quality, flood potential, air quality, wildlife, and other ecosystem services that provide habitat and improved quality of life.

1.2 Enhance the Urban Forest Canopy

1.2.A. Identify opportunities to integrate trees as part of green infrastructure in replacement or augmentation of gray infrastructure. Consider urban trees as opportunities to reduce fragmentation and improve environmental conditions and habitat.

1.2.B. Utilize the inventory to improve forest species diversity, understand management issues related to age diversity, identify public tree risks and the value and importance of establishing regular maintenance, management and planting strategies.

1.2.C. Promote a goal to achieve over-time a statewide standard for improved species diversity. Good example = no more than 30% of any one family; 20% of any one genus; 10% of any one species; or 5% of any one cultivar.

1.2.D. Support community tree planting programs where diversity is encouraged. Provide opportunities and collaborative examples for public and private lands. Include in these planting opportunities, species, and age diversity. Encourage annual tree planting programs, that will sustain our forests by creating a range of tree age classifications.

1.2.E. Prioritize key canopy areas and develop a long-term strategy to plant trees in key areas.

1.2.F. Work with and support State agencies that impact the urban forest canopy to improve canopy cover, species and age diversity in their management strategies. Disseminate specifications, based on industry standards, to these agencies to properly select, grow, plant, maintain and protect trees.

1.2.G. Work with State partners to assist in communication between nurseries and tree purchasers to ensure availability and quality of diverse species for public and private urban landowners. Look for collaborative opportunities to assist the nursery industry in forecasting future diversity needs.

1.2.H. Identify and recommend incentives for landowners who actively work to improve their tree canopy (including diversity, age, and species). These could include tax credits, funding assistance, etc. This might also include looking at how other states, counties, regions or local governments provide credits for stormwater fees, green infrastructure improvements, etc. Local resources should be identified as well as regional and State.

1.2.I. Create a State statute for integration into regional and local government for assessing urban tree damage and penalties. Provide information and resource materials for county and local entities on how to prevent malicious damage to trees and/or penalties.

1.3 Identify and Quantify the Benefits of Trees

1.3.A. Provide up to date data on the benefits of trees to public and private landowners, land managers, foresters, developers, contractors, designers, planners, elected officials and decision makers. This could include:

- i. enhanced property values
- ii. improved economic development
- iii. reduced crime
- iv. improved public health
- v. improved wildlife habitat
- vi. water quality improvements
- vii. air quality improvements
- viii. carbon sequestration and storage
- ix. reduced gray infrastructure costs
- x. reduced erosion
- xi. provide oxygen
- xii. beautification of public spaces creating a sense of place

1.3.B. Recommend incentives and resources for those who integrate the benefits of trees as a means to improve the environment and quality of life, i.e. stormwater reduction, energy reduction, etc. at the local and regional scale.

1.3.C. Utilize the statewide urban forest assessment, regional and local tree inventory data to quantify the economic, social, health and environmental benefits of urban trees. Share this information with State officials, elected officials and decision makers. Teach the regions and communities how to calculate this information and assist them in messaging this information to their constituents.

1.3.D. Develop a statewide marketing campaign directed to multiple audiences on the benefits of trees. Include in this campaign outreach materials which can be easily downloadable. This would include brochures, articles, promotional materials, and educational materials which can be in hard copies or for websites.

2.0 Achieve Widespread Illinois Urban Forestry Sustainability and Management

2.1 Support and increase state and local staffing for urban forestry.

A well-funded and represented program is needed to support goals statewide. A well-funded and represented program is needed to support goals statewide.

2.1.A Establish a funding formula to support the utilization of urban forestry field staff. Field staff should be available to communities within two-hours of their location or based on a population formula. It is recommended that not less than 6 urban forestry field staff be hired.

2.1.B. Encourage communities and public and private land managers to utilize professionally trained or educated forestry staff to oversee administration and management of the urban forest.

2.2 Best Management Practices

Best management practices are those current forestry practices which are the best means, method, process or activity for the care, management, planting or selection of trees. Many of these practices are detailed in International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) manuals and are a refinement to the latest versions of American National Standards Institute resources on forestry, American Nurseryman Association standards, NRCS Urban Manual, and ILCA standards.

