

Urban & Community Forestry in Michigan:

Results of the 2010 municipal survey



**Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Urban & Community Forestry Program**



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Results of the 2010 Municipal Forestry Survey

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Acknowledgements:

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For more information, please contact:

Kevin Sayers, UCF Program Coordinator
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 30452
Lansing Michigan 48909
(517) 241-4632
sayersk@mi.gov
www.mi.gov/ucf

Executive Summary

In 2010, the Michigan DNR's UCF program completed its second municipal forestry survey. 336 municipalities were anonymously surveyed using an online survey containing 40 questions related to local management of public trees. The survey was open for approximately 1 month and results were analyzed and completed in 2011.

Michigan's population of nearly 10 million ranks it 8th nationally. Approximately 80% of the citizens reside in census defined "urban" areas which are distributed among 1,776 local units of government (i.e. city, village, township). Further, nearly 60% of the population resides in 10 contiguous counties in southeastern Michigan, which includes the state's largest city, Detroit. Municipal populations range from less than 20 to nearly 800,000. 1,472 (82%) are designated as small (pop. < 5,000), 245 (13%) are medium (pop. 5,000-25,000) and 62 (3%) are large (pop. > 25,000).

Of the 336 municipalities surveyed, 89 completed the survey for a response rate of 26% representing approximately 30% (2.8 M) of the state's population.

Listed below are some selected highlights from this survey. A more detailed analysis is provided at the end of this report.

- 85% of responding communities had a population of less than 50,000
- 78% reported having a municipal tree ordinance
- 40% reported having a designated tree advisory group
- 40% reported having a formal, resource-based urban forest management plan
- 71% reported annual tree care budgets of less than \$50,000 with 74% reporting a reduction in the past year
- Personnel/staffing is considered to be the most critical, un/underfunded need for municipalities
- The majority of respondents do not employ a staff person with any level of ISA credential
- Political/social issues (69%) are perceived to be a greater threat to long-term program sustainability than physical/environmental issues (31%)
- The use of volunteers (17%) and/or nonprofit (15%) partnerships continues to be negligible
- 91% reported the DNR's UCF program provides relevant, needed assistance to local programs
- Financial & technical aid are the most important types of assistance provided by the DNR, UCF
- 57% reported having an official, annual, Arbor Day celebration
- Promoting positive community image was considered the greatest motivator for becoming a Tree City USA. The \$2 per capita budget requirement was considered the greatest barrier.
- 55% believe local citizens support the use of taxpayer funds for public tree care & management.

The challenge for the DNR's UCF program is to engage communities and individuals and inform and motivate them to actions that will create sustainable local municipal forestry programs.

The information derived from this and previous surveys will aid the state program manager by establishing a baseline of information and identifying trends in progress towards achieving these goals. The next steps will be to interpret this information and use it to improve delivery of program assistance and build awareness, support and capacity for urban tree care at the local level for the betterment of urban and community forests throughout the state.

Introduction

The mission of the DNR's UCF program is to help citizens improve their quality of life by promoting community awareness, investment and support for local urban forest management. The DNR provides technical, financial, and educational assistance to help municipalities capitalize on the economic, environmental, and social benefits that trees provide.

Since 1992, when the DNR's UCF program was established in partnership, and with funding support from the USDA Forest Service, the DNR has designated a single staff member to work with communities and provide a wide array of urban forestry and arboriculture advice and services. Since then, thousands of technical, financial, and educational assistance interactions have been provided to Michigan's communities, schools, nonprofit organizations, other public agencies and individuals.

Through 2011, over \$7.5 million in 2,392 cost-share project grants have been awarded by the DNR, leveraging a local match of more than \$10 million and planting 276,573 trees.

As part of an on-going effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the state program delivery, periodic program reviews, assessments and strategic planning efforts are conducted. This report summarizes one such effort, the second survey of Michigan municipalities since 2005. The information derived will help the DNR UCF program manager to gain insight into the opinions and perceptions of elected officials and municipal staff that are actively responsible for urban forestry decision making at the local level.

Some specific purposes for conducting this survey include:

- assessing the status of local municipal forestry programs
- identifying the relevance of the DNR's UCF program to local community needs
- determining appropriate delivery systems for providing urban forestry services
- establishing and monitoring trend data to help guide future statewide program direction.

Methodology

This survey followed the same format as the previous one conducted in 2005. For approximately 1 month (September 1 – October 7, 2010), 40 questions were presented to 336 municipal contacts via an online survey (www.surveymonkey.com). Questions covered a broad variety of topics including demographics, technical, training, financial data and opinion questions among others. The complete survey question set is provided in the *Appendix* at the end of this report. A hardcopy survey option was available for respondents, though none were requested.

The survey recipient list was generated using the DNR UCF program email list specifically focused on a single contact for each listed municipality. This contact was the individual most responsible for tree-related issues in the municipality. Of Michigan's 1,776 local units of government, 336 (18%) were surveyed. 89 responses yielded an overall response rate of 26%.

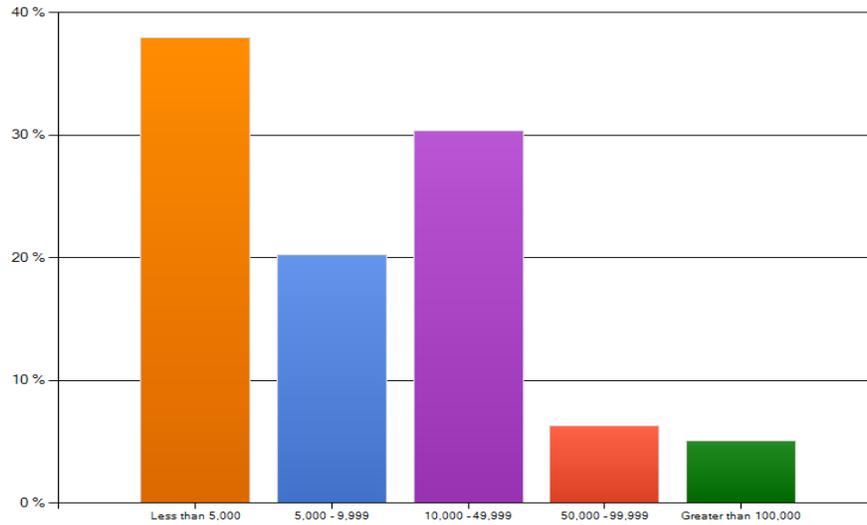
The following definition set the context for the questions and helped guide respondent answers:

For purposes of this survey, the phrase "Municipal Forestry Program" refers to activities conducted by the municipality (or its contractors) in the management of trees on public property. Specifically, this may include planting, maintenance and removal of trees along streets, parks and other municipal properties

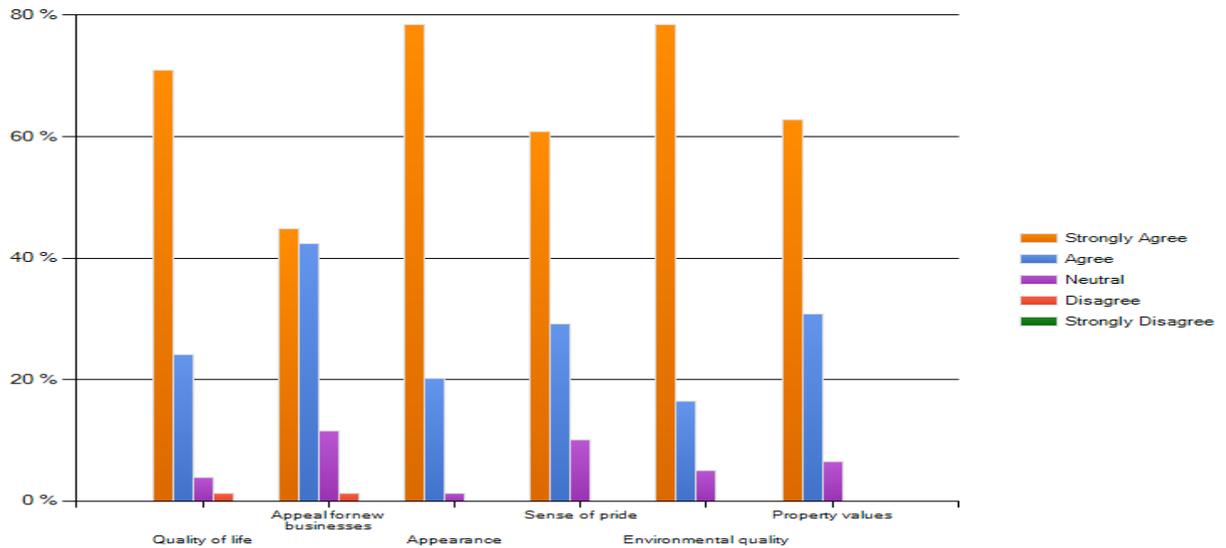
Summarized Survey Results

General Questions:

1) What is the Population of your municipality?

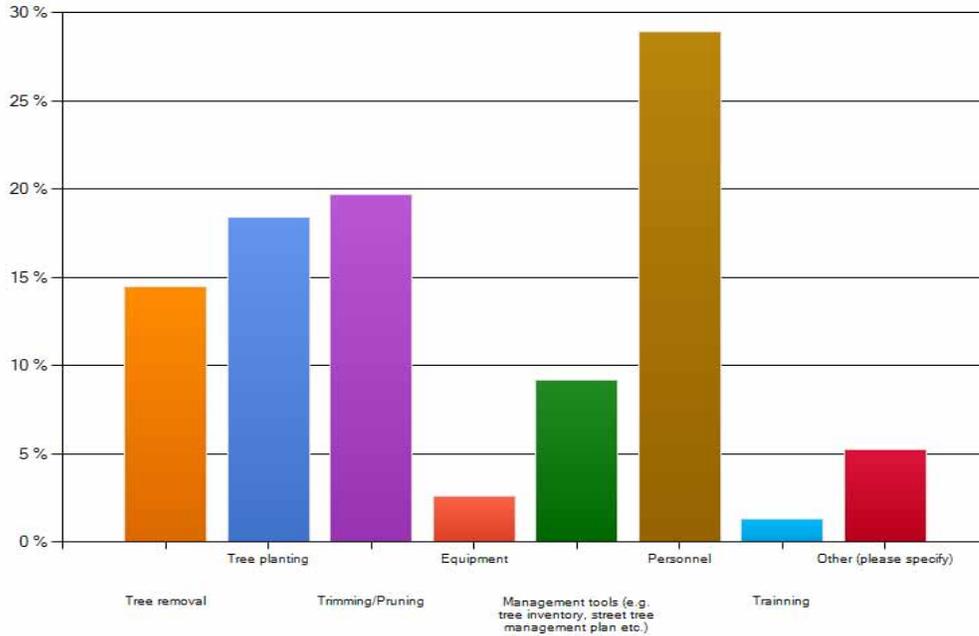


2) **OPINION:** "Properly planted and maintained public trees improve/enhance your community's..."

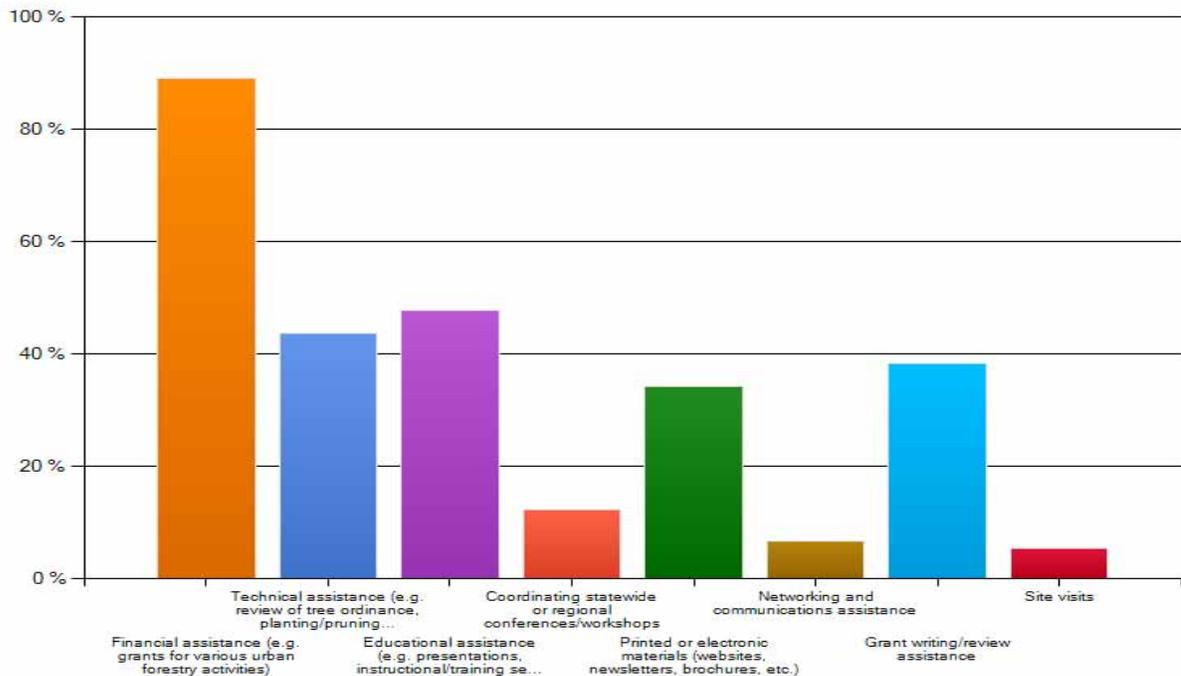


Assistance:

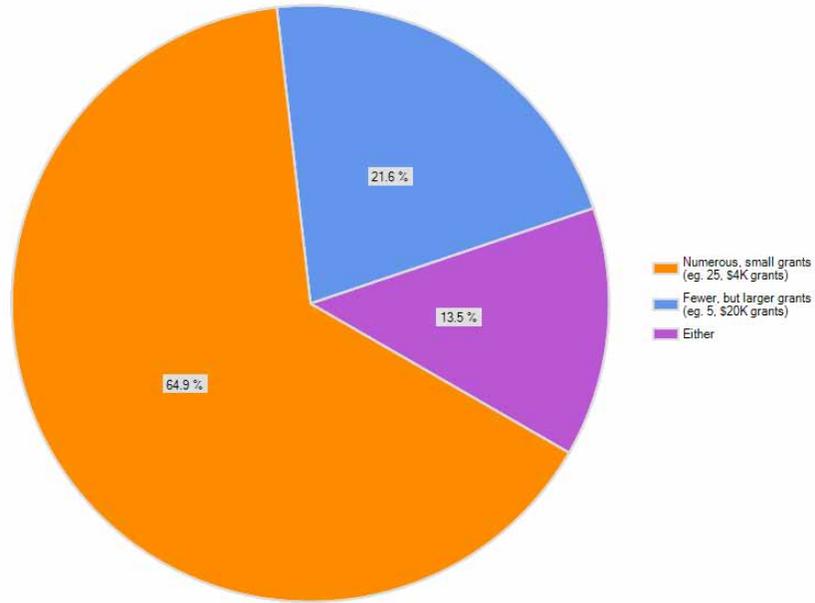
**3) What is currently the most critical un/underfunded need of your municipal forestry program?
(Choose only one)**



