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SCOPE OF THE ENGAGEMENT

The City of Vaughan is home to a diverse urban forest that spans a range of land uses and ownership types. Land use change and development activity associated with the City's rapid growth over recent decades has exerted significant pressure on Vaughan's urban forest. At the same time, issues such as climate change, invasive pests, and diseases, are evolving sources of urban forest stress. The City is now developing an Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) and supporting Woodland Management Strategy (WMS) to guide the long-term management of the urban forest as a critical community resource.

Engagement

Public engagement to help inform the development of the UFMP and WMS was split into two phases. Phase 1 of public engagement occurred from March to April 2023 and was designed to help inform the vision, principles, and goals of the UFMP.

The second phase of engagement took place in June 2023, and involved presenting the strategic framework for both the UFMP and WMS and seeking feedback from the community on how the UFMP proposed directions capture and addresses key concerns. This included exploring which goals and strategies are prioritized in the final version of the UFMP and WMS.

Objectives for public engagement

The project team aims to achieve the following objectives through two phases of public engagement:

- To inform the public about:
 - The status of our urban forest and woodlands (i.e., forested areas > 0.2 hectares in area)
 - The role of the urban forest in the community, including the unique environmental, economic, and social values it supports
 - The challenges facing urban forest management within the city
- To involve the community in developing a long-term urban forest vision that captures the community's perspective on the city's urban forest
- To consult the community to identify opportunities to preserve and protect, grow, and enhance our urban forest
- To build community awareness, support, and advocacy for our urban forest and woodlands and the Urban Forest Management Plan and Woodland Management Strategy

PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The public was invited to provide input through an online survey, community open house, and two stakeholder workshops in June 2023. Details on Phase 2 engagement opportunities are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of online engagement opportunities offered in Phase 2

| Time | Engagement Opportunities | # of Participants |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| June 2023 | Survey | 117 |
| June 15 and 27 2023 | Targeted Stakeholder Workshops | 13 |

Communications

Information on engagement opportunities was communicated through several online and inperson platforms to reach as wide an audience as possible. Table 2 provides a summary of the communication/promotional avenues used in the second phase of public engagement.

Table 2. Summary of in-person engagement opportunities offered in Phase 2

| Time | In-Person Engagement Opportunities |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| June 8 2023 | Community Open House |
| June 13 to June 16 | Pop up event - Civic Resource |
| June 16 to June 19 | Pop up event - Bathurst Clark |
| June 19 to June 21 | Pop up event - Pierre Berton |
| June 21 to June 23 | Pop up event - Ansley Grove |
| June 23 to June 26 | Pop up event - Vellore Village |
| June 26 to June 28 | Pop up event - Maple |
| June 28 to June 30 | Pop up event - Pleasant Ridge |
| June 30 to July 4 | Pop up event - Dufferin Clark |

Table 3 Summary of communication tactics and platforms used in Phase 2

| Launch date (duration) | Communication tactics |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| May 25 | Updated project webpage on <u>vaughan.ca</u> and <u>Have</u> |
| | Your Say, Vaughan |
| May 25 for two weeks; June 5 for two | Banner on the homepage of vaughan.ca |
| weeks | |
| May 25 for two weeks; June 5 for two | Graphic on our digital sign network |
| weeks | |
| May 25 for two weeks; June 5 for two | Graphic on TV screens at City Hall and community |
| weeks | centres |
| May 25, June 5 | Public service announcements |
| May 25, June 5 – we had two go out | Council communications packages |
| June 5 (one with the PSA, one | |
| announcing the art contest winners), | |
| and June 22 | |
| June 5 for two weeks | Synthia message |
| June 5 to June 30 | Paid social media ads and organic social media |
| May 29, June 14 | Vaughan Engagement eNewsletter |
| June 20 | UFMP eNewsletter (to project mailing list) |

WHO WE HEARD FROM

In Phase 2 we heard from 117 survey respondents, representatives from 10 organizations at the stakeholder workshops, and an estimated 111 people at pop-up events.