2.2.A. Enhancing the production and performance of nursery stock for community selection and planting based on the latest version of American Standard for Nursery Stock, ANSI Z60.1.

2.2.B. Provide guidelines and best management practices for selection, planting, preventative and routine tree care on the State website and in other approved forestry sponsored resources to assist urban forestry professionals, non-professionals and tree owners.

2.2.C Review of industry “Best Management Practices” with the intent to continually update those practices as new information becomes available.

2.3 Trees Are Critical Infrastructure.

Trees as green infrastructure provide important ecological services and are the only component of a community's infrastructure that appreciates in value over time. The benefits provided by trees are not always recognized until it is too late. Due to the current infestation, mortality, and removals of ash trees, it will become evident to citizens of Illinois that trees provide critical infrastructure. These infrastructure benefits include reducing heating and cooling costs, increasing property values, improving air quality, and reducing stormwater runoff and flooding. Trees are part of urban infrastructure and play critical roles in stormwater management. In urban areas, trees reduce the amount of runoff and protect surface waters from sediment and nutrient loading. This green infrastructure reduces the amount of stormwater entering the combined sewers and controls stormwater at the source. Leverage partnerships to support green infrastructure.

2.3.A. Work to build interdisciplinary partnerships and collaboration for the integration, care and planting of trees as part of the design process of the urban environment (ecosystem).

Recognize the partnerships that connect green and gray infrastructure enabling a combined benefit.

2.3.B. Encourage and support volunteer programs to build volunteer support for trees and an understanding of their green infrastructure services, i.e. Forest Watch, TreeKeepers, Tree Stewards, youth training programs, etc.

2.3.C. Provide support for tree planting which is planned and integrated to improve the environment and provide for connectivity to fragmented landscapes.

2.3.D. Support efforts to provide credits for trees in stormwater and carbon offset programs.

2.3.E. Support efforts to integrate tree BMPs into the stormwater regulatory framework. This would include credits for BMP implementation, clear design standards for engineers and designers, addressing trees in municipal Stormwater Manuals and all levels and programs MS4, TMDLs, watersheds, city ordinances, IL/DOT.

2.4 Climate Adaptation

Recognize the increased frequency and severity of storm events, drought and flooding. Work to integrate adaptation strategies into maintenance practices, improved species lists based on environmental impacts and infrastructure features which will help to support the urban forest in a time of change. Trees in the urban setting, during times of drought, increased flooding, increased wind and ice or other climate related issues will require the best possible growing conditions and care.

2.4.A. Improve specifications to provide optimal soil content and volume for trees. Include design features which will include adequate space in planting pits, suspended pavement, root paths and connected infrastructure to improve growing conditions.

2.4.B. Review and recommend tree species which will perform well in a changing climate. This would include review of species recommendations at the southern end of their range which might be removed and/or northern end of the range that could be added. Review and recommend how some possible invasive trees could be utilized or should be avoided in the urban ecosystem.

2.4.C. Provide recommendations for stormwater management strategies which will include trees placed in designs that improve access to water and soil conditions for extended periods of inundation and drought. Promote the establishment of increased canopy to offset the installation of impermeable surfaces.

2.4.D. Provide recommendations for risk assessments and management practices to reduce risk. Coalesce the different resources which might be considered to provide assistance for these issues in the urban setting.

3.0 Education and Training for Professionals and Non-professionals

3.1 Increase the Number certified or credentialed individuals in the area of urban and community forestry.

Increase the number of individuals taught proper forestry skills and management practices to more effectively manage the urban forest. Individuals who care for trees in communities (government, land managers, landscape contractors, etc.) may not have sufficient training or background for the forestry work they are performing. Provide education and training for these individuals with the goal that they will become certified and credentialed urban forest managers and caretakers.

3.1.A. Increase program content, locations, and number of opportunities for arborist training leading to certification, credentials and for continuing education units to maintain certification.