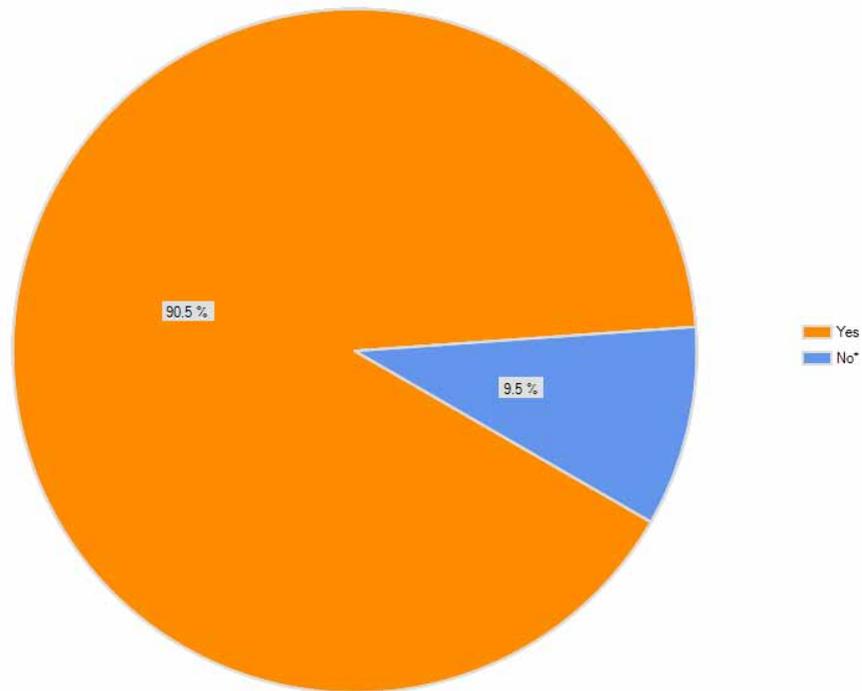
4) Of the following forms of assistance available from the DNR's UCF program please select the THREE most important to your municipality? (any order)



5) The DNR's UCF program is considering changing how it awards competitive grants. Specifically, shifting from awarding numerous, small grants to awarding fewer, but larger grants. Please indicate which you would prefer.

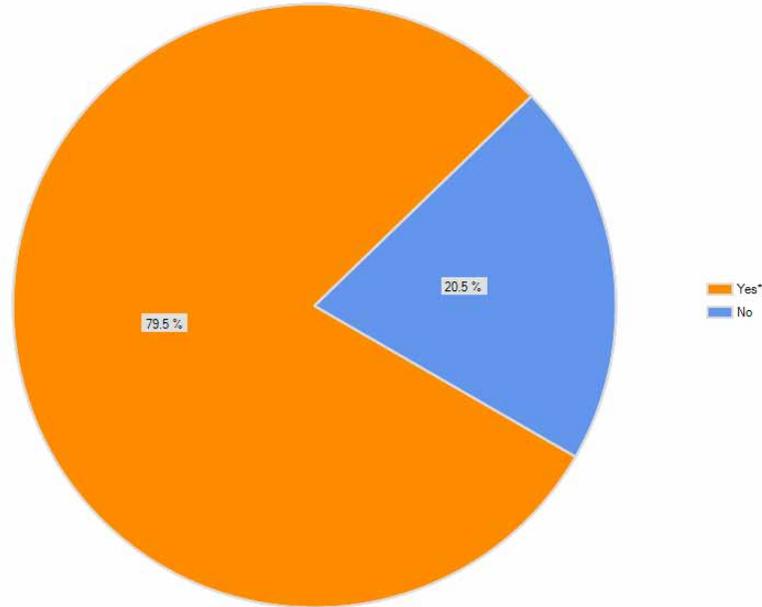


6) **OPINION:** Does the DNR's UCF program provide relevant assistance and information that is useful to you and your program?

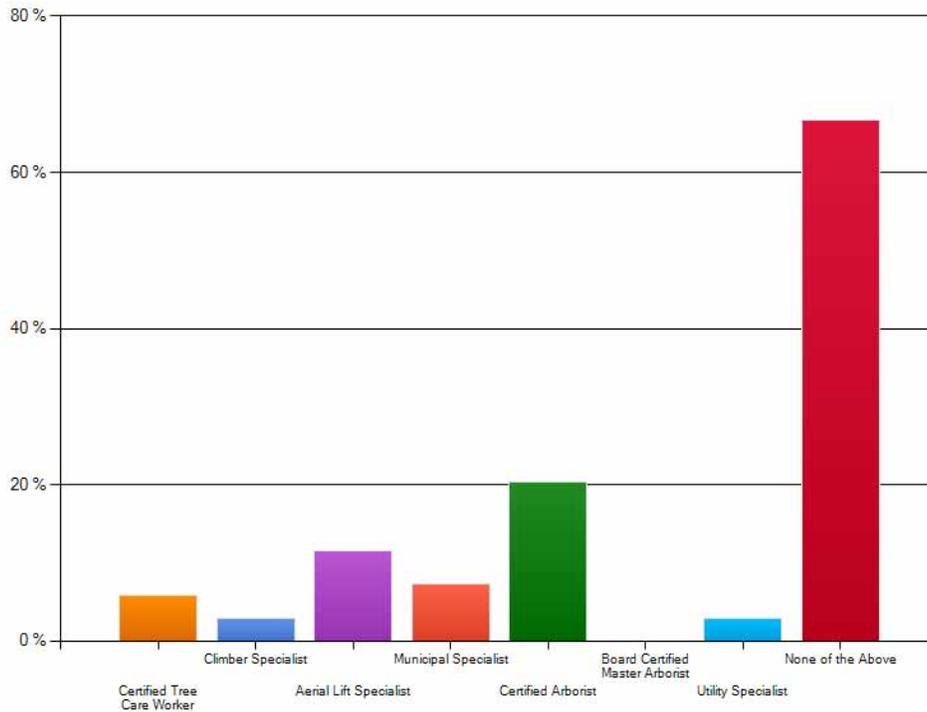


Personnel:

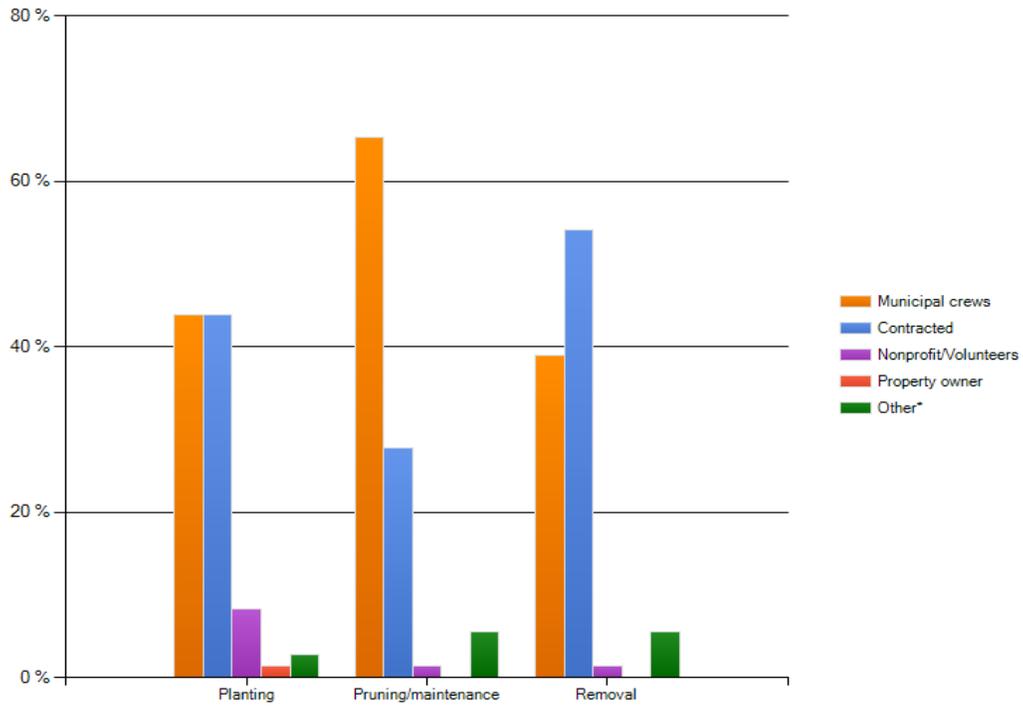
7) Does your municipality have a designated individual/department to handle "public tree" issues?



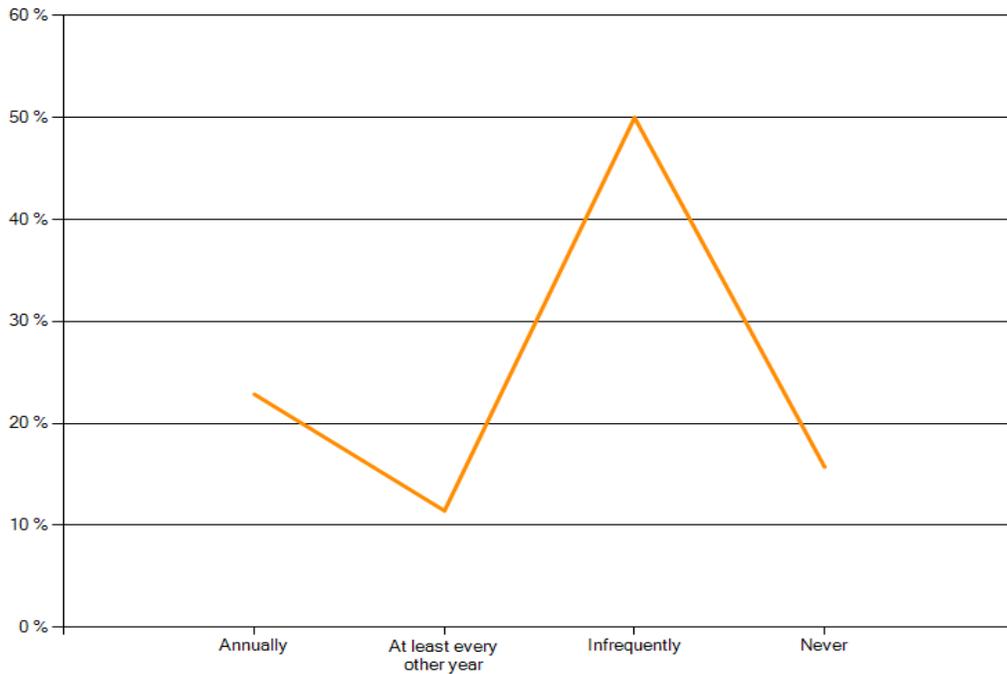
8) Does your municipality employ any of the following arborist classifications as defined by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). (Check all that apply)



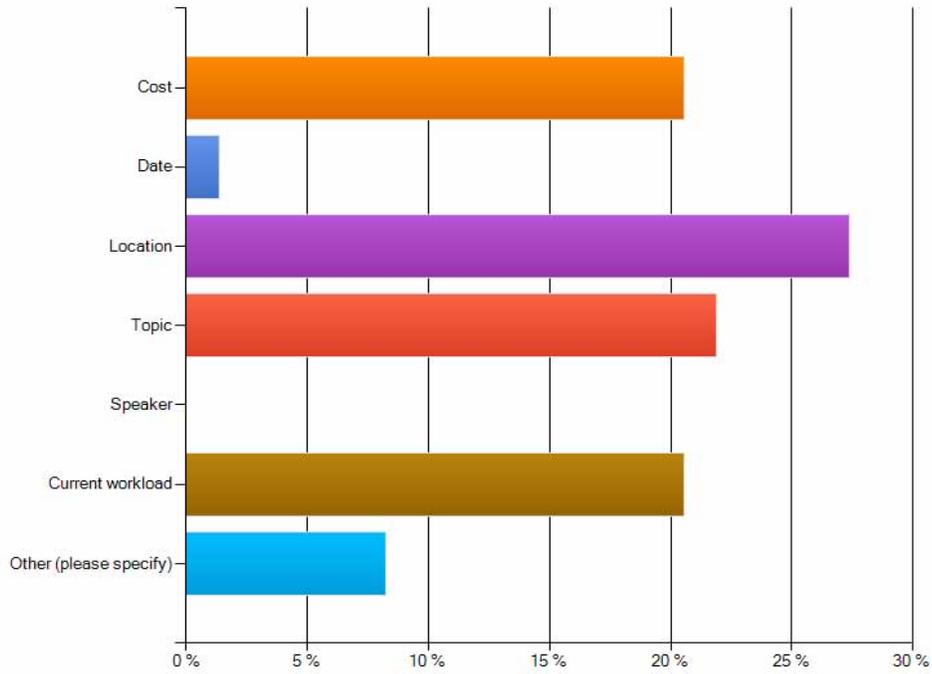
9) For each of the following categories, indicate who is PRIMARILY responsible for each?



10) How often do you or other staff attend tree care/management related training or education events?

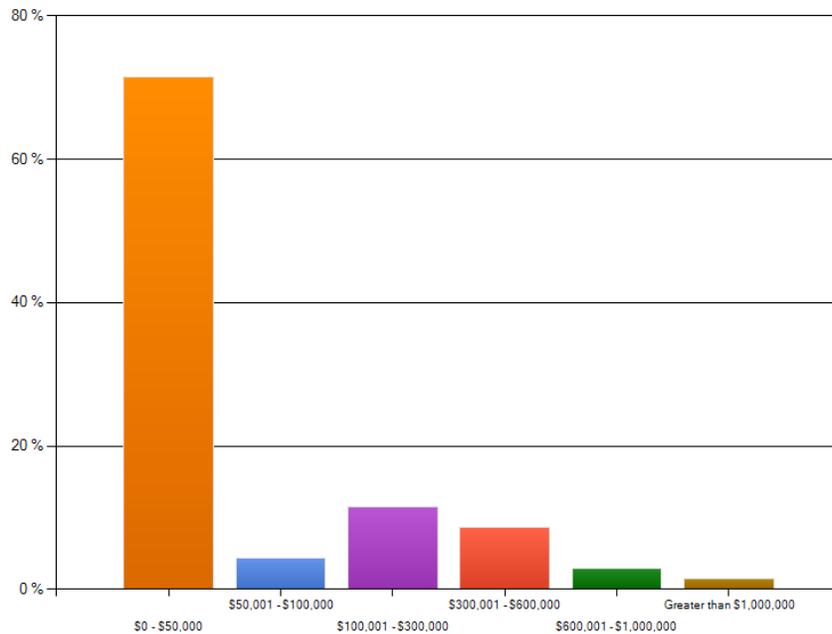


11) **OPINION:** What is the **MOST IMPORTANT** factor in determining whether you (or staff) attend tree related training/education events (Check only one).

