

**New York State Urban Forestry Council's
5-Year Strategic Plan
October, 2014**

In the Fall of 2014, the Council went through the process of developing a new 5-year strategic plan. The previous plan consisted of 33 tasks across our 4 goal areas. Board members were asked to review and rank these tasks and offer new ones. After extensive discussion, ranking, and analysis, the board selected a new set of 33 tasks that board member have both the interest and capacity to implement.

History: The New York State Urban Forestry Council is the largest urban forestry advocacy group in New York State. It was formed with the purpose of advising the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation on urban forestry issues, and operated informally for 7 years until formally organizing in 1999. The Council became fully operational as a NYS not-for-profit corporation in early 2000 with a 501 (c) 3 designation from the Internal Revenue Service. The final designation was received in Spring, 2004. The Council has a 40-member statewide Board of Directors which meets three times annually; and an 8 member Executive Committee which meets at least three times a year. The general membership of the Council is comprised of natural resource professionals, municipalities, non-profits, elected officials, grassroots organizations, large corporations, and dedicated community volunteers.

Vision: The New York State Urban Forestry Council envisions that every community in New York State will recognize the value of trees and maximize the use of trees to help improve the community's quality of life.

Mission: New York State’s Urban Forestry program is a partnership of public, private and volunteer organizations and individuals that foster comprehensive planning, management and education throughout New York to create a healthy urban forest and enhance quality of life.

Goal 1: Strengthen Board Structure and Membership. Attract public, private and volunteer organizations, and individuals to help promote the mission and vision of the Urban Forestry Council.

- A) Identify programs, groups, agencies and individuals with relevant interests and resources, in an effort to promote an interactive Urban Forestry network.

Task #1: Identify potential Council members and partners, with an emphasis on non-profit, government, and corporate memberships.

Task #2: Develop and implement sustainable membership incentives

Task #3: Explore new fund raising mechanisms, including potential corporate sponsorship(s), for the sake of maintaining fiscal resiliency.

Task #4: Expand benefactor platform to include category of “Friend” to accept donations and recognize donors

- B) Define the committee structure and update roles and

responsibilities of Council members, Board members and committees, on an annual basis.

Task #1: Require committees to develop work plans and provide reports at each Board meeting and for publication

Task #2: Publish committee reports and rosters in the newsletter and on the web page.

Task #3: Prepare annual reports for distribution to include membership list.

Task #4: Create a finance committee to regularly assist the treasurer and executive secretary; identify clear reporting methods when discussing council budgets

C) Increase general membership by a minimum of at least 30 members each year.

Task #1: Develop a membership database to analyze, enlist, maintain, and renew membership.

Task #2: Create a comprehensive membership marketing campaign that attracts and promotes diverse organizations, individuals and communities.

Task #3: Develop a Board recruitment strategy.

Goal 2: Identify and Promote the Benefits of Trees. Promote the appreciation and understanding of the environmental, economic and social benefits of trees in the urban environment.

- A) Advocate to decision-makers the urgent need to annually and continuously fund the platforms and programs of the Urban & Community Forestry Council throughout the state.

Task 1#: Develop appropriate materials for distribution to decisions makers and others on the benefits, value and need for urban forestry management.

Task #2: Identify individuals and means to advocate to decisions makers on the need to fund platforms and programs of urban forestry throughout the State.

Task #3: Arrange and participate in meetings with individuals identified in task #3 on an annual basis

Task #4: Arrange and participate in meetings with other organizations promoting New York State forests on an annual basis

- B) Develop a comprehensive and innovative marketing campaign, which highlights the benefits of urban, tree planning, planting and management.

Task #1: Develop and maintain an Urban Forestry Council website with links to other related sites.

Task #2: Merge the Council's website with Taking Root blog to streamline our online presence.

Task #3: Establish budgets to achieve Goals 2A and 2B

Goal 3: Provide Educational Tools. Advance Urban Forestry outreach, training and education.

- A) Provide relevant educational opportunities for urban forestry professionals, local governments, community members and interested individuals.

Task #1: Facilitate an annual statewide educational conference hosted by a different region of the state each year. Develop four-year regional rotation schedule of ReLeaf conference.

Task #2: Participate as speaker/exhibitor at major New York State industry related conference, shows and meetings at least two times per year (i.e. New York State Green Industry show, S.A.F. conferences, Conference of Mayors, Association of Towns, American Society of Landscape Architects and Highway Superintendents Association).

Task #3: Partner with cooperative extensions and educational institutions on webinars

Task #4: Educate and encourage communities in obtaining National Arbor Day Foundation Tree City USA status

- B) Develop a comprehensive strategy using various communication networks to disseminate timely urban forestry information and resources.

Task #1: Encourage regional ReLeaf committees to

offer local educational opportunities such as workshops, conferences, demonstrations, etc.

Task #2: Engage membership with weekly Taking Root blog posts and monthly online newsletter

- C) Provide outreach to primary and secondary educators in an effort to increase student awareness of the importance of trees to their community and lives.

Task #1: Promote and disseminate use of the Council's Arbor Day curriculum guide well in advance of Arbor Day.

Goal 4: Provide Planning and Management Tools. Promote and support comprehensive Urban Forestry planning and the application of industry Best Management Practices and current research.

- A) Encourage 'all' NYS communities to engage in urban forestry management planning through the use of current, applicable industry Best Management Practices.

Task #1: Have a Best Management Practice topic presented at each annual meeting.

- B) Assist in identifying technical, economic and other resources to facilitate the development and

implementation of forestry master and management plans.

Task #1: Place all relevant technical resources on the Council's website and include resources in the newsletter.

Task #2: Identify potential sources of funding and support for urban forestry planning on website and in the newsletter.

Task #3: Assist with community notification of available grant opportunities and application procedures.

Task #4: Post a sample urban forestry master and management plan on the Council's website.

Task #5: Re-survey communities in year three to determine change in planning.

C) Provide a forum for current Urban Forestry research dissemination.

Task #1: Have at least one technical/research session each year at the annual conference meeting.

Task #2: Invite at least one new technical speaker to the annual meeting to present new technical/research information.

Task #3: Include technical information in newsletter and advertise regional technical workshops in a timely

manner.