3.1.B. Provide funding opportunities for individuals interested in becoming certified arborists who may not have the means to pay for the training.

3.1.C. Provide incentives and/or assistance to encourage every community or land management organization to have at least one certified or credentialed professional on staff or on retainer in urban and community forestry.

3.1.D. Increase opportunities for partnerships between agencies, organizations, not-for-profits and governmental entities to facilitate cross-profession training which will expand the use of best management practices will address state, regional and local goals and encourage Arborist or professional certification. Within a community provide training for land managers, volunteers, public works, park district and other individuals on forestry with the goal to encourage further urban forestry training.

3.1.E Encourage hiring forestry interns to assist with program implementation.

3.1.F Volunteer coordinator training to help build the resources provide education on developing volunteer coordination into volunteer organizations.

3.2 Education and Training for Landscapers and the Nursery Industry Field Staff

There is a diverse audience of landscape and nursery workers who could benefit from increased training in arboriculture. The challenge is reaching this diverse audience.

3.2.A. Expand Spanish arboriculture training and opportunities for certification. Provide materials or information in a physical, visual and audio format to provide opportunities for those who may not read.

3.2.B. Provide communities with training information for contractors.

3.2.C. Develop incentives to encourage best management practices.

3.2.D. Collaborate with the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association, the Illinois Green Industry Association and other organizations to offer basic arboriculture training and workshops. Offer grants or scholarships to allow training. Encourage training sessions and outreach to non-certified participants in these fields to encourage early participation and eventual certification.

3.2.E Provide educational opportunities to urban forestry personnel on the basic best management practices of Nursery production and landscape installation. These materials should be directed to different audiences, i.e., the general public, schools, governmental entities, elected officials and land managers, developers, contractors, etc.

3.3 Education and Engagement of Stewards and Volunteers

One of Illinois’s greatest assets is its people. Individuals wanting to learn about trees and help support their community by volunteering their time and talents have a significant impact on the health and management of the urban forest.

3.3.A. Provide training to communities, landowners and managers on how to develop strong urban forest stewards. This would include training municipal foresters how to utilize volunteers effectively so that they can expand their resources.

3.3.B. Provide training and access to urban forestry volunteer opportunities. Partner with existing tree advocacy programs to expand exposure and participation. Provide incentives for communities who have strong volunteer forestry programs.

3.3.C. Provide training and resources for tree boards and commissions.

3.5 Educate and Engage Youth

Youth are a tremendous resource for future forestry advocacy. Many youth do not have opportunities to participate in nature based programs or activities. It is important to engage these youth in programs and activities which may inspire them to become forestry professionals or be advocates for the urban forest in the future.

3.5.A. Work with local schools and youth organizations to teach youth about career opportunities and job skills in forestry. These programs may be part of traditional curriculum, after school programs, or content for youth organizations.

3.5.B. Provide volunteer and training opportunities for youth in arboriculture. These opportunities should be available to youth within their communities and in support of their local urban forest. These opportunities may include community service.

3.5.C. Work with colleges and universities to incorporate forestry into their appropriate programs. Look for opportunities to partner with organizations, agencies or communities for internships and other learning opportunities.

3.6 Educate and Engage the General Public

Community forestry staff, land managers, landscape contractors and landowners, as basic service to their constituents, need to teach their constituents about the importance of the urban forest, the need to manage the forest professionally and to engage these residents in volunteering and advocacy for trees including Right Tree---Right Place.

3.6.A. Provide education and outreach on the benefits of trees

3.6.B. Provide education and outreach on all levels of tree care. Customize existing resources such as the Forest Service Tree Owners Guide for Illinois. Update “Under The Canopy” poster.

- i. how to select the appropriate plant for the appropriate space,
- ii. what to look for in the nursery,

- iii. how to plant correctly,
- iv. how to water,
- v. how to care for the tree through maturity.

3.6.C. Strengthen the connection between community forestry staff and trained volunteers to build community volunteer tree programs and advocacy for urban trees.