Survey demographics

Of the survey respondents:

- 96% reside in Vaughan
- 78% are 25-64 years old: 36% are 25-44 years old, 43% are 45-64 years old
- 33% of respondents or their household member(s) were born outside of Canada, 16% of respondents speak English as a nonnative language and 10% identify themselves as racialized person
- 26% have children (age under 18) and 19% have seniors (age 65+) in their household

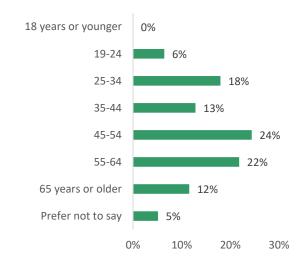


Figure 1. Age of respondents (357 responses)

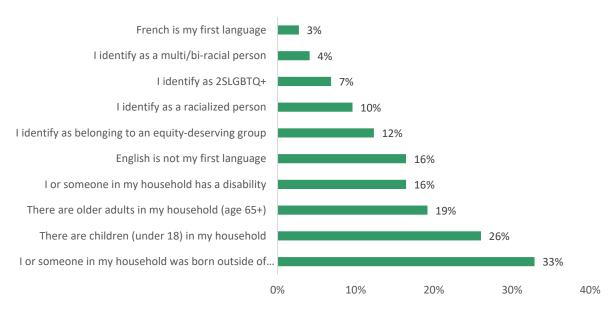


Figure 2. Cultural background of respondents (315 responses)

Stakeholder workshop

13 participants from 10 stakeholder organizations attended the online workshop. Stakeholders included members of:

- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
- LEAF
- OLS
- Nature Canada
- Forests Ontario
- Ontario Woodlot Association
- WSP
- Castle Point Land Development
- Smart Cities Remington Group
- The local land development community

WHAT WE HEARD

Key findings from the second phase of public engagement are summarized in this section for the following engagement methods:

- Online survey
- Stakeholder workshop
- Pop-up events

Online survey

The online survey collected feedback on the draft UFMP strategic framework and work done to date. The survey asked community members to provide input to help prioritize the draft UFMP goals and supporting strategies. Prior to completing the survey, 72% of respondents had reviewed the proposed UFMP and WMS strategic framework, and 91% identified that they understood the content. The survey covered four sections:

- Vision
- Targets
- Goals and Strategies
- Open ended thoughts

The detailed survey results are available in Appendix A.

Vision

Survey respondents were presented with the following draft vision statement:

"Our vision is for a healthy and sustainable urban forest canopy that supports biodiversity, human health and recreation, and community climate resilience to provide a greener future for generations to come."

84% of respondents agree with the draft vision statement (Figure 3). When asked if the vision, goals and strategies provide a good direction for the management of the City's urban forest overall, 22% strongly agreed, and 56% somewhat agreed.

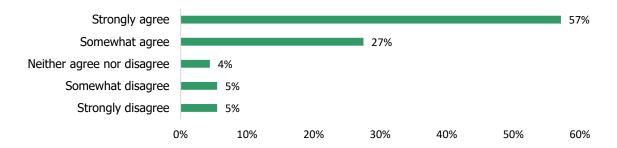


Figure 3. Respondent perspective on draft vision statement (91 responses)

The top three themes from the survey regarding improving the vision statement and urban forest management in Vaughan are:

- Protection and Preservation: There is a strong emphasis on protecting and preserving the existing forest canopy, woodlots, and green spaces in Vaughan. Suggestions included to reduce ambiguity in the vision statement.
- Community Engagement and Stewardship: Adding a stewardship component in the vision statement was identified in several responses. Respondents emphasized the need for community members to recognize the importance of tree preservation, support healthy urban forests, and actively participate in tree care initiatives.
- Climate Change Resilience: Respondents stress the importance of addressing climate change and enhancing resilience within the UFMP. This includes implementing climate adaptation and mitigation strategies to protect the community from the effects of climate change and promoting a greener future.

Targets

In May of 2021, York Region released a State of the Forest Report that suggested that an appropriate canopy cover target for Vaughan might be between 25% and 35%. With the knowledge that Vaughan's 2019 city-wide canopy cover was 20%, 90% of respondents would like to increase the City's urban forest canopy and 85% are in favor of introducing a canopy target.

The York Region's State of the Forest Report also suggested a woodland canopy target of 14% to 17%. The woodland target differs from the canopy target in that it only considers woodland (i.e., forest) canopy. 92% of respondents support increasing the area of its woodlands and 84% support introducing a woodland canopy target.

The leading theme among those who did not support urban forest and/or woodland canopy increases and targets was a need to balance canopy coverage with other community outcomes, such as housing and development.

Strategy prioritization

The draft UFMP developed 5 goals and 14 strategies to guide urban forest management in Vaughan for the long-term future. The goals cover different aspects of planning and management that all work towards achieving the vision of the Plan.

