

Tampa Urban Forest Management Plan

USING CRITERIA AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Criteria and indicators for sustainable urban forest management were developed to provide the City of Tampa with a framework for defining sustainable urban forest management and assessing progress toward this goal.

Criteria define essential elements against which sustainability of urban forest management is judged, with due consideration paid to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural roles of the urban forests and remnant forest ecosystems. Each criterion is defined by indicators, which are to be monitored periodically.

Criteria and indicators are tools to help identify trends in the City's urban forest and the effects of urban forest management activities over time, and to facilitate decision making in the City's urban forest policy processes. The ultimate aim of this tool is to promote improved urban forest management practices over time, and to further the development of a healthier and more productive urban forest.

Criteria are envisioned as a large-scale reflection of public values- the big picture that stakeholders want to see on the City of Tampa's Urban Forest. Resource Management Approach performance indicators provide the means for measuring how well management is proceeding in sustaining or enhancing these urban forest conditions and for tracking subsequent changes. The Vegetation Resource indicators are intended to be flexible elements of urban forest resource monitoring which can be adjusted to provide the most accurate assessment of changing environment. The Community and Institutional Framework performance indicators assess changing economic and social conditions critical to urban forest sustainability.

The criteria and indicators are tied to the 5-year cycle of urban forest assessment and provide a source of reference information for legislators, other policy makers, resource managers, and concerned citizens. This information will present a comprehensive overview of the City of Tampa's Urban Forest, its urban forestry program and provide common information for further analysis and discussion about the sustainable use of the City's urban forests for present and future generations. In addition, the criteria and indicators identify shortfalls in resource data and other areas that must be addressed before we can assure the sustainability of the City's urban forest resources.

The criteria and indicators allow the City of Tampa the assessment capability to use an adaptive approach to urban forestry, and promote flexible decision making. Careful monitoring of the indicators will help the administration adjust policies or operations as part of an iterative learning process leading to more effective decisions and enhanced benefits, while reducing tensions among stakeholders.