3.7 Educate and Engage Elected Officials

Elected officials are those who act in behalf of their constituents to represent their values and priorities by developing and enforcing State and local laws. They prioritize State and local programming and allocate funding to support those programs. It is critical that these officials be supported for their public service and provided the necessary tools to act appropriately on behalf of the individuals to whom they serve.

3.7.A. Provide information to elected officials and decision makers on the value and benefits of trees to protect our environment, natural resources, wildlife and our quality of life.

3.7.B. Provide elected officials with information on how trees protect property values, improve business activity and are a vital part of urban economies.

3.7.C. Provide education on the significance of proactive tree management and the financial benefits of maintaining healthy trees including - the value of tree inventories in budget projections, tree management plans, and routine regular maintenance and planting for a diverse age and species forest.

3.7.D. Educate on the importance of a forestry professional managing the urban forest - a valuable and substantial asset.

3.7.E. Provide examples and templates for communities on forestry management plans, tree inventories, and budgets.

3.7.F. Advocate to the State and local governments on the importance of trees and the need to fund urban tree care and planting as is used in other states.

3.7.G. Promote enacting tree protection ordinances to protect trees on public property and encourage protection of trees on private property.

3.8 Educate and Engage Developers, Contractors and Utilities

Outreach and education to professionals who construct or manage facilities in the urban forest can reduce negative impacts and even protect the forest and focus on Right Tree--Right Place principles.

3.8.A. Provide, as part of the permitting process at State, regional and local levels, education and outreach materials packet that will teach the developer, contractor and/or utility how to reduce negative impacts to trees. Provide examples of municipal specifications that carry intense inspection and penalties for violations. Show the benefits of preventative care and standards and examples of cost savings from implementing tree friendly practices.

3.8.B. Work with professional associations to build partnerships and incentives for proper tree

care and develop an incentive program which will encourage forest preservation and tree protection.

3.8C. Develop a sub-committee within the urban forestry committee to monitor actions taken by utility companies and departments of transportation concerning ROW and utility line clearance.

3.8.D Strengthen local cooperative agreements between municipalities and utilities or DOTs with respect to arboricultural specifications (i.e. Tree trimming).

4.0 Urban Forest Plants, Insect and Disease Invasive Species Awareness and Management

4.1 Emerald Ash Borer

Emerald ash borer infestation is a significant problem for the urban forest resulting in the loss of millions of ash trees and is a prime example of exotic pests compromising native ecosystems due to poor cultural practices. It is extremely important that Illinois communities maintain a diverse tree population. The role of the State Urban Forestry program needs to be a recognized resource to local community forestry program development and outreach to address this type of issue.

4.1.A. Work with property owners and managers to understand there are options for EAB. Provide information on options for addressing EAB and assist in educating constituents about management options.

4.1.B. A diverse urban forest is the best approach to reducing the impact of future invasive pests. Support the development and distribution of a diverse urban species list to landowners and managers to create a more sustainable forest.

4.1.C. Biomass created by EAB, should be repurposed where possible and information on wood processing and utilization for higher purposing of ash wood utilization should be encouraged. Connections between sawyers and potential ash resources need to be further developed.

4.1.D. Encourage land/homeowners and managers to develop EAB management plans. Develop templates to provide guidance.

4.1.E. Assist land/homeowners in identifying qualifications for forestry personnel, including land managers, so that these landowners are aware of "professional forestry" credentials which will help to ensure they receive the appropriate forestry services. Assist these landowners in identifying things to be watchful of so that they are not scammed or provided fraudulent service.

4.1.F. Encourage collaboration, group rates, or including small landowners in larger contracts for tree care related to EAB to provide for economies of scale.

4.1.G. Identify and designate state and/or federal funds to assist communities in reforestation after EAB losses.

4.2 New Invaders

It is important to be aware of new invaders which might impact the urban forest in Illinois. This requires a collaborative effort with the U.S.D.A. and surrounding states. Emphasis should be placed on transportation facilities and corridors and distribution centers for import of new invaders.

4.2.A. Provide education and outreach to landowners and managers on potential new invaders. Include in this education early detection rapid response training.

