



# Ann Arbor's Urban Forestry Program





# Purpose of Our Meeting

- Discuss the City's recent tree trimming and removal activities in the area
- Report on upcoming tree planting plans
- Discuss the development of the urban forestry management plan





# Presentation Topics

- Ann Arbor's Urban Forest
- Virginia Park Neighborhood
- A Brief History of the Urban Forestry Program
- What's Changed in the last 5 years?
- Current Practices
- Resident Questions



# Ann Arbor's Urban Forest

The City manages...

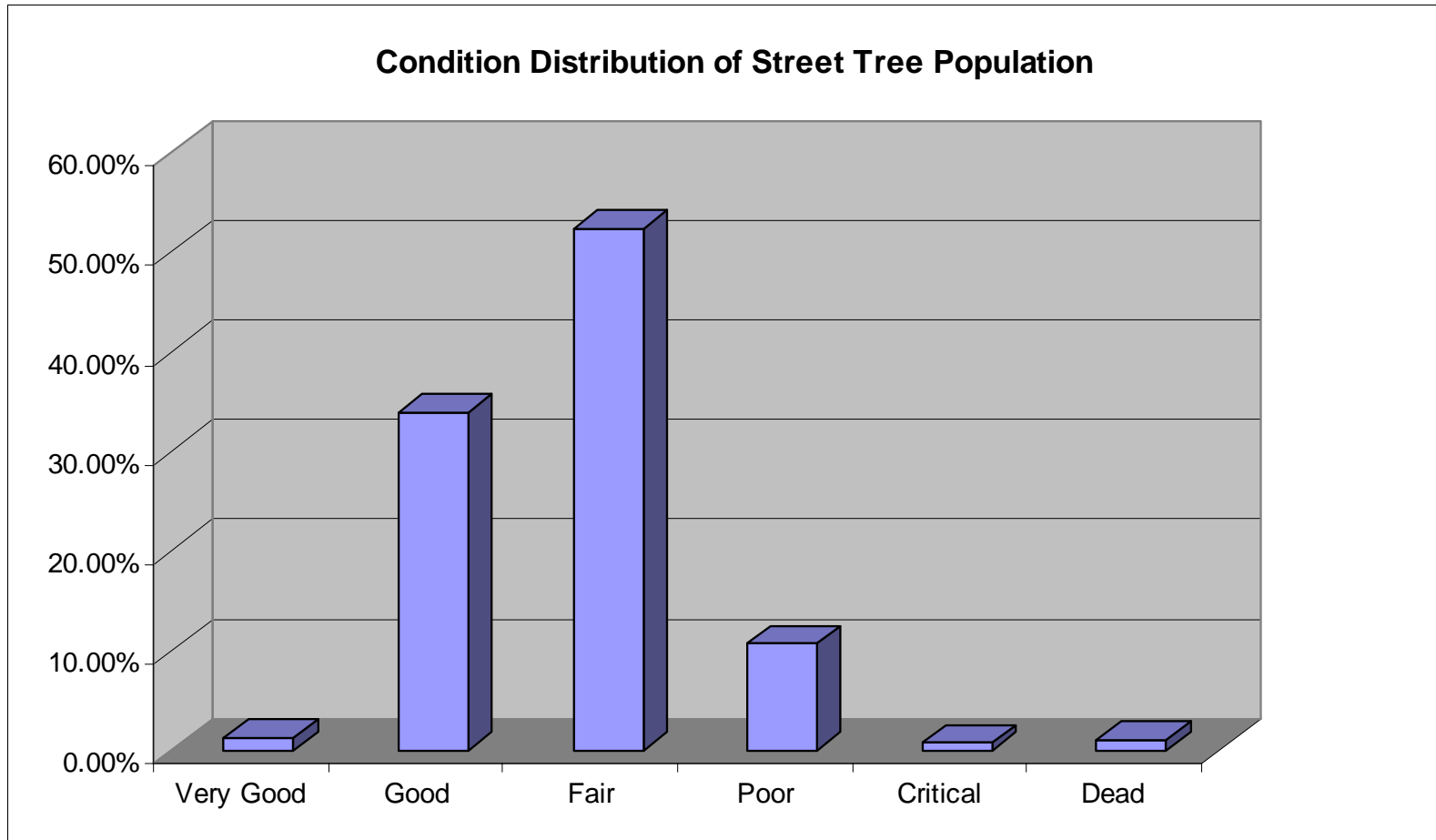
- ❖ 40,749 street trees
- ❖ 6,610 park trees (in mowed areas)
- ❖ 8,853 potential tree planting sites along streets