Respondents identified protecting trees and woodlands for future generations (goal 4) as a high priority (40% selected as most important), while increasing community stewardship (goal 5) was noted as the least important (65% selected as least important) (Figure 4).

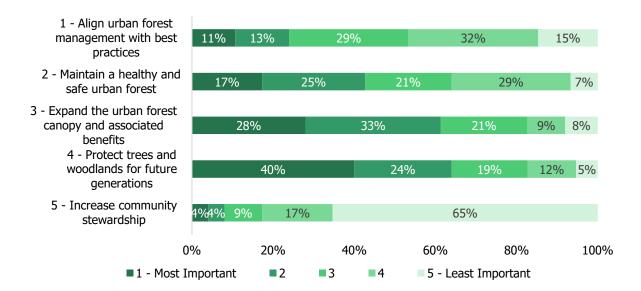


Figure 4. Respondent ranking relative importance of draft goals (75 responses)

Respondents were also asked how they would prioritize strategies associated with each urban forest management goal. This information helps the project team understand which strategies survey respondents believe are the most effective and important to achieve each goal.

Goal #1 - Align urban forest management with best practices.

Respondents were asked to prioritize strategies when thinking about the management of the urban forest, the implementation of this plan, and the integration of this plan into other city initiatives and departments. A sustainable urban forestry program aligned with best practices was a high priority action, chosen by 56% of respondents as highest priority (Figure 5).

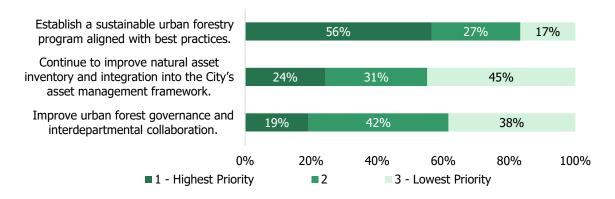


Figure 5. Respondent ranking of Goal #1 strategy priorities (78 responses)

Goal #2 - Maintain a healthy and safe urban forest.

When asked to prioritize strategies when thinking about maintenance and monitoring of the urban forest, respondents identified a transition from reactive to more proactive urban forest

maintenance as a high priority (Figure 6). Minimizing the risk of pest, disease and invasive species impacts to the urban forest was identified as a medium priority by respondents with an equal number of respondents selecting it as first, second, and third priority for goal 2 actions.

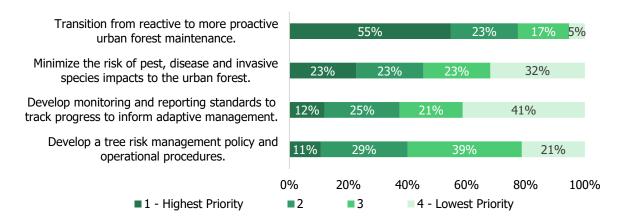


Figure 6. Respondent ranking of Goal #2 strategy priorities (75 responses)

Goal #3 - Expand the urban forest canopy and associated benefits.

Goal 3 strategies focused on tree establishment, replacement, and enhancement. Increasing tree planting rates to compensate for loss and achieve the canopy cover target was identified as a high priority, and restoring and expanding woodlands to enhance biodiversity and connectivity was a medium to high priority (Figure 7).

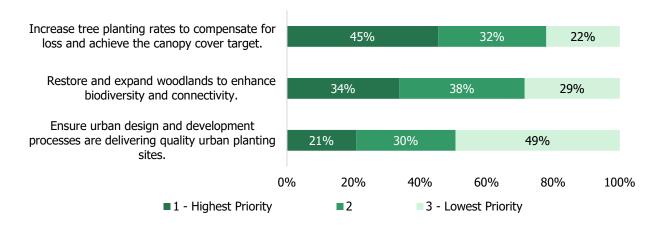


Figure 7. Respondent ranking of Goal #3 strategy priorities (77 responses)

Goal #4 - Protect trees and woodlands for future generations.

When asked to prioritize strategies when thinking about tree preservation and protection in Vaughan, tree protection outcomes on private land was a higher priority than on private land (Figure 8).