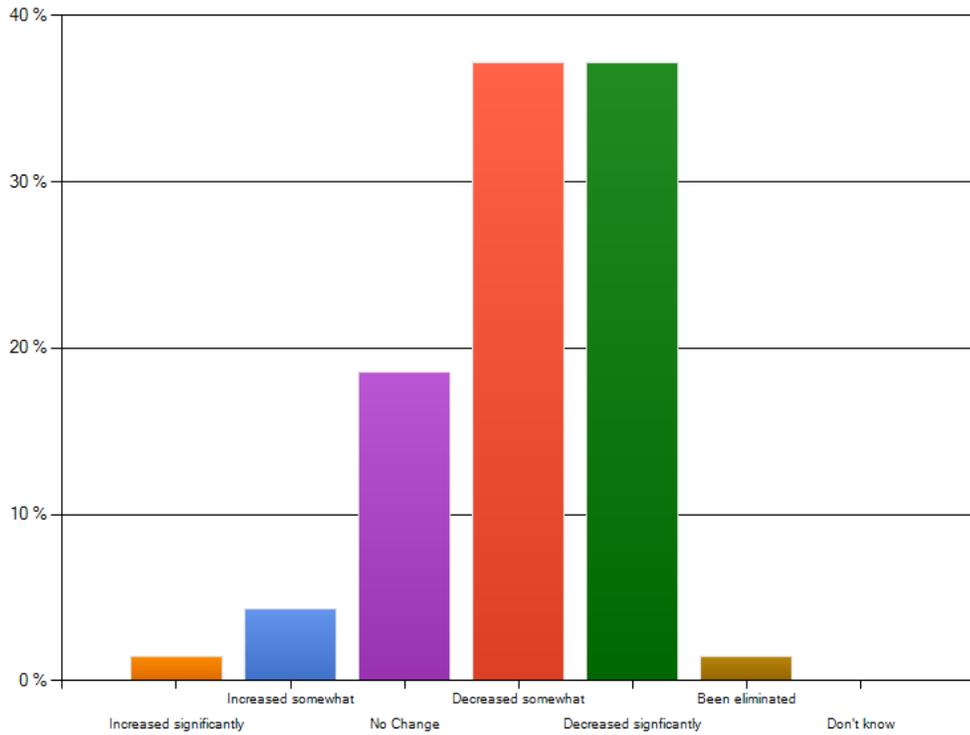


Budget:

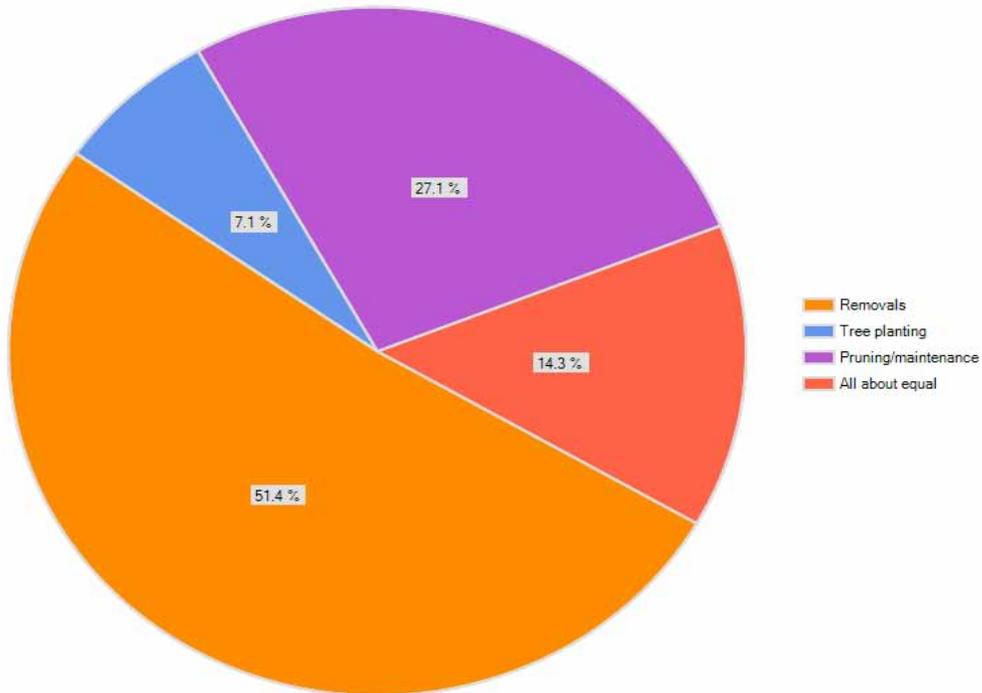
12) Please estimate your most current annual budget for ALL municipal forestry program activities and expenses.



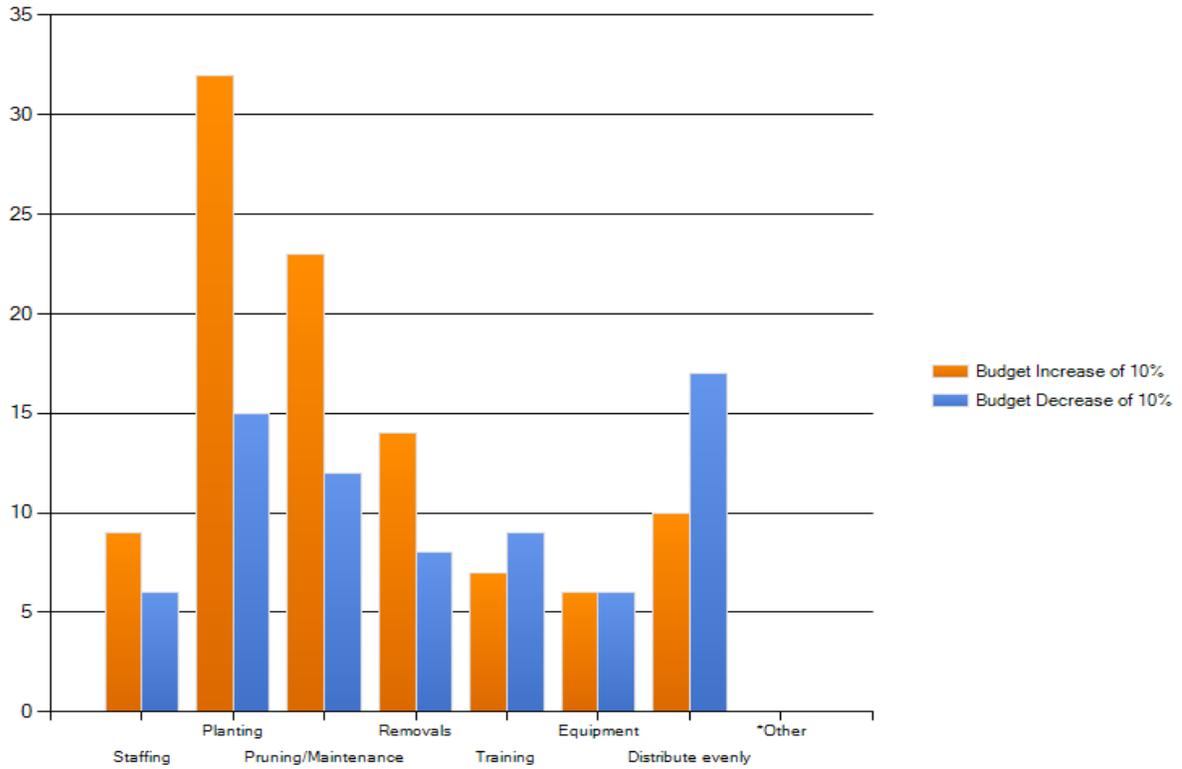
13) How has your budget changed in the past year?



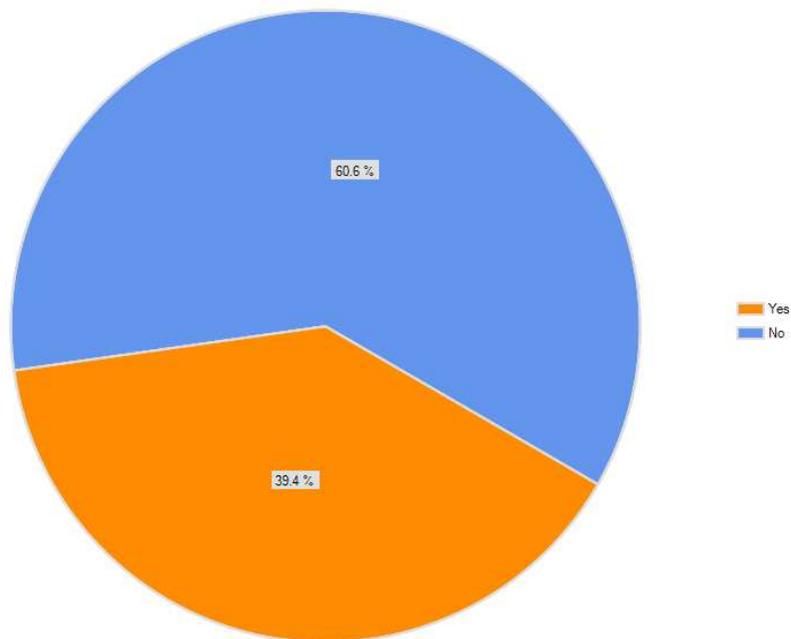
14) Of the following categories, which makes up the largest percentage of your budget in an average year?



15) If your program budget increased/decreased by 10% for 1 year, where would you increase/decrease spending FIRST?

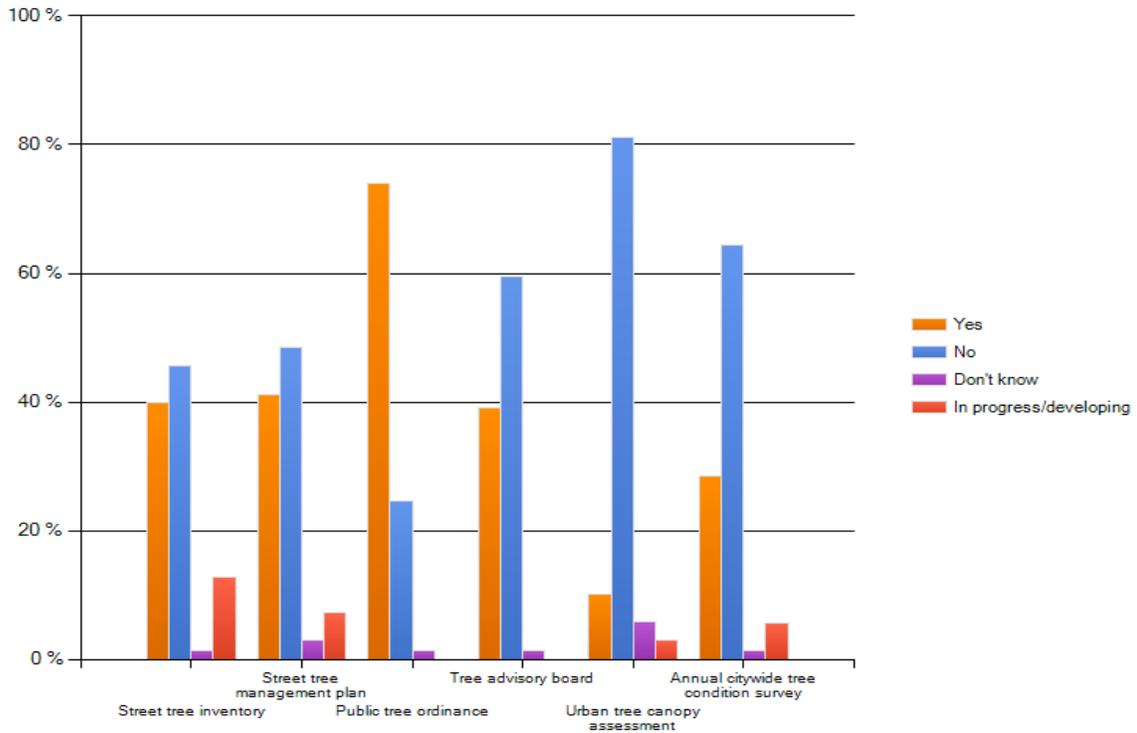


16) **OPINION:** Within the next 3 years, do you believe your municipality will shift more of its forestry operations to outside contractors in an attempt to find budgetary savings?

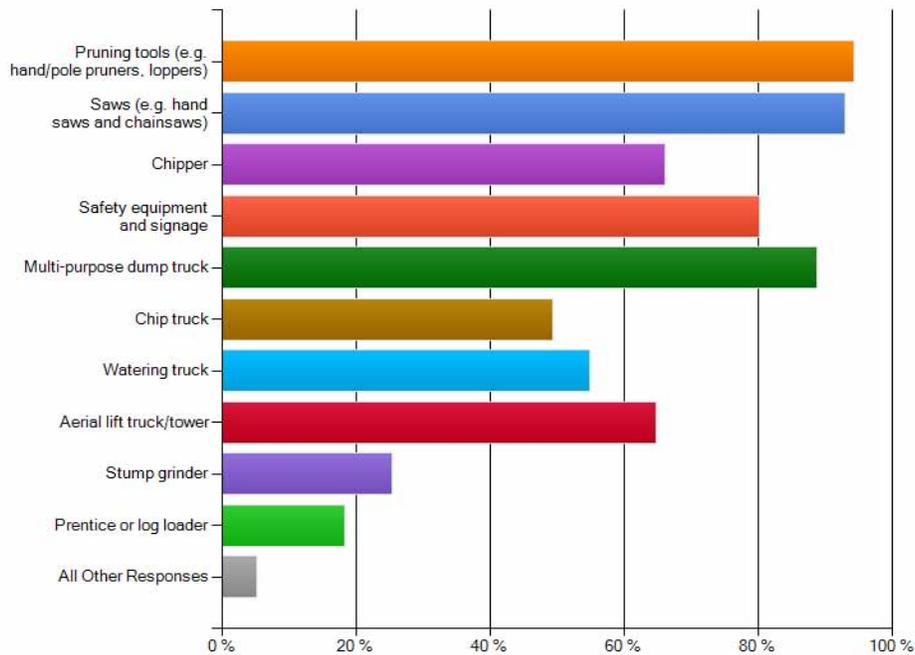


Local Program Management:

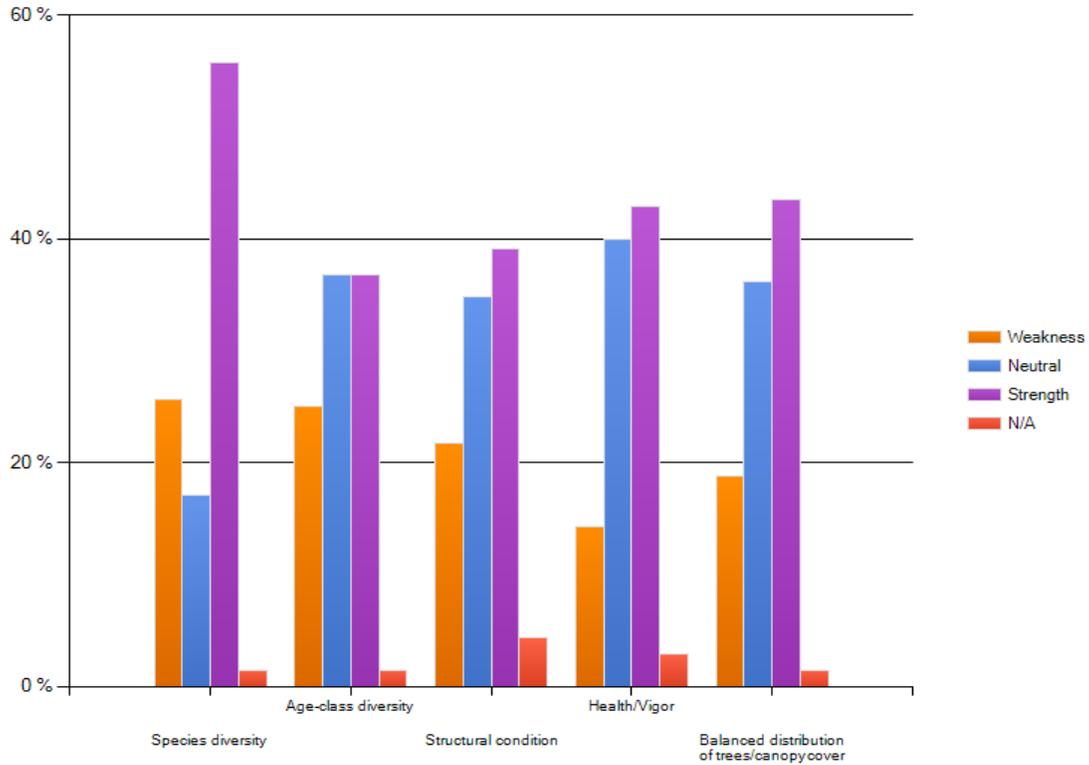
17) Please indicate if your municipality has the following:



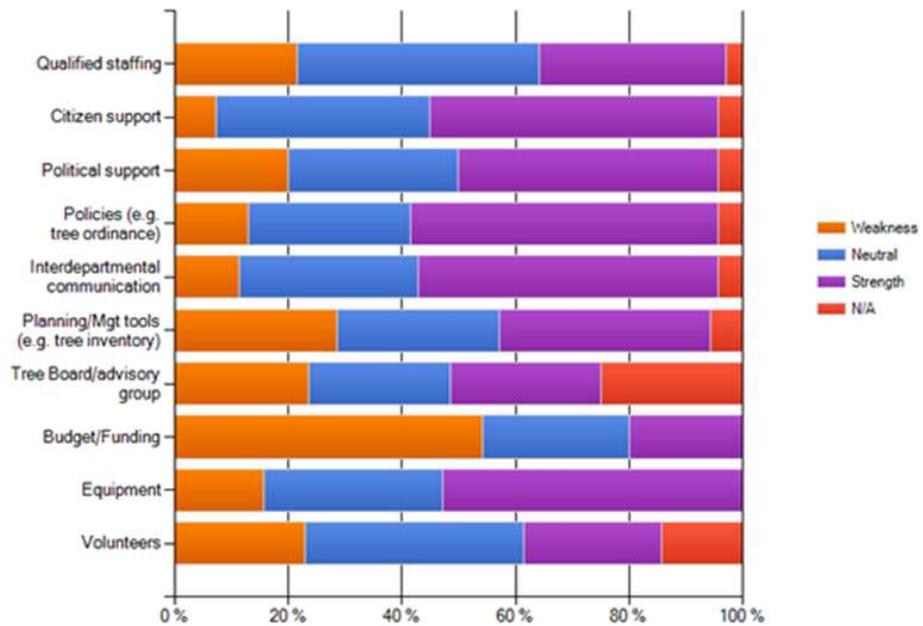
18) In terms of forestry related equipment, please indicate which of the following your municipality has. (Check all that apply)



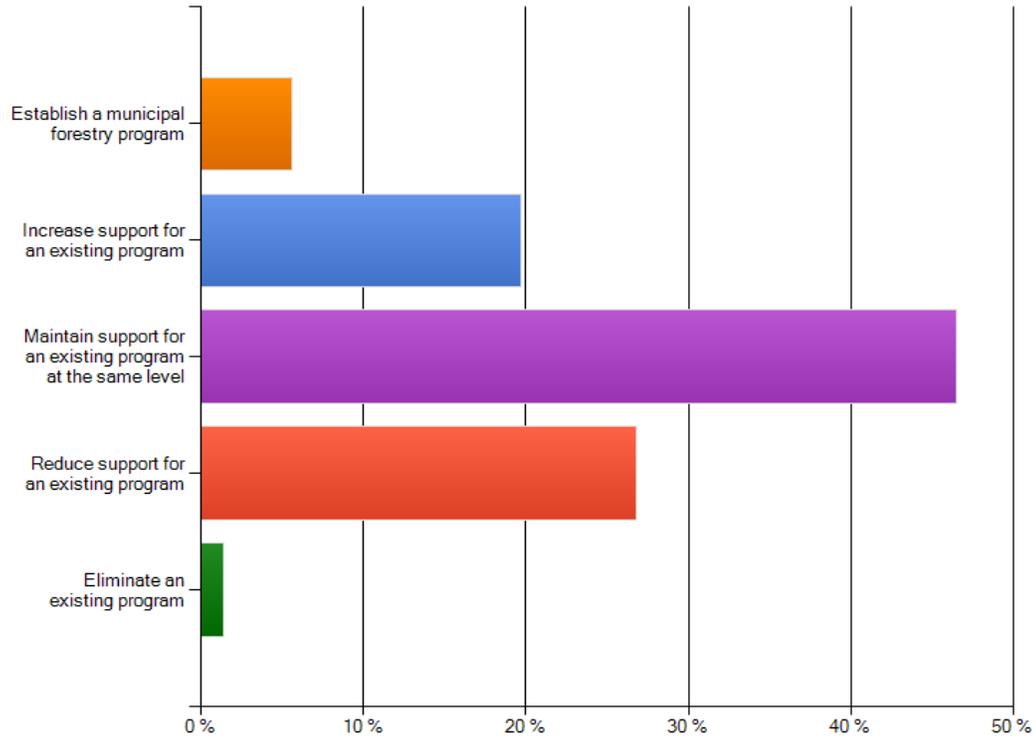
19) Thinking of the current, overall condition of public trees in your community, do you consider the following "physical" attributes to be strengths or weaknesses in achieving long-term health and sustainability of the urban forest?



20) Considering the following "management" aspects of your current municipal forestry program, indicate which are strengths or weaknesses towards achieving long-term program goals

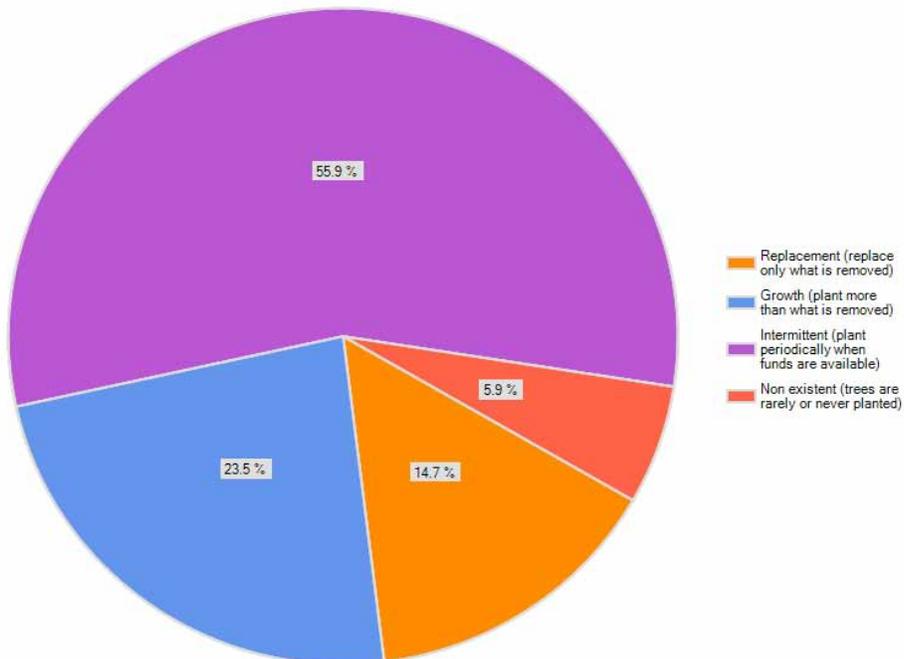


21) **OPINION:** Within the next five years, do you anticipate your municipality will:

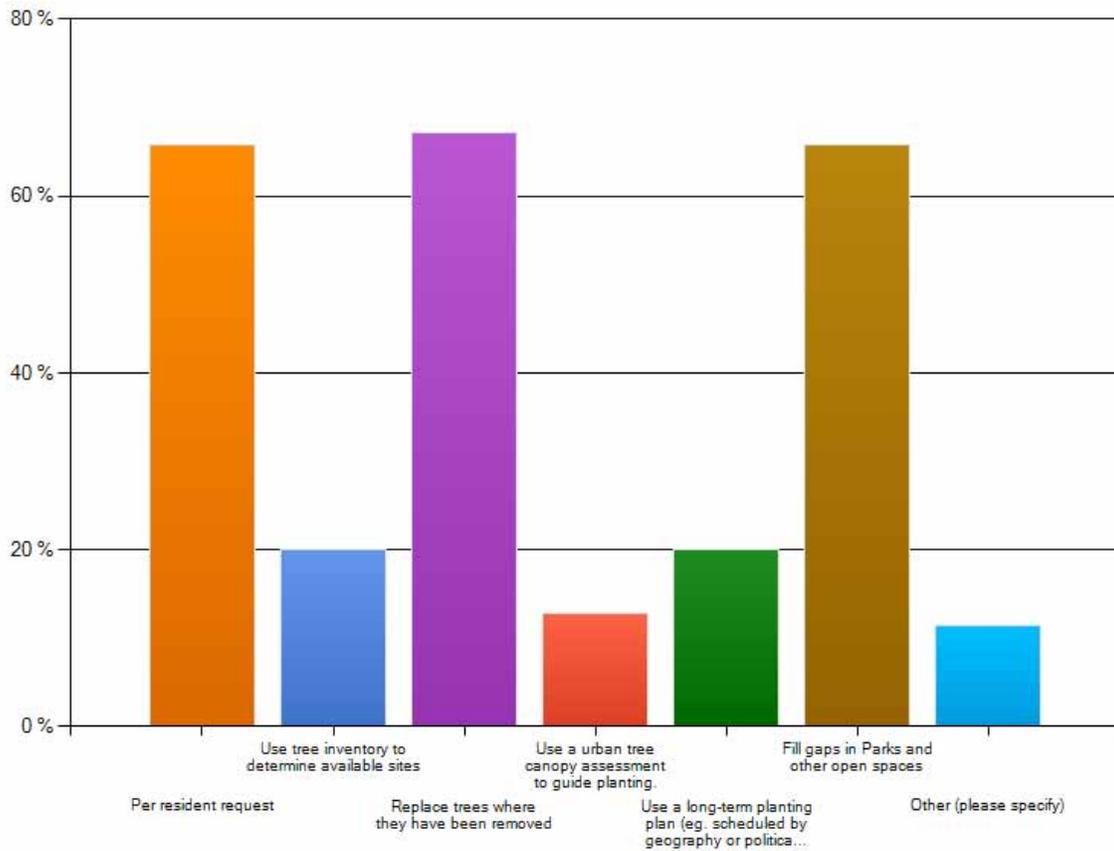


Tree Planting:

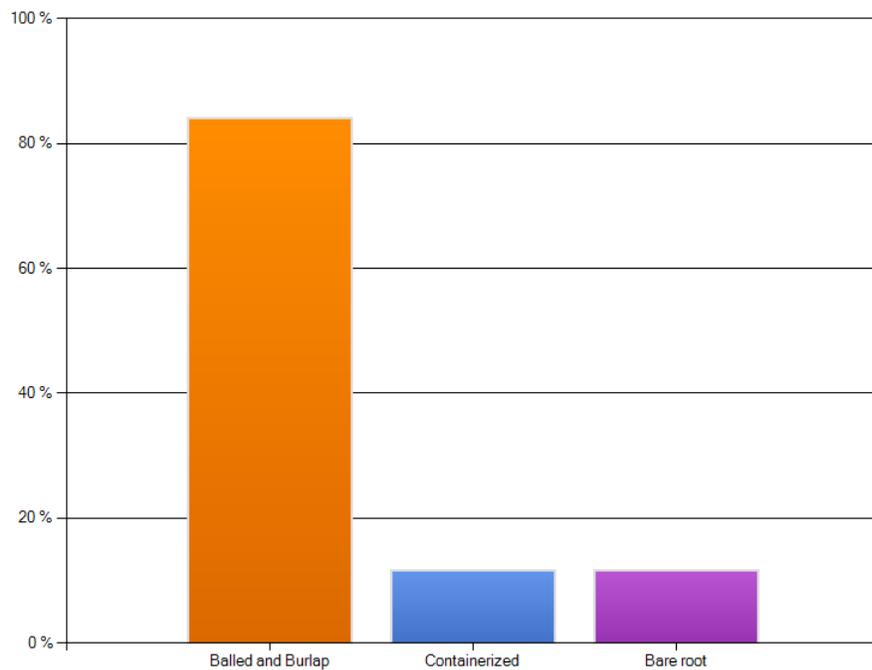
22) How would you characterize your municipality's annual approach to tree planting?