4.2.B. Partner with organizations which can be an extension of State, regional and local personnel in early detection and rapid response, such as local birding, hiking, restoration, biking, picnicking, boating and other groups that may be able to assist in quick identification of potential new invaders.

4.2.C. Distribute new invaders information to professionals and non professionals---including homeowners.

4.3 Woody and Other Invasive Plant Species

The presence of woody invasive plant species in our urban areas costs millions of dollars every year to control. These species inhibit the ability of more desirable species to grow and thrive.

4.3.A. Work with landowners and managers to identify, remove, control, and replace invasive woody species with species which will not adversely impact other plants and wildlife.

4.3.B. Develop species lists to assist landowners and managers in replacing invasive woody species with species which will provide similar screening and other aesthetics.

4.3.C. Evaluate woodlands where woody invasive species are present for regeneration of other tree species. Manage sites for opportunities for natural regeneration and/or planting to encourage replacement species.

4.3.D. Collaborate with invasive species organizations to develop and distribute a state-wide awareness initiative on woody and other invasive species that impact the urban forest. Work collaboratively with landscape architects, nurseries, researchers, landowners and land managers to track characteristics and plants which should be monitored and identified as possible threats for colonization to natural areas.

4.3.E. Provide support to protect unique and natural areas. Reduce possible impacts from governmentally identified invasive species which might impair the ecological function and resiliency of these important areas. Recognize and support the need for buffers between diverse urban areas where some woody species may pose a threat to unique and natural areas.

4.4 Diseases

It is important to be aware of diseases which might impact the urban forest in Illinois. This requires a collaborative effort with resources, inside and outside the state, which can help to identify potential threats and treatment options.

4.2.A. Provide education and outreach to landowners and managers on typical diseases and potential new diseases. Include in this education early detection rapid response training.

4.2.B. Partner with organizations which can be an extension of State, regional and local personnel in early detection and rapid response, including local birding, hiking, restoration, biking, picnicking, boating and other groups.

5.0 Nuture Urban Forestry Partnerships

5.1 Develop Partnerships throughout the State to meet and encourage a statewide urban and community forestry needs.

The State Urban Forestry Committee will continue to make a concerted effort to bring together all perspectives and sectors of the state in a unified effort to support urban forestry.

5.1.A. Provide opportunities for information sharing and networking to enhance unification of the State urban forestry program. Coordinate state-wide campaigns to distribute information and development of a collaborative alliance that will strengthen the overall urban forest resource.

5.1.B. Encourage mentoring programs that share resources with underserved and under resourced communities.

5.1.C. Support partnerships for state-wide problems such as emerald ash borer, wood utilization, storm mitigation and response etc.

5.1.D. Seek opportunities for partnerships between urban and community forestry professionals and education to build awareness of careers opportunities.

5.1.E. Encourage the funding of collaborative partnerships on regional landscape initiatives that promote urban and community.

5.1.F. Partner with and provide information to State and regional organizations and programs which integrate trees and ecosystems within urban and community settings, i.e., the State Wildlife Action Plan.

5.4 Researchers and Scientists

Coordinate with scientists to determine urban forest research needs of urban and community forestry practitioners. Facilitate the distribution and collaboration of urban forestry research to the practitioner to promote best management practices and understanding of the urban forest ecosystem.

5.4.A. Develop partnerships with researchers and urban foresters to share the latest research results and forecast urban forestry issues.

5.4.B. Assist in the education, distribution and integration of the latest urban forestry research into best management practices.

5.4.C. Solicit and support State, Federal and other funding opportunities for research.

6.0 Expand and Support Advocacy

6.1 Legislation

Key to the success of a State urban forestry program is recognition of the importance and benefits of urban trees to the State and to received support and assistance from State legislators and policy makers.

6.1.A. Tracking of legislation and policy at the State and Federal levels to identify urban forestry issues that should receive support and should received support and those which might require legislative education to correct potential negative urban forestry policy.

6.1.B. Advocate and protect utility tree trimming law (Public Act 92-0214) from changes that harm urban trees and or property rights.