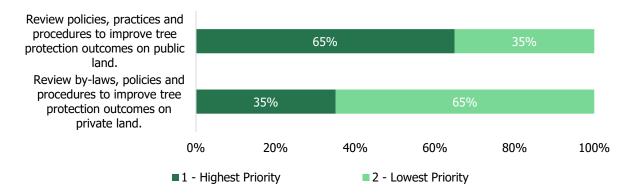


Figure 8. Respondent ranking of Goal #4 strategy priorities (57 responses)

Goal #5 - Increase community stewardship.

Survey respondents assigned higher priority to improving awareness of urban forest benefits and proper care compared to strengthening partnerships to expand the urban forest, when asked about goal 5 and urban forest engagement and collaboration (Figure 9).

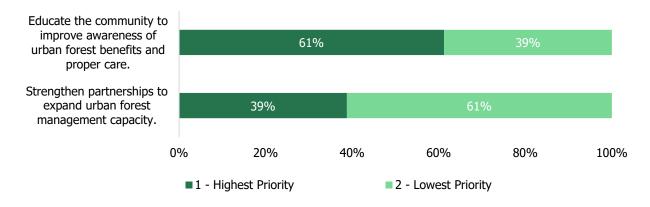


Figure 9. Respondent ranking of Goal #5 strategy priorities (49 responses)

Open ended thoughts

Having reviewed the proposed goals and strategies, respondents were asked to comment on the strategic framework for Vaughan's UFMP, including the vision, goals, actions, or anything else coming to mind. Top themes from responses were:

- Planting Guidelines and Requirements: Several responses highlight the need to protect and preserve existing urban canopy cover, woodlands, and green spaces. Planting guidance that emphasizes that prioritizes the benefits of large, mature trees are prioritized among responses.
- Community Stewardship and Partnership: A number of responses emphasized the importance of engaging the community, including schools and educational institutions, in tree-related initiatives. There is a desire for increased awareness and outreach efforts to

- involve residents in the City's vision and to promote ongoing stewardship to increase City capacity for tree planting and maintenance.
- Importance of Trees and Forests: Many responses express the significance of trees and forests in terms of their environmental benefits, such as mitigating climate change, providing habitats for wildlife, offering recreational spaces for communities, and contributing to overall well-being in Vaughan.
- Tree Preservation during development: Several responses stress the need for responsible land development practices that prioritize tree preservation. Expanding development and roads that cause tree clearing is a concern among survey respondents.
- Enforcement and ongoing evaluation of best practices: There are calls for implementing bylaws, fines for illegal tree cutting, and preventing the destruction of trees during land development.

Other responses touched on climate change and tree suitability and proactive and ecologically sustainable pest control.

Stakeholder Workshops

Stakeholder workshops were held on June 15 and 27, 2023 to give targeted stakeholder groups, including other levels of government, non-profit and professional organizations an opportunity to comment on the draft Plan. 13 participants from 10 groups attended the workshops. The project team presented stakeholders with an overview of the work done to date, and the strategic frameworks for both the UFMP and the WMS. Through an online facilitated discussion, participants identified priority strategies and commented on opportunities, benefits, gaps and challenges in the strategic framework, as well as its implementation.

Stakeholder comments on the UFMP and WMS framework focused on expanding urban forest canopy, with participants raising comments about private planting subsidies, managing the urban forest, maintenance, planting guidelines, and developing community partnerships. For example, participants noted that LEAF currently provides education and training opportunities for community members and both LEAF and Nature Canada have been involved with local organization and groups to promote tree equity through planting in the region. Participants also suggested creating a centralized tree planting and care resource written for the public, either through partnership or independently, as a way to increase stewardship of the urban forest.

Tree management was also a theme among participants. Participants suggested improving site design to benefit tree growth, introducing a broader range of tree protection measures, and revisiting the bylaw to discuss how to protect small trees and trees planted on private property.

Concerning the WMS, stakeholder discussion gravitated towards biodiversity conservation and habitat. Specifically, climate change resilience, seed sourcing, and invasive species management were identified as components to steer the development of the WMS.

Community Open House

A community open house was held on June 8, 2023 at Vaughan City Hall. The open house was underattended. As a result, staff decided to engage community members through several popup events at community locations over the following two weeks. Public engagement and the collection of feedback through the pop-up events was more fruitful.

Pop-up events

Eight pop-up events were held at public facilities across the community (see Table 2). These pop-up events provided members of the community with another opportunity to have their priorities and values heard. Through poster board and small one-on-one discussions, members of the community were invited to identify their priority goals and strategies on the UFMP and WMS framework. Boards from pop-up events can be found in Appendix C. An estimated 111 members of the community engaged with the pop-up materials.