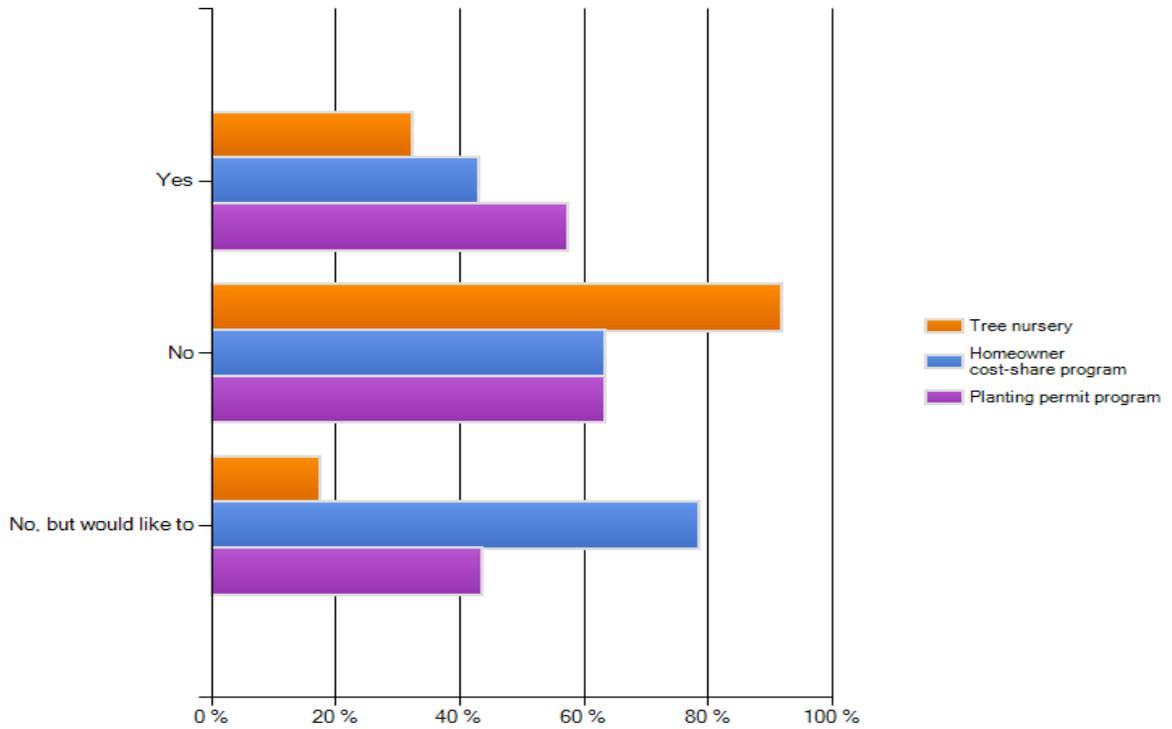
23) When you plant trees, how do you determine where to plant? (Check all that apply)



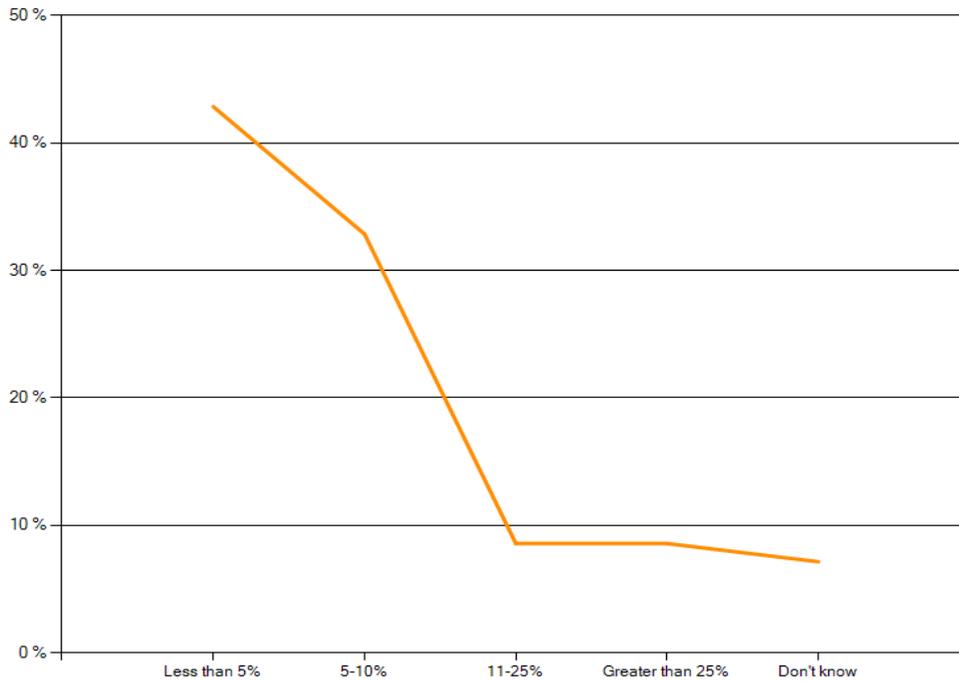
24) What is the MOST COMMON type of nursery stock your municipality plants?



25) Does your municipality operate or administer any of the following:
(Tree Nursery) (Homeowner Cost-share Tree Program) (Tree Planting Permit Program)

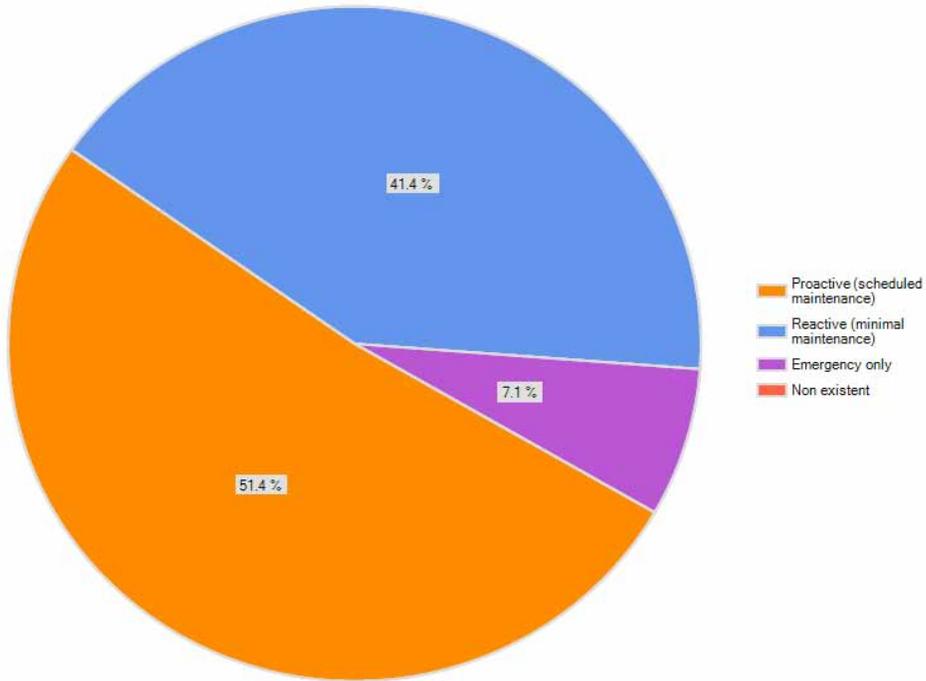


26) Please estimate the current percentage mortality within the establishment period (first 3yrs) of all newly planted street and park trees in your municipality?

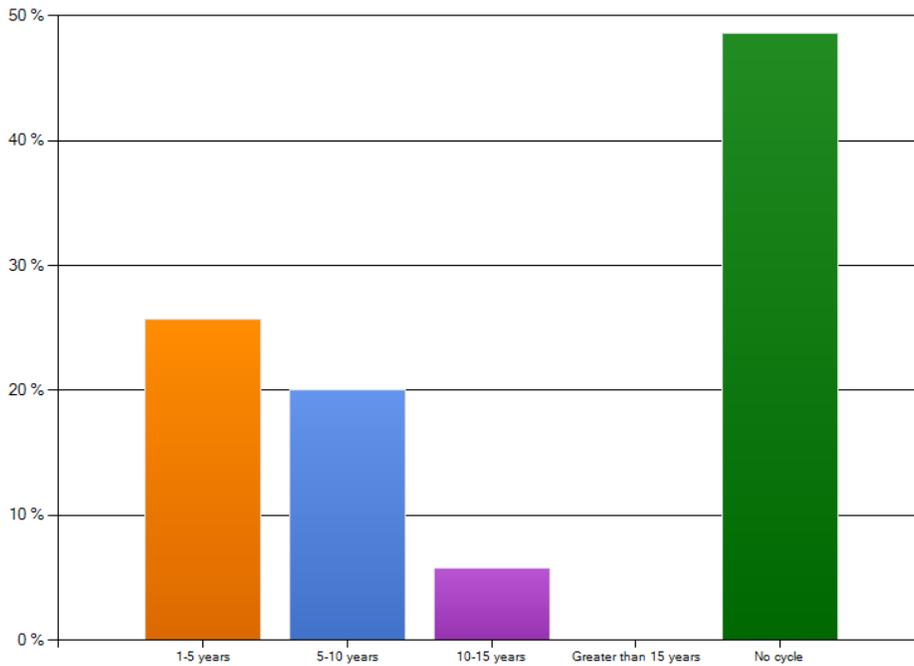


Tree Maintenance:

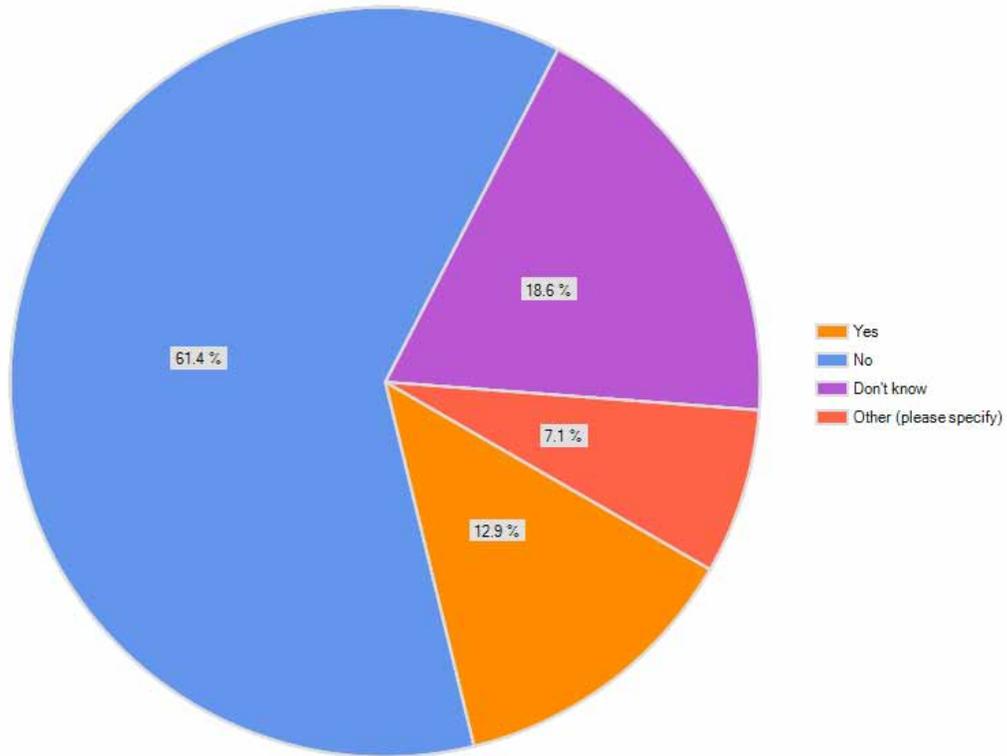
27) Describe your municipality's annual approach to maintenance of public trees.



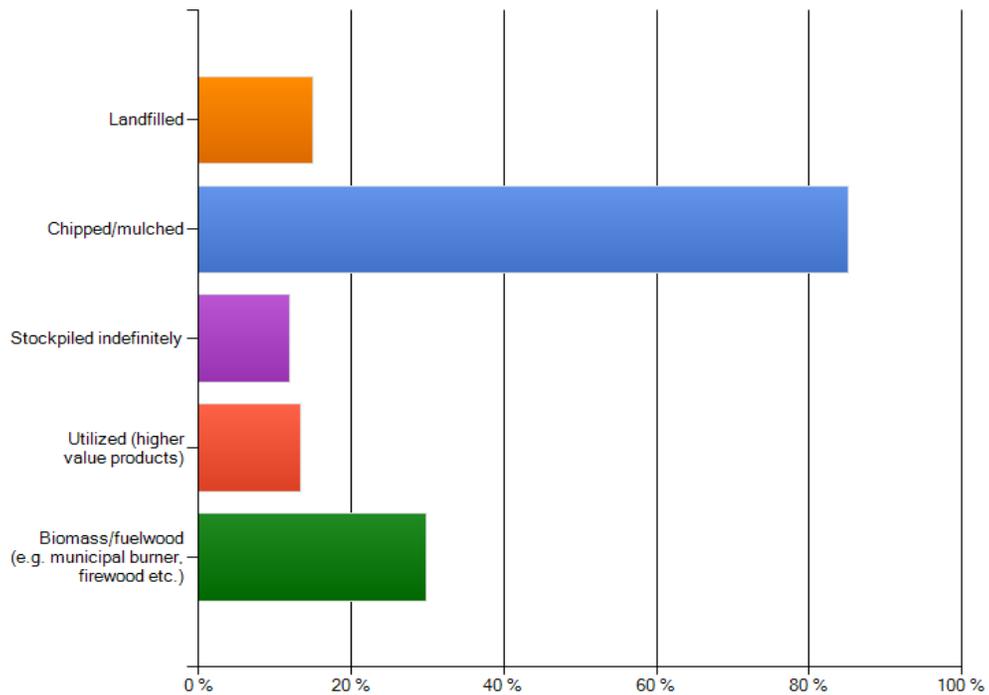
28) If your municipality has a pruning cycle, what is the target time period to complete a citywide cycle? (Check only one)



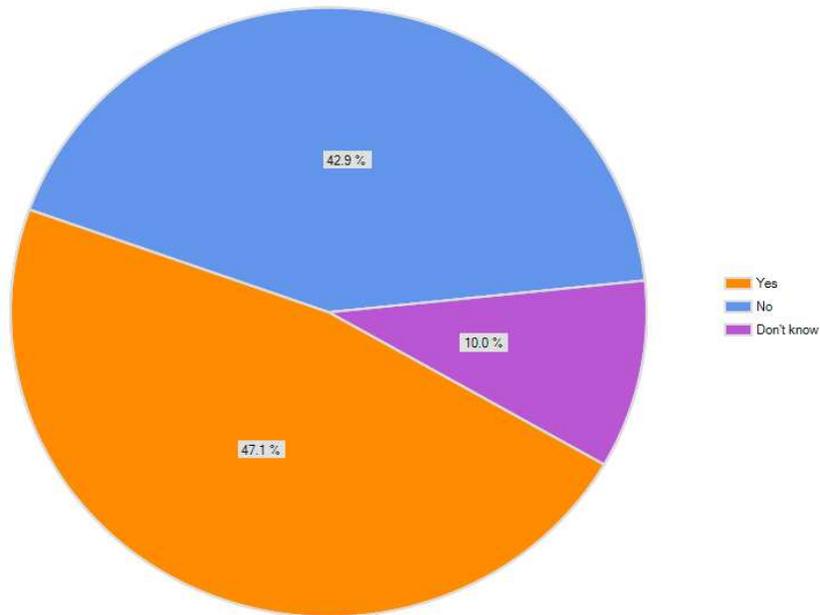
29) Does your municipality practice or allow "topping" of public trees?



