

UPDATE

We are pleased to report that the many issues we brought forward in our delegation on the North Oakville Urban Forest Strategic Management Plan seem to have been addressed. Specifically, it looks like the minimum amount of soil to be recommended for trees in constrained areas (streetscapes, parking lots) will be enough to grow a medium-sized tree. We also learned that the Town does have very specific soil quality requirements and that the soil used to plant trees will be tested to ensure that it meets the requirements. Furthermore, we have been assured only native species will be planted in the NHS and that the plan will specifically preclude the planting of invasives. An expert also stressed the need to always plant trees that are capable of reaching large stature, even in constrained areas, because trees sometimes get lucky and find enough water and soil to thrive. This is important information and should be reflected in the choice of trees planted. We found the process of using a special committee, composed of members of Council (in this case Mayor Burton, Council Elgar, Councillor Adams and Councillor Grant) with key staff on hand and delegations welcomed, was a very useful way for interested parties to have input and for knowledge to be shared in a somewhat informal but respectful and efficient way. We look forward to the same process being used to address the North Oakville East Trails Plan in January.

The Urban Forest Plan will go to the Council with a final staff report in January and be voted on. We will keep you up to date on it because if the final report is as good as we think it will be it will be nice for some of us to attend the meeting and show Council and staff our support, not only to their commitment to achieving 40% tree canopy cover by 2057, but also for creating a leading edge Urban Forest Plan that other cities are sure to emulate. Oakvillegreen would also like to thank the Mayor and Councillors on the committee and Town staff, especially Chris Mark, director Parks and Open Space, for their work on the committee and for ensuring we will have a plan that both meets the Town's Tree Canopy objectives and provide our community with a healthy, resilient and beautiful urban forest that will provide many benefits to citizens for generations to come.

Background

On December 6, Oakvillegreen offered several suggestions to a special committee reviewing the recently released North Oakville Urban Forest Strategic Management plan that will guide the Town in reaching its goal of 40% tree canopy cover by 2057. Overall, Oakvillegreen endorses the plan and commends Town staff on its creation, however there were a few areas that we believe need to be improved including: requiring higher soil volumes for street trees, regulating soil quality for tree planting, ensuring tree planting specifications are drawn into street engineering diagrams; increasing the amount of native plants required from 20% to 50% or more; putting in policies about plant selection to increase biodiversity and the resilience of our urban forest and implementing the Plan quickly so that it covers the new development already taking place north of Dundas.

The only other person to make a delegation was a representative of the the developers who are building north of Dundas. In summary, they suggested throwing out the rules in the plan about tree planting, especially as they pertain to parking lots and street trees, letting the developers do as they want and if tree goals can't be met, having the developers pay money to the Town to be

used for tree planting elsewhere by the Town or by community groups.

Needless to say, this didn't sound like a good idea to Oakvillegreen. It's also important to note that the Plan makes very clear that parking lots and streets in North Oakville must be treed according to what is currently in the plan or Oakville will not achieve its goal of 40% tree canopy coverage. As well, the Plan notes opportunities to increase tree canopy in South Oakville are limited, therefore, it is critical for trees to be planted North of Dundas. Indeed, 90% of the Natural Heritage System must have tree canopy if we are to reach the 40% goal.

The special committee consisting of Mayor Rob Burton, Councillor Tom Adams, Councillor Allan Elgar and Councillor Marc Grant will meet again on **Tuesday, December 13 at 1 p.m. in Committee Rm. 1 at Town Hall** to hear a staff report on the two delegations and discuss changes to the Plan. We will be in attendance at this meeting and welcome any of our members and friends to join us. To read our full delegation please [click here](#)