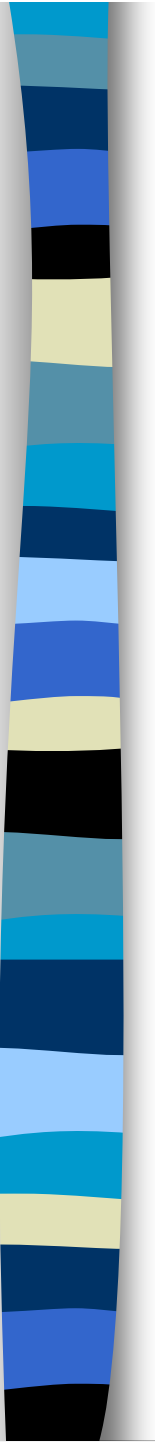
- There are 176 species representing 57 genera
- The genus Acer (Maple) comprises 38.22% of the total street and park tree population



# Ann Arbor's Urban Forest

Condition Distribution of Street Tree Population





*The City strives to maintain a healthy,  
vibrant urban forest canopy through  
proper tree maintenance and  
planting*



# Virginia Park Neighborhood Tree Maintenance Activities

- ❖ Trees along Virginia Ave. were pruned by the City in advance of road resurfacing this summer. In the process of this work Forestry Staff evaluated each tree and pruned or removed them, as needed. The trees were pruned higher than normal to accommodate the large resurfacing equipment.
- ❖ While in the neighborhood Forestry also addressed resident generated service requests. Several trees were requested to be removed (along Virginia, Charlton and Fair) and upon evaluation Forestry staff concurred, and the trees were removed.





# Virginia Park Neighborhood Tree Maintenance Activities

- The trees in the neighborhood are primarily Norway, Sugar and Silver Maples
- The Norway Maple trees are of particular concern
  - ❖ Planted at approximately the same time
  - ❖ Inferior cultivar- small crowns for the age of the tree, weak wood





## Virginia Park Neighborhood Tree Maintenance Activities

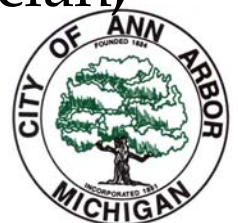
- Over the past four years, due to the Emerald Ash Borer, the City has not done any routine pruning or maintenance of the street trees
- This was the first time in at least 5 years that the trees in the neighborhood had been pruned and the tree health evaluated.





## Brief History of the City's Urban Forestry Program

- Street and Park Tree Population in 2002 was approximately 57,000
- Pruning and Removal needs were identified by several sources:
  - ❖ Resident requests
  - ❖ Staff surveys of areas in response to an epidemic (i.e. EAB, Dutch Elm Disease)
  - ❖ City Staff- field arborists, forestry technician, city forester





## Brief History of the City's Urban Forestry Program

- The City removed about 1000 street trees per year prior to EAB or approximately 2% of the street tree population
- City conducted area pruning on a 10 year cycle.
  - ❖ Clearance pruning (over sidewalks & roads), corrective pruning and removal of deadwood.
  - ❖ Work accomplished by Contractors



# What has changed in the last 5 years?

## ■ Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

- ❖ EAB was discovered in Michigan in 2002 and the City began systematic ash removals in 2005.
- ❖ The removal of ash trees consumed the City's Forestry staff and budget until 2008
- ❖ All routine pruning and maintenance was put on hold while the more pressing issue of removing the dead and dying ash trees was completed