30) How does your municipality dispose of wood waste from tree removal and maintenance activities? (Check all that apply)

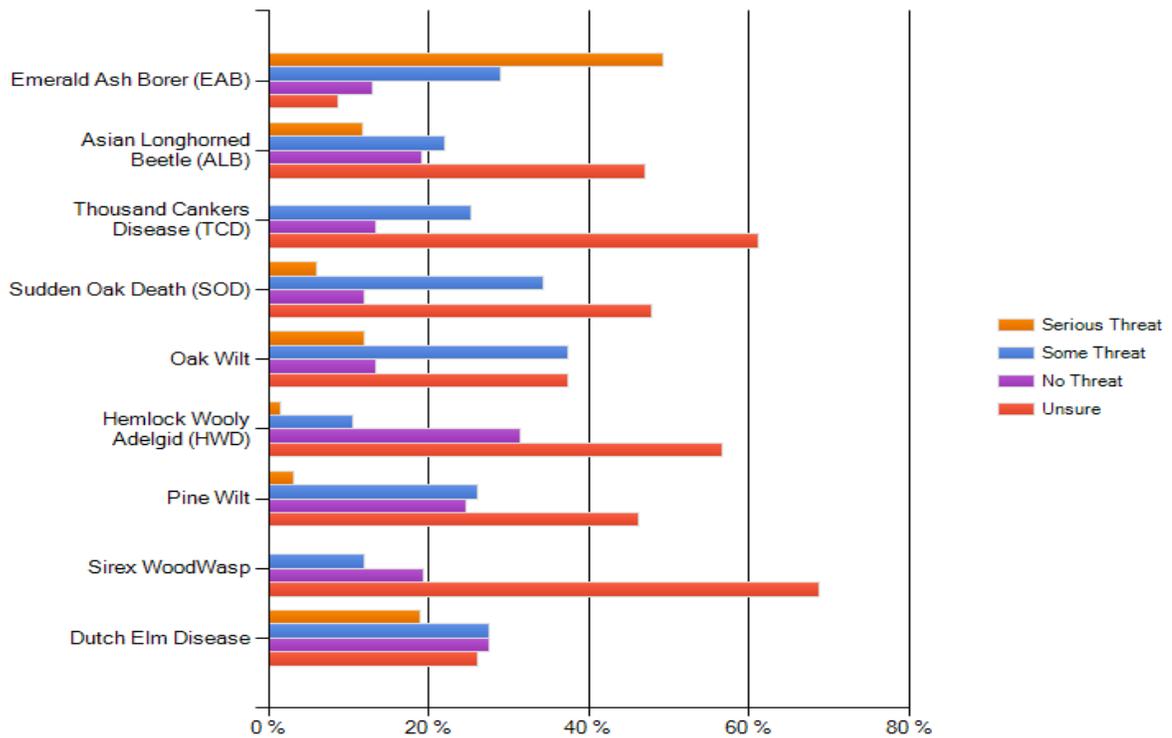


31) **OPINION:** Does your municipality do a good job of pruning trees within the first 5 years of planting to encourage good form and structure?

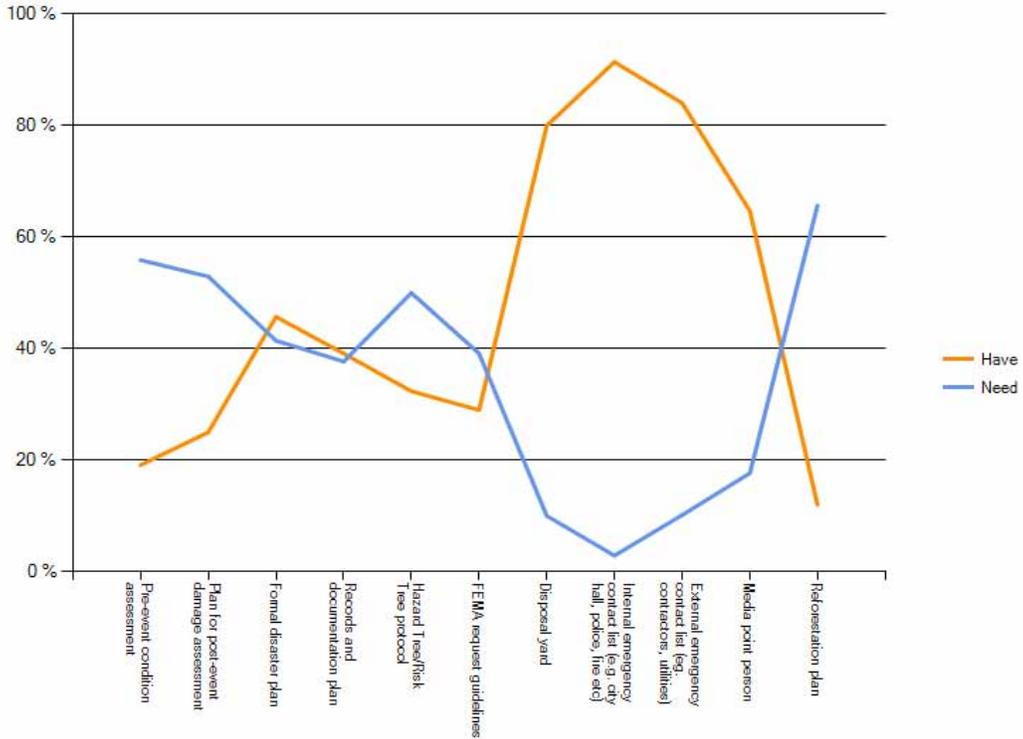


Threats and Preparedness:

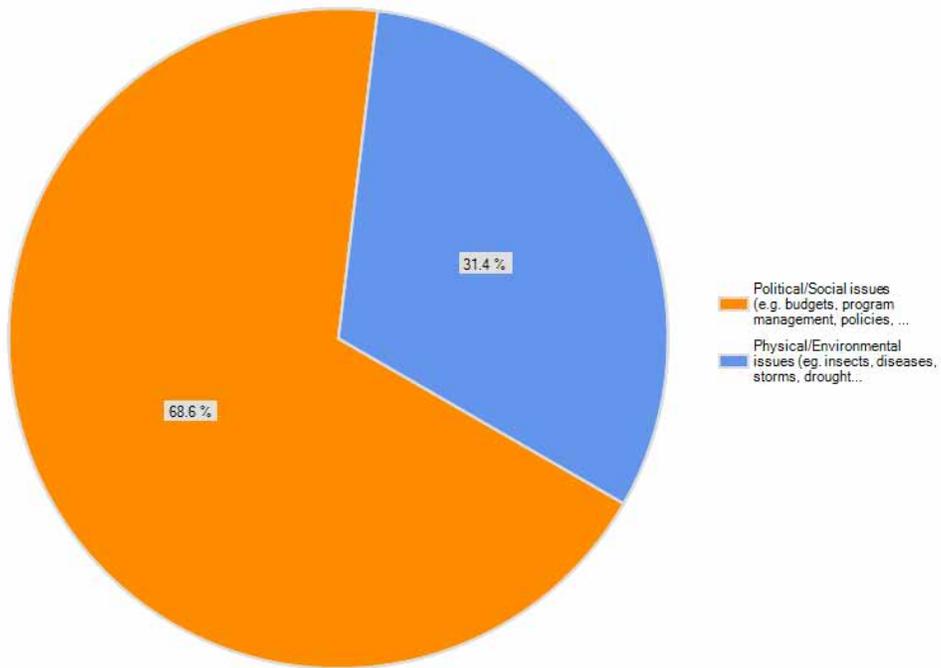
32) Based on your current local conditions and what you know of the insect and diseases listed below, please indicate the perceived degree of threat they pose to public trees you manage.



33) In terms of storm preparedness, please indicate which of the following your municipality HAS or NEEDS TO HAVE to successfully coordinate a significant damage and recovery effort.

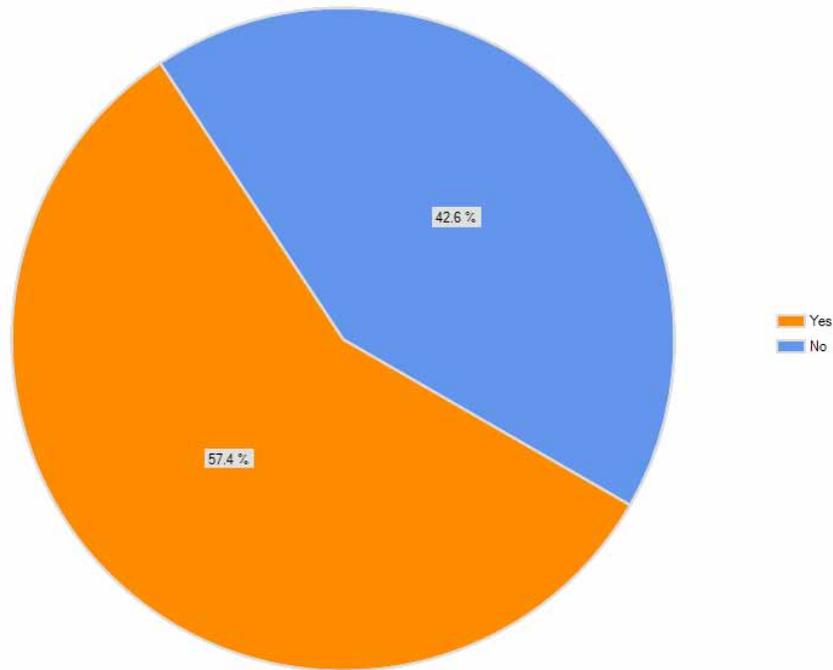


34) **OPINION:** In general, which of the following do you consider to be the greater threat to the long-term sustainability of public trees in your municipality?

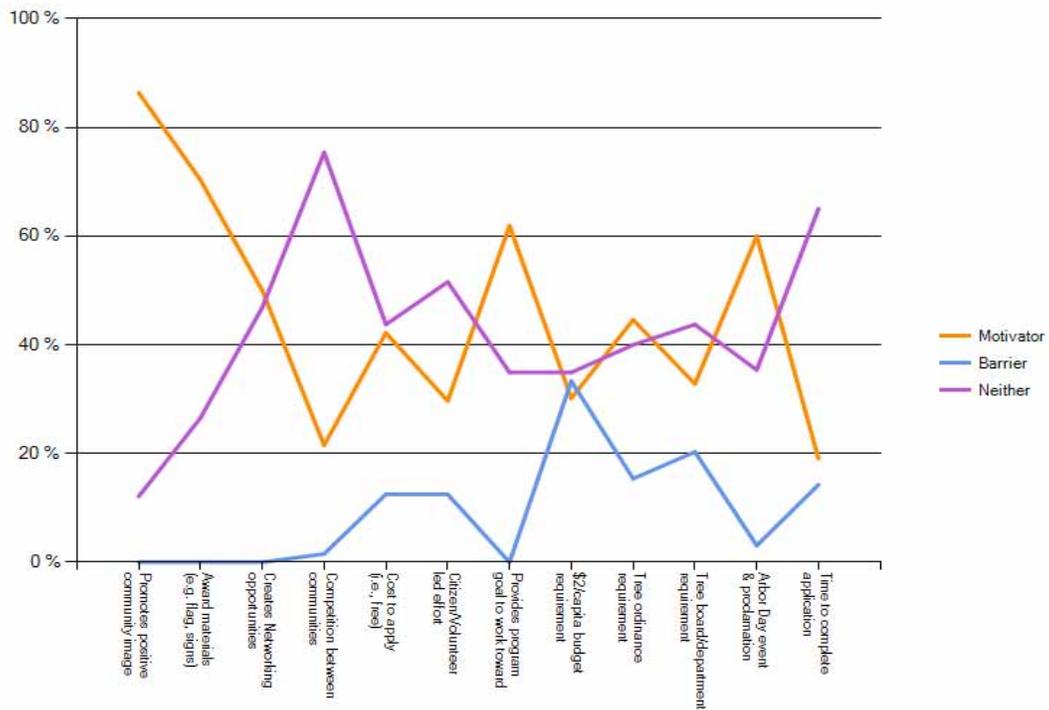


Public Relations:

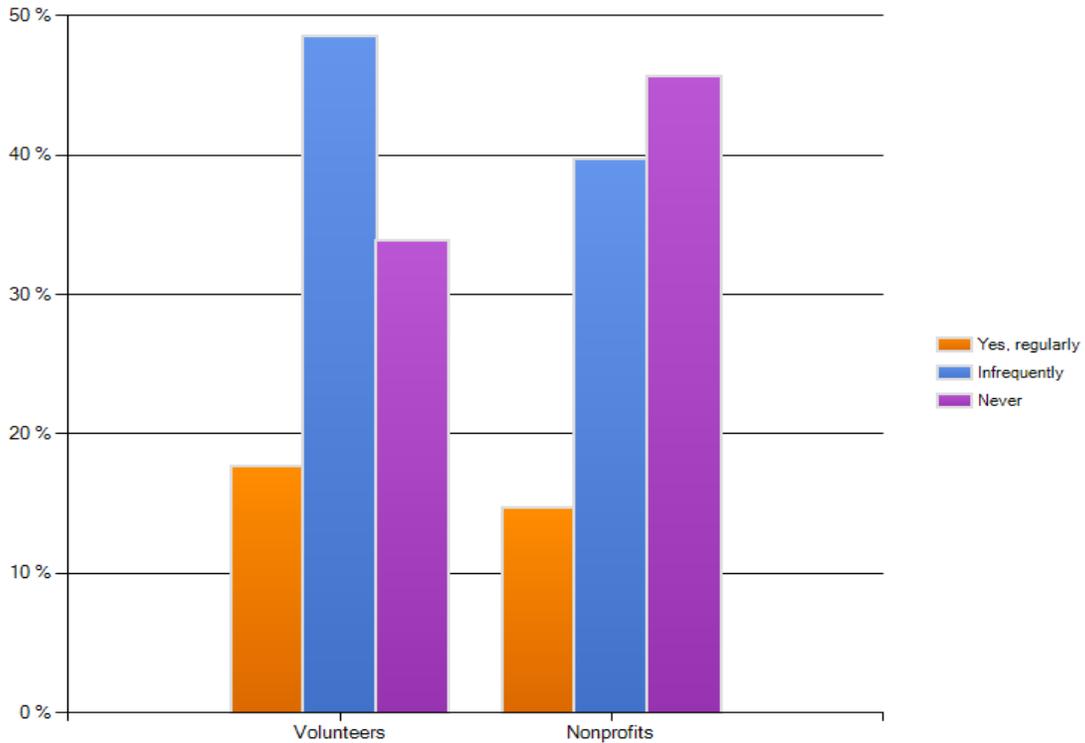
35) Does your municipality have an official Arbor Day celebration each year?



