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Councillor Peter Milczyn, Chair  
Planning and Growth Committee

## **PG 23.7 Toronto's Strategic Forest Management Plan**

### **Summary:**

The City of Toronto has been called “a city within a park” in recognition of our parks, trees and natural areas. However, there are threats to our natural environment that must be addressed and managed if the urban forest is to continue to provide benefits to society. Many factors can have a lasting impact which can influence the growth and development of the urban forest.

As stated in the City's Official Plan, protecting the natural environment and urban forest should not be compromised by growth, insensitivity to the needs of the environment or neglect.

A liveable city includes elements of the natural environment, such as trees, parks, ravines and recreational areas, and clean air, soil and water that support the physical and mental well-being of the people that live and work in the city. Toronto has approximately 18,000 hectares of urban forest canopy cover and approximately 10.2 million trees.

The urban forest has an estimated structural value of \$7 billion and provides over \$28.2 million in ecological services each year. The urban forest stores 1.1 million metric tonnes of carbon annually and Toronto's trees are estimated to reduce energy use from heating and cooling of residential buildings by \$9.7 million per year. Trees also provide an additional \$483,000 in value per year by reducing the amount of carbon emissions released by fossil-fuel based power plants. Toronto's trees intercept air pollutants equivalent to \$16.9 million per year.

With only 52 off-leash dog parks and approximately 11 more proposed, the city's dogs may not have sufficient space to roam free as urbanization continues to cause damage to the natural environment. Some of the harmful impacts of dogs on the urban trees include social compaction from overuse, damaging effects of urine. The pre-mature deaths of urban trees come at a tremendous cost to the city and the development industry as dead trees will need to be replanted and replaced. It would be advisable for the City of Toronto to encourage developers to provide onsite pet care facilities to address the above concerns and to balance urbanization impacts and the efforts to bring sustainability to the urban forest.

**Recommendation:**

"Planning and Growth Management Committee direct the Director of Urban Design and Chief Planner and Executive Director of the City Planning Division to report back to the Committee by June, 2013 with recommendations to promote the creation of onsite pet care facilities (ie. dog-runs) in all new mid-rise and tall building developments."

Respectfully submitted,

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