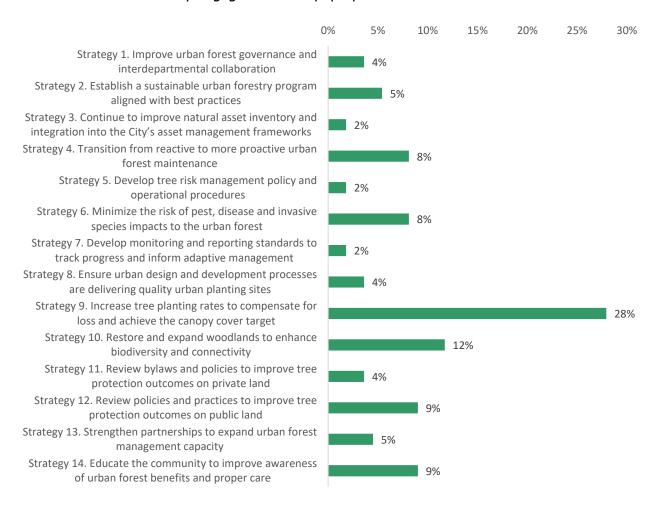


Figure 10. Draft Strategy prioritization from pop-up events. (111 responses)

28% of participants identified increasing tree planting rates to compensate for loss and achieve the canopy cover target as a priority strategy. 12% of participants identified restoring and expanding woodlands to enhance biodiversity and connectivity as their priority; this was the second most common priority area. 9% of participants selected strategies twelve or fourteen and 8% selected strategies four or six (Figure 11).

Summary of suggested revisions

Feedback received during phase 2 engagement shows a high satisfaction with the draft UFMP and priorities that are mostly aligned with the ones proposed in the draft plan. Responses collected during phase 2 engagement have been summarized to inform revisions to the draft UFMP.

The project team will consider the following updates to the draft UFMP:

- Increase the implementation priority of actions under:
 - Goal four to protect trees and woodlands for future generations (top priority from survey)
 - Goal three to expand the urban forest canopy and associated benefits (top priority from pop-up events)
- Reduce the implementation priority of actions under goal five, to increase community stewardship, while utilizing resources to help achieve actions under other goals
- Provide more content or emphasis on the following topics:
 - Protecting existing canopy cover, woodlands, and green spaces with planting quidelines that emphasize the retention and planting of large, mature trees
 - Improving partnerships with schools and educational institutions to foster stewardship
 - Enhancing responsible land development practices that proactively prioritize tree preservation
 - o Increasing bylaw enforcement to ensure that best practices are adopted

These suggested revisions will be considered along with input from Council, staff, and the project team to finalize Vaughan's draft Urban Forest Management Plan and present it to Council for adoption.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Detailed Survey Results

