

# Parks, Forestry and Recreation Shade Policy Provision Guidelines





- In 2002, City Council directed a multi-disciplinary team (Shade Policy Committee) to produce a comprehensive policy and guidelines aimed at providing shade at sites and facilities within the City's jurisdiction.
- Team members included city staff and the Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR) Working Group with representatives from Environment Canada, Evergreen, Tree Advocates, Sunnybrook and Women's Health Sciences Centre, Toronto Western Hospital, Architects, Clean Air Partnership, Ryerson University, Cancer Care Ontario, and the Toronto Food Policy Council.



- Over the next 2 years, the Shade Policy Committee developed the “Shade Policy and Technical Considerations for the City of Toronto”.
- In 2004, the corporate policy was considered by City Council but no action was taken for various reasons.
- In hindsight, the initiative could have been positioned as part of the Environmental Plan or under the climate change initiative.
- Timing is now right to re-introduce the initiative under the climate change umbrella of enhancing the City’s tree canopy.



- In 2006, Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff ‘re-tooled’ the policy as a divisional operational policy to guide its park design and development activities and tree planting initiatives.
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation’s Senior Management Team approved the guidelines in early 2007 and staff reported to the Parks and Environment Committee on them.
- Several aspects of the original corporate policy were retained:



## Policy Highlights:

### The Need for Shade

- Exposure to UVR linked to many health conditions (principally skin cancer), which are preventable.
- Need to ensure that shade provisions are included in planning our facilities and programs (eg. children's summer camps, splash pads etc.)

### Policy Statement

- The Division recognizes that shade can be an effective way to reduce exposure to UVR by providing shade at all its sites and facilities where feasible.
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation's (PFR) shade policy will assist in achieving both climate change goals and PFR's strategic plan goal to increase the tree canopy by 30 to 40%.



## Policy Objectives

- Increase shade opportunities, wherever feasible, as part of the Division's park and facility planning, design and retrofitting activities:

### Short term:

- Education and promotion
- Ensure staff and program participants use sunscreen and take other protective measures to reduce exposure.
- Provide community advice (eg. Shade audits of local parks).

### Long Term:

- Provide greater shade opportunities at all PFR sites.
- UVR reduction in all planning and development activities.



## Planning for Shade - Natural and Constructed

### Natural Shade:

- Trees provide shade and also reduce other atmospheric contaminants
- Tree selection is important – large deciduous trees with dense, full crowns provide greater UVR protection
- Requires appropriate site conditions and soils to maintain these trees.



## Planning for Shade - Natural and Constructed

### Constructed Shade:

- Free standing open air structures provide all weather protection.
- Attached canopies/awnings made of durable, solid materials with little maintenance.
- Temporary structures - tents/umbrellas/canopies provide varying degrees of protection and durability but are flexible and well-suited to events and temporary activities.



## Benefits of Shade Creation

### Reduce Urban Heat Island Effect:

- shading of buildings, pavement, parking lots and roofs can assist in cooling by releasing moisture into the air.

### Reduce Air Pollution:

- shade trees can lower ambient air temperature slowing smog formation and improving air quality.

### Climate Change:

- trees act as a carbon filter and reduce the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere.



## Benefits of Shade Creation

### Energy Savings:

- by mitigating the heat island effect, energy requirements for cooling are reduced.

### Encourages Physical Activity:

- providing a shaded, protected environment encourages the use of outdoor facilities (eg. pools, playgrounds, splashpads, trails and paths, community gardens etc.)



- The Parks, Forestry and Recreation policy differs from the original in that it establishes itself as a set of guidelines or best practices to be considered and implemented wherever feasible – not a requirement.
- Guidelines are intended as an information tool to guide staff in park planning and design projects and to assist local communities and PFR staff in determining areas where shade provision can be enhanced (eg. Shade audits).
- Policy guidelines will be rolled out to staff shortly and will be evaluated and improved to ensure they remain up to date and relevant.



- The City's Parks and Environment Committee recently requested that Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff conduct shade audits of all city playgrounds to determine which ones are shade deficient.
- Staff are developing a strategy for conducting audits at over 800 playgrounds and will be reporting back to the Parks and Environment Committee and City Council this fall.
- The Division's shade provision policy guidelines will assist staff in this important work.
- It is expected that these guidelines will become an integral part of the planning and design process and will be included in future capital budget submissions for project funding.
- Shade guidelines to be reviewed for consistency / compatibility with City's new green building standards.