



## Legislation Text

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### **City of Gainesville's Urban Forest Management Plan (B)**

The purpose of this item is to present the final draft of the City of Gainesville's Urban Forest Management Plan to the City Commission.

The City of Gainesville's Urban Forest Management Plan was developed through a collaborative effort supported by Gainesville's City Commission that involved all the departments of the City of Gainesville, the University of Florida, business and professional organizations, and citizens. This strategic plan for the management of Gainesville's urban forest addresses the numerous challenges to growing and maintaining a healthy urban forest in an efficient manner.

Gainesville's strategic urban forest management plan was developed with a 20-year planning horizon to meet the challenge of programmatic continuity by planning on a long-time framework. At the same time, it provides guidance for intermediate 5-year citywide work planning. In turn, it provides the direct input into short-term annual departmental operational plans and decision-making.

The initial step in the plan's development was to obtain an understanding of how Gainesville residents felt about their urban forest through a public survey, which received responses from a total of 739 residents. The results of the survey informed the work of the Public Committee on Urban Forestry Sustainability, which was comprised of 11 members representing a broad diversity of government, business, and neighborhood interests. Through a series of facilitated sessions, the Committee developed a consensus vision statement and series of goals for the plan.

Directors of all the City's departments then appointed members of the Internal Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) to work on drafting the technical components of the plan. The ITAC worked through a deliberate step-by-step review and edit process over the course of several months. Their work resulted in a detailed set of Gainesville-specific elements, objectives, and performance indicators for urban forest management that reflected the perspectives of each department. The final draft of these items was reviewed for comments by the Public Committee.

The performance indicators for each element were then evaluated to determine the present state of urban forest management in Gainesville. Alternatives for action were then developed that, if implemented, would be expected to incrementally move each performance indicator to the next highest level. These alternatives were specific actions, policies, or programs that could be initiated by the City of Gainesville. A total of 158 quantifiable alternatives for action were developed, reviewed, and edited by the ITAC. The ITAC then reached consensus on a subset of 46 alternatives for action chosen to guide the first five years of the plan's implementation. These actions and intended outcomes are to become part of the annual departmental operational plans and individual work plans.

Background:

On December 8, 2016, the General Policy Committee heard a presentation on recommendations by the Tree Ordinance Stakeholder Committee regarding proposed changes on uses of the tree mitigation fund. One of the recommendations was to fund the Urban Forest Ecological Analysis and Urban Forest Management Plan. The General Policy Committee approved funding from Wild Spaces/Public Spaces for the assessment and plan.

On October 12, 2017, the General Policy Committee heard a presentation by University of Florida researchers regarding the Urban Forest Ecological Assessment and next steps for the City of Gainesville's Urban Forest Management Plan. The General Policy Committee approved staff to work on contracting for the Urban Forest Management Plan. The Urban Forest Management Plan contract was approved in December 2018.

On June 13, 2019, the General Policy Committee heard a presentation on the progress of the Urban Forest Management Plan. At this time, the first steps of the management plan had been completed, including the public survey, establishment of the Public Committee on Urban Forest Sustainability, and development of a vision statement and goals for the management plan. Staff and University of Florida researchers presented the next steps of the plan, which were to form the ITAC and develop the key elements and objectives of the management plan based on the vision and goals developed by the Public Committee on Urban Forest Sustainability.

None.

The City Commission adopt the Urban Forest Management Plan as the strategic plan for management of the City of Gainesville's urban forest.