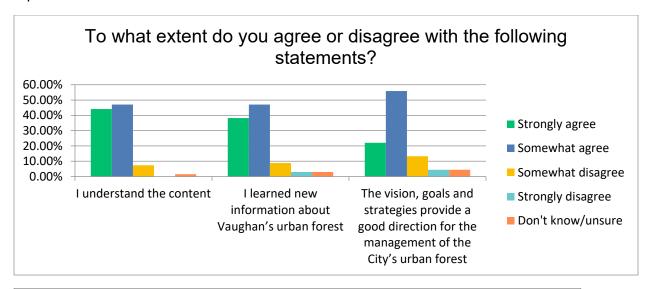
Appendix B: Stakeholder Workshop Boards

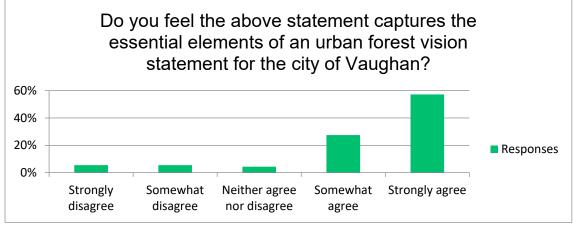
Appendix C: Pop-up Event Boards

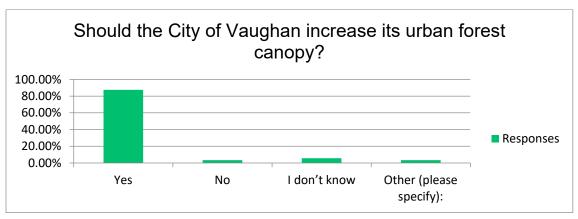
APPENDICIES

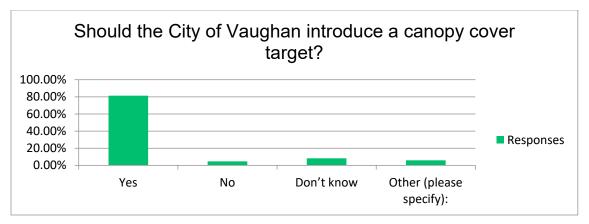
Appendix A - Detailed Survey Results

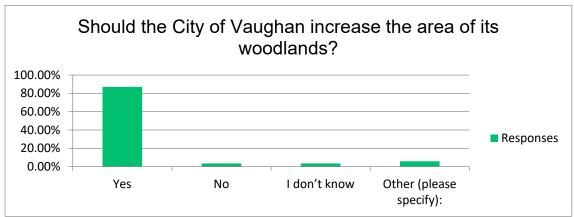
This section includes responses that are not covered/summarized in the main body of the report.

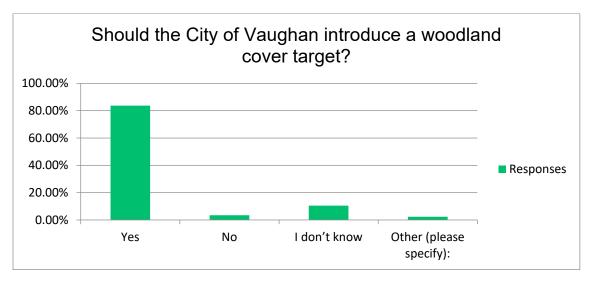


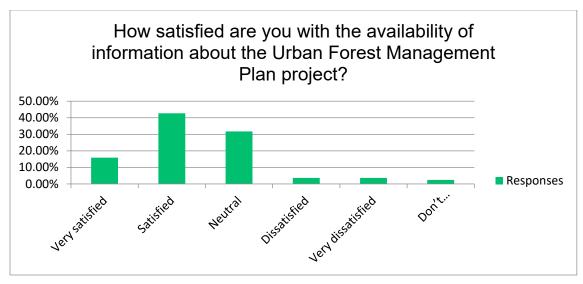


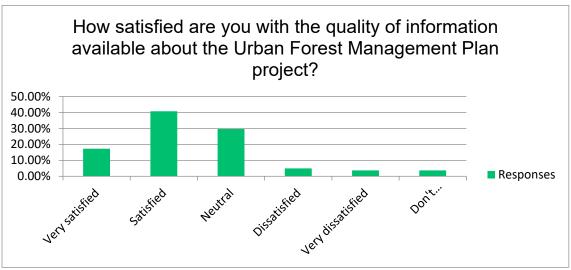


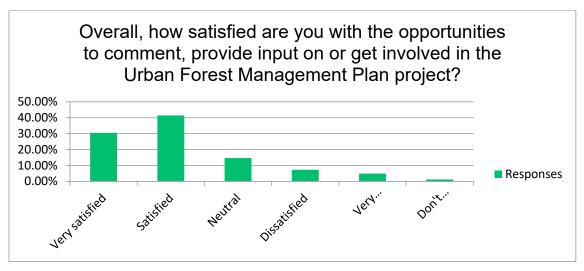








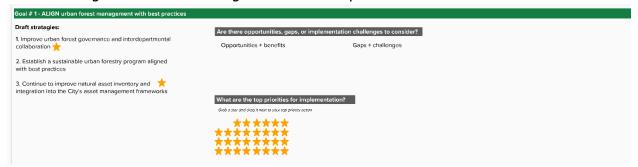




Appendix B – Stakeholder Workshop Boards

This section includes feedback material from stakeholder participants.