6.1.C. Host an annual legislative meeting with elected officials to present the urban forest strategy and discuss issues related to the protection of the urban forest.

6.1.D. Encourage partnerships and collaboration with major urban forestry organizations for info sharing and strengthening urban forestry opportunities in a cost effective manner.

6.1.E. Promote Illinois efforts and successes at National conferences and events to increase funding and recognition.

6.1.F. Coordinate official support from tree and stewardship groups across the state to promote urban forestry awareness to key agencies, legislature and executive governments in Springfield.

6.1.G. The Forestry Development Council should work with the Urban Forestry Committee to develop the state annual Council report to Legislators.

6.2 Local Advocacy

The majority of land within the state is owned by citizens. Decision-makers, public and private, need to be in a position to make the best possible decisions for the urban forest within their communities. Education and outreach to these officials, landowners and decision-makers, on the value and proper care of the urban forest should be readily available and relevant for their needs.

6.2.A. Resources should be developed and available for use by decision-makers which will enable them to more effectively protect and care for their urban and community forest.

6.2.B. Decision-makers should be educated and guided to the benefits and use of green infrastructure, specifically trees, as replacement for, or augmentation of, more traditional infrastructure.

6.2.C. Communities and landowners should be encouraged to work together to protect the interconnectedness of the urban forest ecosystems.

6.2.D. Communities should provide education and resources to assist private landowners in maintaining, planting and protecting trees for the benefit of the urban forest.

6.2.E. Municipalities should increase the proportion of employees with forestry backgrounds in order to foster awareness and knowledge of urban forestry practices. Educational programs should be offered to employees with minimal forestry backgrounds.

6.2.F. One of the most effective management tools available to local communities is the municipal ordinance, every community should be encouraged to implement the ordinances necessary to preserve, protect, and enhance their urban forestry resources.

7.0 Increase Funding for Urban & Community Forestry

7.1 State Capacity

The Council should work with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to identify dedicated funding for the State Urban Forestry Program. This funding should include funding resources for State, regional and local governmental units to protect and maintain the health of the urban forest and to provide outreach and education on the important benefits of the urban forest.

7.1.A. Encourage increased sustainable funding for the State Urban Forestry program and the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Act.

7.1.B. Continue to utilize State and federal urban forestry funding to provide technical assistance and funding for the purchase and establishment of trees to counties and communities throughout the State.

7.1.D. Significant funds are needed to provide statewide assistance for urban forestry management related to insects and diseases, i.e., emerald ash borer, etc.

7.2 U.S. Forest Service Funding

The U.S. Forest Service has been a strong traditional resource for urban forestry funding. Efforts need to continue to support this funding and to increase the capacity of the state through local urban forestry programs and within organizations which make this funding possible.

7.2.A. Work with all municipalities in the State which are not currently Tree City USA communities to educate them about the program and engage them to become Tree City USA communities.

7.2.B. Coordinate USFS funding opportunities with IDNR to get needed funds into the hands of practitioners.

7.2.C. Facilitate the request for proposal's process to enable NGO's and partners of all resource levels to be able to apply for funding competitive opportunities.

7.2.D. Provide grant writing education and assistance to enable communities at all resource levels to apply for needed funding.

7.2.E. Requests for proposals should ensure that program funding meets State Urban Forestry goals as established by the Council.

7.2.F. Urban and Community Forestry Committee assist in the review and administration of funding opportunities.

8.0 Increase State Urban Forestry Staffing

8.1 Provide dedicated staff to the Urban and Community Forestry program throughout the State since Illinois has more local units of government than most other states in the U.S.

Municipalities need access to State Urban Forestry representatives throughout Illinois to help develop local urban and community forestry programs.

8.1.A. State U&CF staff should work with partners to increase the presence and understanding of urban forestry issues within the State, regional and local levels.

8.1.B. A multi-agency request should be made for six urban and community forestry district or regional administrators to be added to support statewide urban forestry efforts.

8.1.C Provide access to trained community foresters on inventories, ordinances, tree management plans, storm mitigation, tree utility conflict resolution and other important urban and community forestry issues.