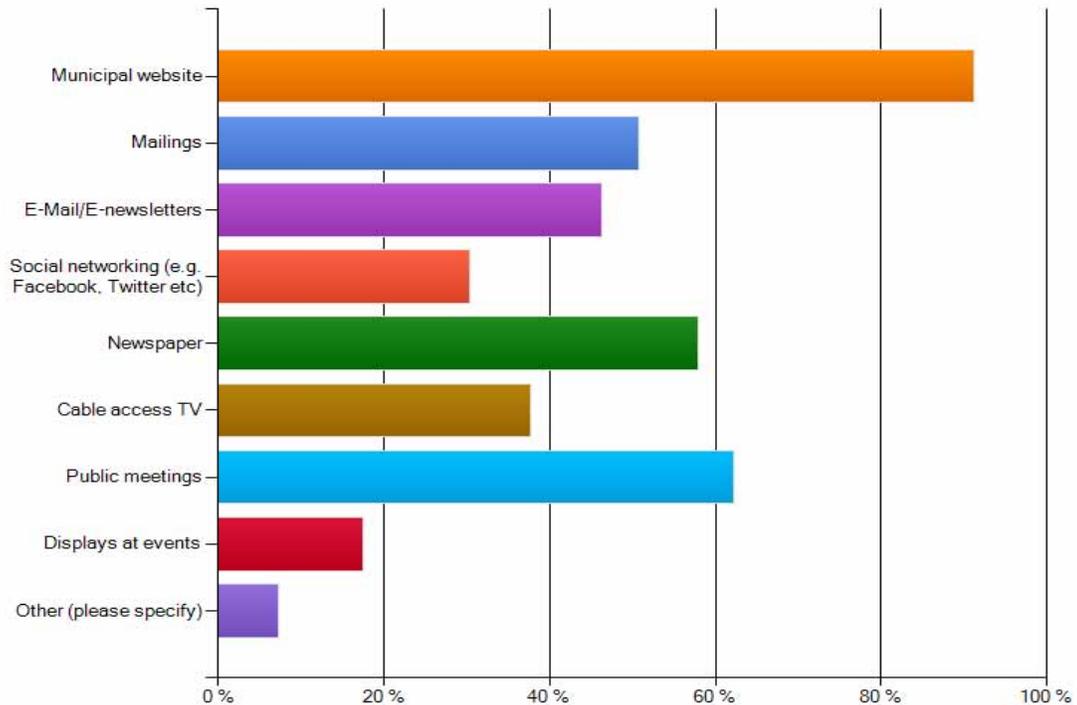
36) Please indicate whether you believe the following to be a MOTIVATOR or BARRIER to becoming a Tree City USA.



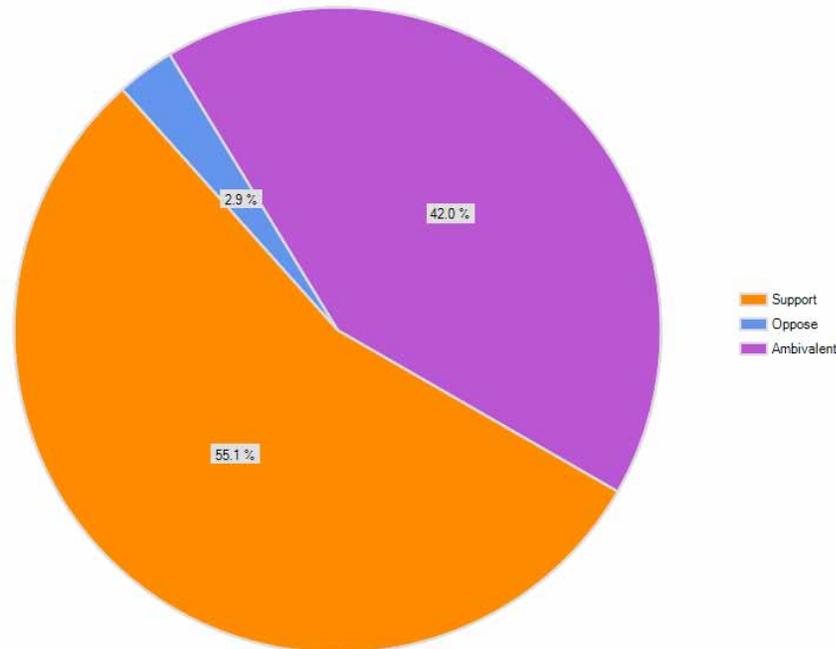
37) Does your municipality engage volunteers or nonprofits as part of its municipal forestry program (e.g. pruning, planting etc.)?



38) How do you communicate program related messages and announcements to your residents? (Check all that apply)



39) OPINION: In general, do you feel the majority of citizens in your municipality support, oppose or are ambivalent about the use of taxpayer funds for public tree care and management?



40) Additional thoughts or comments?

- We're a small community with minimal staff & budget for Urban Forest activities. If the economy doesn't improve & government doesn't realize the honor of public service, & the laws change so we again have a part-time legislature & no unending benefits, we will never turn MI around. What makes a legislator worth \$105K/yr? It shouldn't exceed the mean state salary.
- Looking forward to applying for a grant in the future to help fund a tree inventory.
- We need to educate the citizens that it is less expensive for them to help us maintain the trees, rather than including increases in the budget to cover costs. Tree Board is tackling this.
- We just have too many challenges to completely focus on tree issues at this time.
- As a Great Lakes State, Urban Tree Canopy is a foremost guardian of keeping our waters clean. Green guardians protect the environment, people & communities we share. Beauty is the bonus.
- Tree City USA provides no value to the City. They regularly sent multiple enrollments to City officials & anyone they felt would pay member dues. It was difficult getting to one membership. We also received multiple Arbor Day Foundation requests for donations. It seems underhanded.
- Elected officials need to learn about tree benefits so they can educate the public themselves.
- Some of the greater hindrances faced here are the residents who do not understand what a healthy urban forest is or needs, many think that trees should only be removed when they are completely dead. I agree whole heartily with the ideals set forth by the Arbor Day people.
- As our recreation director and a past landscaper I strive to create a canopy of trees where needed to beautify our community. Our park is a great example of this.
- We are a small village of 1 sq. mile and do maintain and spend to the best of our ability.
- As a township we don't have a forestry dept./div., so work is primarily contracted out as needed

Conclusions and Discussion

Municipal governments constitute the primary focus and beneficiaries of the DNR's UCF program delivery. As such, there is a need to periodically assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting community needs. This survey reflects the most recent findings in this ongoing process (every 5 years) with the next survey scheduled for 2015.

The 2010 Municipal Forestry Survey provides a great amount of information about local municipal forestry programs and their needs. It also gives insight into the effectiveness and impact of the state's UCF program, its delivery methods and strategies and offers suggestions of future areas to focus. Using the information collected through this survey the UCF program manager and advisory council will be able to improve program delivery in the years ahead.

The following section summarizes many of the survey findings, draws some conclusions and offers commentary from the DNR state UCF coordinator about the state of municipal forestry programs in Michigan as of 2010.

Assistance

- **State/federal program assistance is greatly valued, frequently utilized and relevant to community needs.**
 - *Over 90% of respondents indicated that the state and federal UCF programs are providing relevant and important assistance/information that is useful to you and your program.*
- **Communities overwhelmingly prefer that the state UCF program continue to offer numerous smaller denomination grants as opposed to shifting to a few, large denomination grants.**
 - *This is important to note since it was a real consideration for the program and how it delivers grant assistance.*
 - *The most common concerns raised were: 1) match requirement would become problematic for small communities and 2) small communities aren't typically interested in, or capable of large, expensive projects and grants.*
 - *The state UCF program will maintain its current process for awarding grants at a variety of funding levels.*
- **The types of assistance being provided (financial, technical and educational) are appropriate, but the need is greater than the program's capacity to deliver (esp. financial).**
 - *In both the 2005 and 2010 surveys, these three forms of assistance continue to rank most important*
 - *This response will help the program manager direct available resources and seek ways to increase offerings in these areas.*
 - *While other forms of assistance are available and important, they should clearly be a lower priority for the state program.*

Personnel

- **Personnel/staffing is currently the most un/under-funded need (30%) followed by tree maintenance, planting and removal.**
 - *Many municipalities report a trend towards reassigning/combining duties or privatizing many of the more traditional city forester responsibilities and functions over the past 5-10 years.*
 - *Additionally, as employees retire, many of their positions are not refilled due to budget constraints.*
- **80% of communities indicated that they have a designated staff/department responsible for tree related issues. However, most are untrained or receive training only infrequently.**

- *While it is positive to see that most communities have a point person for tree-related issues, it's concerning to note that most (nearly 70%) of communities don't employ any level of professional arborist certification.*
- *In many cases, this is a staff person from a municipal department (primarily Public Works) who has little or no training (and possibly no interest) related to trees.*
- *It's also noteworthy that staffing was listed as the single greatest un/underfunded need for nearly 30% of communities.*
- **The functions and operations of municipal forestry programs are generally split between in-house staff and contractors.**
 - *Municipal in-house staff are typically responsible for routine pruning and maintenance, while contractors are the primary resources for tree removals. Tree planting operations are equally likely to be a function of both.*
 - *There are a couple of interesting things to note here. First, nearly 50% of communities indicate that they have no routine pruning cycle. It's highly likely that for most municipalities staffing (and budgets) is insufficient to effectively implement a routine pruning cycle. Second, most respondents (66%) do not foresee a shift towards contracting of more services within the next three years.*
- **The use of volunteers (17%) and/or nonprofit (15%) partnerships continue to play a negligible role in most municipal forestry programs.**
 - *Many municipalities cite considerations related to quality of work, lack of staff time for training/monitoring volunteers, inconsistently reliable workforce, and liability issues among reasons for not using volunteers more often..*
 - *In many cases, municipal union issues prevent using volunteers or nonprofits. However, some examples exist where municipalities have entirely assigned core urban forestry responsibilities to nonprofits (e.g. City of Detroit/Greening of Detroit partnership for tree planting and local citizen pruner program initiatives underway in Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids).*

Budget

- **Most (70%) municipal budgets for tree care are less than \$50,000/yr., are shrinking (70%), and primarily used for removals (51%)**
 - *First, most communities in the state are small and understandably have relatively small budgets for tree care so this is primarily indicative of that.*
 - *However, decreasing budgets are certainly another example of the consequences from a slow economy. States provide less revenue sharing to cities and tax revenues are down as well. Subsequently, municipal budgets for tree care and management are reduced and funding sources and priorities for where the funds are used (e.g. tree removal vs. planting) are shifted.*
- **Given a scenario where a municipal program has one-time budget surplus or reduction, it is interesting to see how communities would administer/allocate it.**
 - *With a one-time 10% surplus, 33% of communities would allocate it towards planting, 23% towards maintenance and 14% towards removals.*
 - *Given a one-time 10% budget reduction, the majority would distribute it evenly.*
 - *What this seems to indicate is that during a budget windfall, communities quickly/easily allocate it for operations that may be traditionally un/underfunded or that's simply highly visible and positively perceived. However, given a budget reduction, communities attempt to evenly distribute it and preserve all services or minimize impacts to them.*

Local Program Management

- **Percent of communities having the following: tree ordinance (78%), tree board (40%), tree inventory (55%), urban forest management plan (40%) & urban tree canopy assessment (25%).**

- 2005 survey responses for the same question were as follows: tree ordinance (78%), tree board (50%), tree inventory (59%), urban forest management plan (16%) & urban tree canopy assessment (not collected).
- No strong trends when comparing 2005 to 2010 responses.
- The variability in responses between the 2005 and 2010 surveys for the same components is likely a function of which communities responded during each survey. For example, fewer communities with tree boards may have responded in 2010 than in 2005. This might explain the decline as opposed to a real reduction in the number of communities with tree boards.
- **In terms of physical attributes affecting local urban forest health and sustainability, communities consider species diversity to be both the greatest strength and greatest weakness.**
 - Admittedly, this question was probably confusing in the way it was worded and could have been interpreted in various ways.
 - Perhaps the value in this question and responses is that it gives an indication that communities comprehend the importance of species diversity in the health and sustainability of the urban forest.
 - Hopefully this is an indication that ongoing outreach/education efforts promoting species diversity in tree plantings is making a difference. This is especially important when considering the significant reforestation efforts in the wake of the emerald ash borer.
- **In terms of management aspects affecting long-term goals for local municipal forestry programs, communities indicated that budgets were the greatest weakness (55%), policies (e.g. ordinances) were the greatest strength (54%).**
 - Not altogether surprising. A few other noteworthy issues: Most respondents considered having “qualified staffing” to be a neutral influence and tree boards were the only issue equally reported as a weakness, strength and neutral influence on their programs.
- **Within the next five years, most communities (45%) anticipate that their municipal forestry program will be maintained with the existing level of support (ie., no increase or decrease).**
 - Represents a slight downward trend when compared 2005 responses for this question (60%)

Tree Planting

- **Most communities (56%) describe their approach to tree planting as Intermittent, 24% as Planned (growth), 15% as Replacement Only (neutral) and 6% as Nonexistent (decline).**
 - Not surprising given current economy and reduced budgets.
 - Clearly not a positive indicator of long-term sustainability of the urban forest.
 - Comparing 2005 and 2010 responses for a similar question shows a significant decrease in Planned (-29%), and increases in Intermittent (+18%), Replacement Only (+10%) and Nonexistent (+1%).
- **Communities are planting fewer trees than they remove, they’re replanting primarily with larger (balled and burlap) trees, and most don’t have a residential cost-share program, tree permit requirement or municipal tree nursery.**
 - These findings mirror national trends in municipal tree planting, though Michigan has clearly been more significantly impacted by the loss of ash trees due to the emerald ash borer.
 - Many communities no longer have designated budgets for tree planting and get by with grants.
 - This could be a good opportunity for the state UCF program to promote and provide examples of successful home-owner cost-share planting programs, esp. since nearly 80% of respondents indicated an interest in developing one.
 - Communities should also be encouraged to consider planting smaller nursery stock (bare root or large containerized) to maximize the number of trees being planted. Currently 83% are planting balled and burlap trees, a trend that has not changed since the 2005 survey.
- **When communities do plant trees, they have a reactionary approach to determining locations. They do, however, report having good success in getting new trees established.**

- The top three responses for how communities determine planting locations where
 - o 1) Replace where trees were removed
 - o 2) Per resident request for new trees
 - o 3) filling gaps in parks/open spaces
- The state UCF program should facilitate and encourage the adoption and use of new technologies for planning and management (eg. UTC assessments, tree inventories etc.) Currently these tools appear to be underutilized or unavailable: tree inventories (20%), long-term planting plan (19%) and urban tree canopy assessments (10%).
- The majority of communities (75%) report high success rates (90%) for getting new trees established within the first three years of planting.

Tree Maintenance

- **51% of communities describe their approach toward maintenance of public trees as “Proactive” (ie. scheduled) while 41% describe it as “Reactive” (minimal) or “Emergency” (7%)**
 - Additionally, nearly 50% of communities indicate that they do a good job of young tree pruning/training, i.e., within the first 5 years of planting.
- **Most municipal programs do not perform tree maintenance on a formal pruning cycle**
 - Nearly 50% report having no pruning cycle
 - Respondents who do report having a routine pruning program report their cycle is 1-5yrs (25%), 6-10yrs (20%) and 11-15yrs. (5%).
- **Most communities (62%) prohibit the practice of “topping” public trees.**
 - 75% of respondents in the 2005 survey indicated they did not allow “topping”.
 - The state UCF program and advisory council should focus outreach and education efforts on this issue.
 - This will be an important trend to follow in future surveys. The goal is to eliminate tree topping of live trees.
- **By far, the most common method for disposing of municipal forestry wood waste is chipping and mulch (82%)**
 - Biomass and wood utilization are gaining interest and recognition among municipalities as viable outlets for this wood waste stream.
 - The state UCF program should work to further promote and facilitate examples of successful municipal wood waste utilization efforts

Threats and Preparedness

- **In terms of storm preparedness, most communities have internal and external emergency contact lists (90 and 80% respectively), a disposal yard (80%), media point person (65%). However, only 45% have a formal disaster plan, and less than 30% are familiar with FEMA request or documentation protocols and less than 20% have a pre-event condition assessment or formal hazard tree assessment process.**
 - This is an area the state’s UCF program could provide some much needed assistance in. Communities clearly need to have some exposure to FEMA processes and storm damage preparedness training. Many opportunities exist for partnering with state ISA chapter, USFS and other organizations to host trainings.
- **Political/social issues (69%) are considered to be greater threats to long-term sustainability of public tree health than physical/environmental issues (31%)**
 - This is somewhat telling of the current economic and political realities faced by communities.
 - It is especially interesting considering the recent impacts of emerald ash borer (EAB) and storms/droughts that have taken an immense toll on urban trees of late.