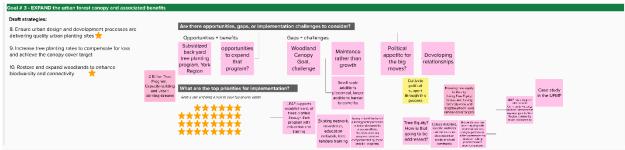
Goal #1 – Align urban forest management with best practices



Goal #2 - Maintain a healthy and safe urban forest



Goal #3 - Expand the urban forest canopy and associated benefits



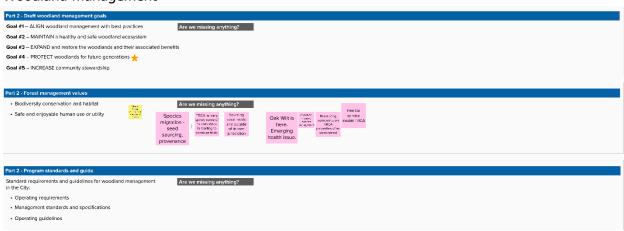
Goal #4 – Protect trees and woodlands for future generations

| Goal #4 – PROTECT trees and woodlands for future generations | | |
|---|--|--|
| Draft strategies: | Are there opportunities, gaps, or implementa | ntation challenges to consider? |
| Review bylaws, policies, and procedures to improve tree protection outcomes on both public and private land | Opportunities + benefits | Gaps + challenges |
| | | Boundary trees-are Can be a hey an insue? incley issue |
| | What are the top priorities for implementation | on? |
| | Case a des vina da gara en an a peus sego a landa perindo. | |

Goal #5 – Increase community stewardship



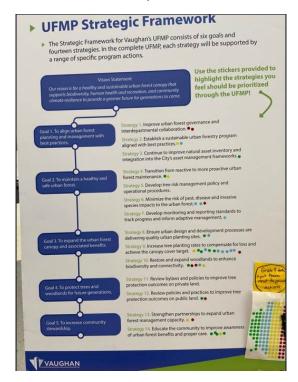
Woodland management



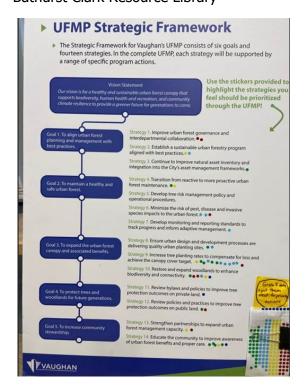
Appendix C – Pop-up Event Boards

This section includes event boards from pop-up engagement events.

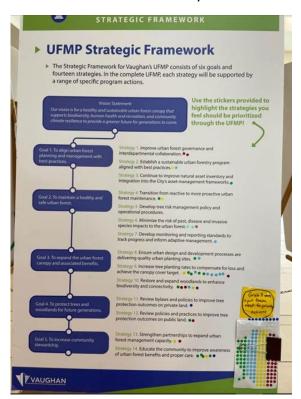
Civic Resource Library



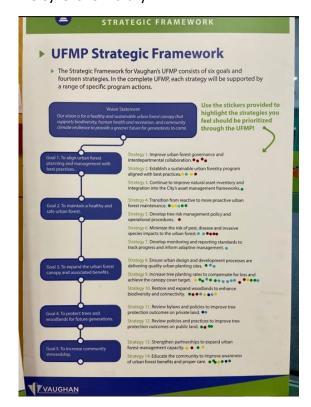
Bathurst Clark Resource Library



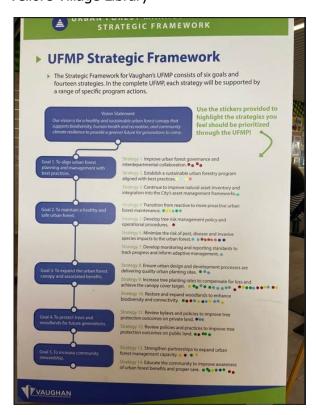
Pierre Berton Resource Library



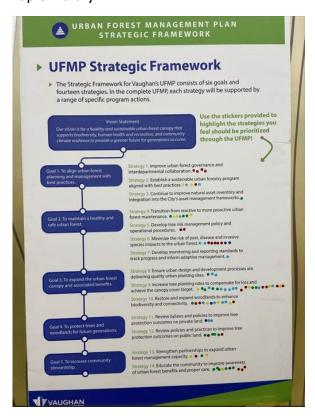
Ansley Grove Library



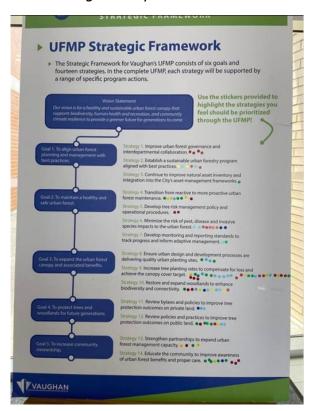
Vellore Village Library



Maple Library



Pleasant Ridge Library



Dufferin Clark Library