# What has changed in the last 5 years?

## ■ Sidewalk Program

- ❖ The City has been involved in a systematic sidewalk program striving to make the system more accessible to all users
- ❖ The City inspects sidewalks using criteria developed by the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.
- ❖ Per City Code homeowners are required to repair or replace sidewalk that do not meet the criteria.
- ❖ In some instances tree roots have caused the sidewalk damage



# What has changed in the last 5 years?

## ■ Arboricultural Practices

- ❖ Arboriculture is a science. Practices are continuously changing as research finds new, innovative and effective ways of caring for trees. Some practices that were commonly used in the past have been proven to be arboriculturally unsound.

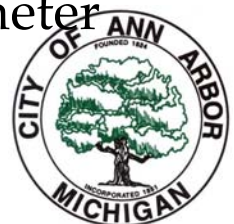


# What has changed in the last 5 years?

## Root Pruning Practices

❖ Research indicates that some prior root pruning practices may have a detrimental effect on trees. What we have learned from research in the last 5 years...

- Mature trees are less tolerant of root pruning than young trees
- Root shaving can lead to decay and death of the root
- Trees on windy sites are less tolerant than those on sheltered sites
- Trees in fair or poor health are not good candidates for root pruning
- Root pruning should occur as far from the trunk as possible (rule of thumb: cut at least 3 times the diameter of the trunk away from the tree)



# What has changed in the last 10 years?

## ■ Staffing

### ❖ 1999 Staffing Levels

- 15 Full Time Employees
  - Including City Forester, Forestry Technician, Forestry Supervisor, Horticulturalist
- Up to 10 Temporary/Seasonal employees
  - 3 Equipment operators, 3 forestry workers
  - 2 interns for Field Investigations
  - 2 Horticulture workers

### ❖ 2009 Staffing Levels

- 12 Full Time Employees
  - Including Forestry Field Operations Supervisor
- 6 Temporary/Seasonal
  - 3 interns for tree watering
  - 3 Forestry workers



# Current Practices

## The City strives to manage trees like other city assets

- ❖ The City manages trees for health, structure and safety
- ❖ Urban forestry and natural resource planning coordinator was hired by the City in 2008 to coordinate the development of the City's urban forestry management plan, policies and ordinances
  - The first step in developing the management plan was the completion of a new GIS based street and park tree inventory



# Current Practices

**Pruning and Removal needs are identified by several sources:**

- ❖ Customer driven (service requests by residents)
  - The City has a backlog of service requests and tree work due to EAB
- ❖ Trees identified by staff in need of attention
- ❖ Preparation for upcoming construction activities
- ❖ Emergency work/Storm Damage
- ❖ Priority removals and pruning identified in the recently completed tree inventory



# Current Practices

- How is a tree evaluated for removal or pruning needs?
  - ❖ Field Investigation by City Staff
    - Staff examine the tree while answering a series of questions including:
      - What is the location?
      - What species is it? Does the species have a history of failure?
      - Are there large dead branches?
      - Does the tree have cavities or rotten wood on trunk or major branches?
      - Are mushrooms present at base, on trunk or branches?
      - Cracks or splits in trunks or at branch attachments?
      - Have branches recently fallen?
      - Have the roots been damaged by construction activities?
      - What is the size, shape and color of the leaves?
      - How full is the canopy?
      - Discussion with resident



# Current Practices

- Based on the evaluation and discussion with other forestry staff a decision is made on the action that will be taken.
- The resident adjacent to the tree is notified of the decision and if necessary, work is scheduled.



# Current Practices

## ■ Trees and Sidewalks

- ❖ The City looks at all possible options when a root/sidewalk conflict occurs
  - Ramping
  - Going around the tree
  - Utilizing rubber sidewalks
  - Root pruning
  - Sidewalk Lifting

As a last resort, if none of these activities are feasible or it will compromise the health and/or safety of the tree, the tree is removed.



QUESTIONS?





# Contact Information

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**THANK YOU!**