Public Relations

- **The majority of communities (57%) celebrate Arbor Day annually**
 - *This is unchanged from the 2005 survey and still significantly fewer than would be expected with nearly 120 Tree City USA communities in MI. Holding an Arbor Day event is a requirement of TC USA*
 - *Not all of the respondents in either the 2005 or 2010 were Tree Cities which likely explains the low percentage reported.*
- **The top three motivators for communities to participate in Tree City USA are:**
 - 1. Promotes a positive community image**
 - 2. Provides a goal for the program to work towards**
 - 3. Promoting Arbor Day**
 - *These are consistently noted as the most common motivators for participation.*
 - *With tools like i-Tree growing in sophistication and use, expect to see more communities recognizing the economic value of trees and subsequently seeking ways to promote these benefits and themselves through programs like Tree City USA.*
- **The top three barriers for communities to participating in Tree City USA are:**
 - 1. \$2/capita budget requirement**
 - 2. Tree board/departement requirement**
 - 3. Finding the time to assemble needed information to complete application**
 - *Since Tree City USA began in 1976, the Arbor Day Foundation has only increased the per capita spending requirement once. The indication from this survey is that if this requirement were to increase, it may prohibit communities either staying certified or becoming certified.*
 - *DNR UCF staff experience is that the spending requirement is typically not the biggest barrier but rather documenting the annual Arbor Day event and proclamation and finding time to complete the application are.*
 - *It will be important moving forward to communicate any possible changes to the program requirements and provide regular reminders/updates about the program to communities.*
- **REPEAT FINDING The use of volunteers (17%) and/or nonprofit (15%) partnerships continue to play a negligible role in most municipal forestry programs.**
- *Many municipalities cite considerations related to quality of work, lack of staff time for training/monitoring volunteers, inconsistently reliable workforce, and liability issues among reasons for not using volunteers more often..*
- *In many cases, municipal union issues prevent using volunteers or nonprofits. However, some examples exist where municipalities have entirely assigned core urban forestry responsibilities to nonprofits (e.g. City of Detroit/Greening of Detroit partnership for tree planting and local citizen pruner program initiatives underway in Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids).*
- **Municipal websites are the primary tool used to distribute, share and communicate information to residents about local urban forestry issues.**
 - *Not surprising since most communities have robust websites and functionality to serve residents efficiently.*
 - *Public meetings and newspaper were the next most important tools respectively.*
 - *Use of social media (e.g. facebook, twitter) will likely become more popular and ubiquitous in the future.*
- **Communities perceive that residents generally support (55%) or are ambivalent (42%) about the use of local taxes for management of public trees.**
 - *This is the first time this opinion question has been asked. It's somewhat noteworthy that most respondents believe that the majority of residents are either supportive or ambivalent on this issue in light of the down economy and increased scrutiny on use of public tax dollars.*
 - *It will be interesting to monitor this question in the future to see whether there are any trends that develop.*

Appendix:

2010-11 MI Municipal Forestry Survey Questions

The DNR's Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) program is conducting a 5 year assessment of municipal forestry programs in Michigan and we need your input.

The survey consists of 40, primarily multiple choice questions, and is intended to help us gauge conditions, identify trends and assess the needs of municipal forestry programs.

*Note - For the purposes of this survey, the phrase "Municipal Forestry Program" refers to activities conducted by the municipality (or its contractors) in the management of trees on public property. Specifically, this may include planting, maintenance and removal of trees along streets, parks and other municipal properties.

Please take 10-15 minutes to complete the survey by October 7th!

If you feel that someone else within your municipality is more appropriate to respond to this survey, please share this message with them. All submissions are anonymous and results will be shared and posted on our website at www.mi.gov/ucf later this fall.

Kevin Sayers
U&CF Program Coordinator
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
517.241.4632
sayersk@mi.gov

General Questions

1. What is the Population of your municipality?
 - Less than 5,000
 - 5,000 – 9,999
 - 10,000 – 49,999
 - 50,000 – 99,999
 - Greater than 100,000

2. OPINION: "Properly planted and maintained public trees improve/enhance your community's..."
 - Quality of life
 - Appeal for new business
 - Appearance
 - Sense of pride
 - Environmental quality
 - Property values

3. What is currently the most critical un/underfunded need of your municipal forestry program? (Choose only one)
 - Tree removal
 - Tree planting
 - Trimming/pruning

Equipment
Management tools (e.g. tree inventory, street tree management plan etc.)
Personnel
Training
Other (please specify)

4. Of the following forms of assistance available from the DNR's UCF program please select the THREE most important to your municipality? (any order)
 - Financial assistance (e.g. grants for various urban forestry activities)
 - Technical assistance (e.g. review of tree ordinance, planting/pruning specs., tree inventories etc.)
 - Educational assistance (e.g. presentations, instruction/training sessions, example/reference materials etc.)
 - Coordinating statewide or regional conferences/workshops
 - Printed or electronic materials (websites, newsletters, brochures, etc.)
 - Networking and communications assistance
 - Grant writing/review assistance
 - Site visits

5. The DNR's UCF program is considering changing how it awards competitive grants. Specifically, shifting from awarding numerous, small grants to awarding fewer, but larger grants. Please indicate which you would prefer.
 - Numerous, small grants (eg. 25,\$4K grants)
 - Fewer, but larger grants (eg. 5,\$20K grants)
 - Either

6. OPINION: Does the DNR's UCF program provide relevant assistance and information that is useful to you and your program?
 - Yes
 - No

7. Does your municipality have a designated individual/department to handle "public tree" issues?
 - Yes
 - No

8. Does your municipality employ any of the following arborist classifications as defined by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). (Check all that apply)
 - Certified Tree Care Worker
 - Climber Specialist
 - Aerial Lift Specialist
 - Municipal Specialist
 - Certified Arborist
 - Board Certified Master Arborist
 - Utility Specialist
 - None of the Above

9. For each of the following categories, indicate who is PRIMARILY responsible for each?

	Municipal crews	Contracted	Nonprofit/Volunteers	Property owner	Other*
Planting					
Pruning/maintenance					
Removal					

10. How often do you or other staff attend tree care/management related training or education events?
 - Annually
 - At least every other year
 - Infrequently
 - Never

11. OPINION: What is the MOST IMPORTANT factor in determining whether you (or staff) attend tree related training/education events (Check only one).

- Cost
- Date
- Location
- Topic
- Speaker
- Current workload
- Other (please specify)

12. Please estimate your most current annual budget for ALL municipal forestry program activities and expenses.

- \$0 - \$50,000
- \$50,001 - \$100,000
- \$100,001 - \$300,000
- \$300,001 - \$600,000
- \$600,001 - \$1,000,000
- Greater than \$1,000,000

13. How has your budget changed in the past year?

- Increased significantly
- Increased somewhat
- No Change
- Decreased somewhat
- Decreased significantly
- Been eliminated
- Don't know

14. Of the following categories, which makes up the largest percentage of your budget in an average year?

- Removals
- Tree planting
- Pruning/maintenance
- All about equal

15. If your program budget increased/decreased by 10% for 1 year, where would you increase/decrease spending FIRST?

- | | Budget Increase of 10% | Budget Decrease of 10% |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Staffing | | |
| Planting | | |
| Pruning/Maintenance | | |
| Removals | | |
| Training | | |
| Equipment | | |
| Distribute evenly | | |
| *Other | | |

16. OPINION: Within the next 3 years, do you believe your municipality will shift more of its forestry operations to outside contractors in an attempt to find budgetary savings?

- Yes
- No

17. Please indicate if your municipality has the following:

- | | Yes | No | Don't know | In progress/developing |
|-----------------------------|-----|----|------------|------------------------|
| Street tree inventory | | | | |
| Street tree management plan | | | | |
| Public tree ordinance | | | | |
| Tree advisory board | | | | |

Urban tree canopy assessment
Annual citywide tree condition survey

18. In terms of forestry related equipment, please indicate which of the following your municipality has. (Check all that apply)

- Pruning tools (e.g. hand/pole pruners, loppers)
- Saws (e.g. hand saws and chainsaws)
- Chipper
- Safety equipment and signage
- Multi-purpose dump truck
- Chip truck
- Watering truck
- Aerial lift truck/tower
- Stump grinder
- Prentice or log loader
- Tree spade
- None of the above
- All of the above

19. Thinking of the current, overall condition of public trees in your community, do you consider the following "physical" attributes to be strengths or weaknesses in achieving long-term health and sustainability of the urban forest?

- | | Weakness | Neutral | Strength | N/A |
|---------------------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|-----|
| Species diversity | | | | |
| Age-class diversity | | | | |
| Structural condition | | | | |
| Health/Vigor | | | | |
| Balanced distribution of trees/canopy cover | | | | |

20. Considering the following "management" aspects of your current municipal forestry program, indicate which are strengths or weaknesses towards achieving long-term program goals.

- | | Weakness | Neutral | Strength | N/A |
|------------------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|-----|
| Qualified staffing | | | | |
| Citizen support | | | | |
| Political support | | | | |
| Policies (e.g. tree ordinance) | | | | |
| Interdepartmental communication | | | | |
| Planning/Mgt tools (e.g. tree inventory) | | | | |
| Tree Board/advisory group | | | | |
| Budget/Funding | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | |
| Volunteers | | | | |
| Nonprofit partners | | | | |
| Private business support | | | | |
| Tree City USA status | | | | |

21. OPINION: Within the next five years, do you anticipate your municipality will:

- Establish a municipal forestry program
- Increase support for an existing program
- Maintain support for an existing program at the same level
- Reduce support for an existing program
- Eliminate an existing program

22. How would you characterize your municipality's annual approach to tree planting?

- Replacement (replace only what is removed)
- Growth (plant more than what is removed)

Intermittent (plant periodically when funds are available)
Non-existent (trees are rarely or never planted)

23. When you plant trees, how do you determine where to plant? (Check all that apply)
- Per resident request
 - Use tree inventory to determine available sites
 - Replace trees where they have been removed
 - Use a urban tree canopy assessment to guide planting.
 - Use a long-term planting plan (eg. scheduled by geography, political boundary, ward, neighborhood etc.)
 - Fill gaps in Parks and other open spaces
 - Other (please specify)
24. What is the MOST COMMON type of nursery stock your municipality plants?
- Balled and burlap
 - Containerized
 - Bare root
25. Does your municipality operate or administer any of the following?: -- Tree nursery -- Homeowner cost-share tree program -- Tree planting permit program
- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Tree nursery | Homeowner cost-share program | Planting permit program |
| Yes | | | |
| No | | | |
| No, but would like to | | | |
| Don't know | | | |
26. Please estimate the current percentage mortality within the establishment period (3yrs) of all newly planted street and park trees in your municipality?
- Less than 5%
 - 5-10%
 - 11-25%
 - Greater than 25%
 - Don't know
27. Describe your municipality's annual approach to maintenance of public trees.
- Proactive (scheduled maintenance)
 - Reactive (minimal maintenance)
 - Emergency only
 - Non existent
28. If your municipality has a pruning cycle, what is the target time period to complete a (citywide) cycle? (Check only one)
- 1-5 yrs.
 - 5-10 yrs.
 - 10-15 yrs.
 - Greater than 15 yrs.
 - No cycle
29. Does your municipality practice or allow "topping" of public trees?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
 - Other (please specify)

30. How does your municipality dispose of wood waste from tree removal and maintenance activities? (Check all that apply)

- Landfilled
- Chipped/mulched
- Stockpiled indefinitely
- Utilized (higher value products)
- Biomass/fuelwood (e.g. municipal burner, firewood etc.)

31. OPINION: Does your municipality do a good job of pruning trees within the first 5 years of planting to encourage good form and structure?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

32. Based on your current local conditions and what you know of the insect and diseases listed below, please indicate how much of a threat they pose to public trees you manage.

- | | Serious Threat | Some Threat | No Threat | Unsure |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|--------|
| Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) | | | | |
| Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) | | | | |
| Thousand Cankers Disease (TCD) | | | | |
| Sudden Oak Death (SOD) | | | | |
| Oak Wilt | | | | |
| Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWD) | | | | |
| Pine Wilt | | | | |
| Sirex WoodWasp | | | | |
| Dutch Elm Disease | | | | |

33. In terms of storm preparedness, please indicate which of the following your municipality HAS or NEEDS TO HAVE to successfully coordinate a significant damage and recovery effort.

- | | Have | Need | Don't Know |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------------|
| Pre-event condition assessment | | | |
| Plan for post-event damage assessment | | | |
| Formal disaster plan | | | |
| Records and documentation plan | | | |
| Hazard Tree/Risk Tree protocol | | | |
| FEMA request guidelines | | | |
| Disposal yard | | | |
| Internal emergency contact list (e.g. city hall, police, fire etc) | | | |
| External emergency contact list (eg. contractors, utilities) | | | |
| Media point person | | | |
| Reforestation plan | | | |

34. YOUR OPINION: In general, which of the following do you consider to be the greater threat to the long-term sustainability of public trees in your municipality?

- Political/Social issues (e.g. budgets, program management, policies, public awareness etc.)
- Physical/Environmental issues (e.g. insects, diseases, storms, drought etc.)

35. Does your municipality have an official Arbor Day celebration each year?

- Yes
- No

36. Please indicate whether you believe the following to be a MOTIVATOR or BARRIER to becoming a Tree City USA.

- | | Motivator | Barrier | Neither | Both |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|------|
| Promotes positive community image | | | | |
| Award materials (e.g. flag, signs) | | | | |
| Creates Networking opportunities | | | | |

- Competition between communities
- Cost to apply (i.e., free)
- Citizen/Volunteer led effort
- Provides program goal to work toward
- \$2/capita budget requirement
- Tree ordinance requirement
- Tree board/department requirement
- Arbor Day event & proclamation
- Time to complete application

37. Does your municipality engage volunteers or nonprofits as part of its municipal forestry program (e.g. pruning, planting etc.)?

	Yes, regularly	Infrequently	Never
Volunteers			
Nonprofits			

38. How do you communicate program related messages and announcements to your residents? (Check all that apply)

- Municipal website
- Mailings
- E-Mail/E-newsletters
- Social networking (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc)
- Newspaper
- Cable access TV
- Public meetings
- Displays at events
- Other (please specify)

39. OPINION: In general, do you feel the majority of citizens in your municipality support, oppose or are ambivalent about the use of taxpayer funds for public tree care and management?

- Support
- Oppose
- Ambivalent

40. Additional thoughts or comments?

Thank you again for taking the time to complete this survey. Results will be made available shortly after the survey closes.