

Interactive Urban Forest Map Tool

Tuesday, 12 April 2022

Council

Strategic Alignment - Environmental Leadership

Public

Program Contact:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting on 14 December 2021, Council requested a report on the partial or full replication of the City of Melbourne's Urban Forest Visual Map tool that allows members of the public to view and comment on every tree within the Map.

This report provides information on the City of Melbourne's (CoM) Urban Forest Visual Map and a selection of comparable urban forest visualisation tools used by South Australian local government areas.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes that a subsequent report on the establishment and operating costs for delivering an Interactive Urban Forest Map Tool for the City of Adelaide is brought back to Council by August 2022 for decision.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2020-2024 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Environmental Leadership 4.5 Enhance biodiversity in the Park Lands and connect our community to nature.</p> <p>Strategic Alignment – Enabling Priorities 5.1 Review and improve the way we collect and present data and insights with the community.</p>
Policy	<p>Climate Change Risk Adaptation Action Plan 2021-2026 Action 4.6 Complete a full audit of trees and species planted in the public spaces within the City and its Park Lands (to be completed by June 2023)</p>
Consultation	The City of Melbourne, the City of West Torrens, the Town of Walkerville and the City of Burnside provided information that informed this report.
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	There is an opportunity to improve City of Adelaide tree asset data, tree asset management, customer service and our community's connection with nature.
21/22 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 22/23 Budget Allocation	The draft 2022/2023 budget includes \$125,000 for a street and Park Lands tree audit and verification which can inform the approach to an Interactive Urban Forest Map Tool for the City of Adelaide.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
21/22 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

1. The City of Melbourne (CoM) Urban Forest Visual Map (Map) (melbourneurbanforestvisual.com.au) was launched in 2013 primarily as an educational tool and community reporting mechanism for tree management.
2. The CoM approach presents individual tree data on an interactive online map that is simple and easy to read, with individual tree data limited to:
 - 2.1. Tree Genus
 - 2.2. Common Name
 - 2.3. Tree Age Description
 - 2.4. Tree Asset ID.
3. The CoM approach provides an option for the community to email an individual tree. CoM staff estimate receiving and responding to ten emails a week. Tree emails are managed outside of the customer request system.
4. The CoM maintain the Map as an open data source which is updated every six months. The data is managed separately from the CoM's asset management system.
5. Several South Australian councils have similar visual interfaces on their websites that allows the community to obtain information about trees within their local government area.
6. Preliminary consultation with the administration at the CoM, and the City of West Torrens, Town of Walkerville and City of Burnside, has provided valuable information on concepts that could be applied for a similar outcome at the City of Adelaide (CoA).
7. The City of Marion has prepared a publicly available case study that also speaks to the benefits of an interactive visualisation tool.
8. The existing approaches are generally based on an educational-promotional visualisation tool to improve the community's connection with trees.
9. A natural evolution of these visualisation tools could be integration with customer service and asset management systems.
10. There is benefit in CoA in pursuing a visualisation tool that not only provides educational-promotional benefit but also facilitates improved management of customer requests and Council assets. This approach is more akin to the tools being used in South Australia rather than the City of Melbourne.
11. Key considerations for the CoA in delivering an interactive urban forest map tool include our asset database, reliability of existing data, and a spatial system and/or platform for the public to view the information:
 - 11.1. **Asset database** - we currently use an Asset Management System (AMS), Assetic, to record tree assets and their characteristics. An Assetic Mobile Solution (AM2) is currently out for tender and is scheduled for implementation by December 2022 to assist in field use and updating of Assetic in real time.
 - 11.2. **Reliability of existing data** - we currently have approximately 90% and 70% confidence in relation to CoA's street tree and Park Lands tree data respectively. Partial or full implementation of a visual mapping tool would be dependent on data availability and reliability.
 - 11.3. **Spatial system and/or platform** – initial investigations demonstrate that a fit for purpose tool for CoA may be available through existing CoA software capabilities or alternatively through a proprietary product (similar to other South Australian councils).
12. Several councils within the Resilient East partnership area, which comprises the Campbelltown City Council, Town of Walkerville, Cities of Adelaide, Burnside, Norwood, Payneham and St Peters, Prospect, Tea Tree Gully and Unley and the Government of South Australia, Green Adelaide, have implemented interactive visualisation tools for tree data. It would therefore be logical to explore opportunities for a regional approach as part of any next stage of investigation.
13. Next steps toward an Interactive Urban Forest Map Tool for the CoA could include:
 - 13.1. Audit of existing tree assets
 - 13.2. Verify and update CoA tree asset database
 - 13.3. Evaluate CoA existing information management system solutions and proprietary product options

- 13.4. Consult with councils in the Resilient East partnership area
 - 13.5. Identify an appropriate model and associated establishment and operating costs for delivering an Interactive Urban Forest Map Tool for the CoA
 - 13.6. Investigate creative options for the community to engage with trees such as tree naming, communicating with the trees and linking with social media
 - 13.7. Seek budget funding to support establishment and ongoing maintenance of the system.
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ATTACHMENTS

Nil

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