



Infrastructure and Environment Committee

December 2, 2021

RE: IE26.6: Actions to Reaffirm Toronto's Tree Canopy Target

The Long Branch Neighbourhood Association supports the recommendation for City Council to reaffirm Toronto's target of 40% tree canopy cover by 2050 and to commission and select an official arboreal emblem for the City of Toronto.

The LBNA is proud to be taking action to support the goal of 40% Tree Canopy. This past year alone our volunteers have contributed to this goal by:

1. Distributing over 1,220 free native trees for planting on private property with support from the City's Neighbourhood Tree Giveaway programs and a Community Planting and Stewardship grant. People come from all over Etobicoke and from as far away as Scarborough to pick up trees from our events
2. Hosting and organizing the 3rd Annual Long Branch Tree Fest in Marie Curtis Park
3. Creating and launching a comprehensive Community Tree Stewardship program that includes education on how to care for trees and free guided interpretive walks and bike rides to build understanding and appreciation for the benefits and importance of trees in the City
4. Through Partnership with the University of Toronto and funding from Canada Summer Jobs, we have inventoried the trees on 70% of all properties in Long Branch, which includes over 200 different species of trees.
5. Regularly participating in public hearings at the COA and TLAB to try to prevent the injury and removal of protected trees.
6. Successfully achieving official Heritage Tree Designations through Forests Ontario for 3 trees and continuing to work on achieving this designation for more.

However, in spite of our best efforts, our existing tree canopy faces a precarious future and continues to be threatened. We ask this Committee to urgently Strengthen Tree Protection beyond what is outlined in the report submitted today.

The use of fees and fines to address compliance with the City's Tree By-laws and public and industry education is important but, as we have learned through experience in our community in recent years, unfortunately fail to protect our trees.

Without further strengthening Tree Protection beyond these measures, a 40% Goal by 2050 is quite frankly unachievable.

The 2018 Tree Canopy Study determined that the greatest amount of potential space for tree canopy growth exists on private land. Planting new trees on private property is critically important but equally important is to better protect the existing trees on private property. Municipal Code Chapter 813 protects less than 20% of the trees in Long Branch (see Figure1).

The City's plans for Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods, particularly proposals for Garden Suites, will wipe out mature trees in neighbourhoods such as ours by making them "as-of-right". Municipal Cost Chapter 813 provide no protection whatsoever for "as-of-right" builds. If a tree is in the way, the chainsaws will come out and the tree will be removed. Even properties beside a proposed Garden Suite will lose their trees.

A study conducted 2 years ago by a Masters student at the University of Toronto found that Intensification in Long Branch resulted in a 55.7% Tree Canopy decline on redeveloped properties and a 24% reduction in tree canopy on the adjacent properties. (see Figure 2)

The 2018 Tree Canopy study confirmed similar findings and provided data that Long Branch is the hardest hit Neighbourhood for Tree Canopy loss in all of Etobicoke York and the 8th hardest hit neighbourhood in all the City. Our tree canopy was at 26.5% when the City set the goal to grow the City's tree canopy coverage to 40%. Long Branch's tree canopy, during this period of planned tree canopy growth, has declined to now only 15%. (see Table 1)

Stronger tree protection is needed now, **before** any changes are made to expand “as-of-right” building permissions where trees exist now (i.e. Garden Suites).

Recommendations for this Committee to strengthen Tree Protection:

1. Protect more trees. Toronto is currently lagging other local municipalities in the size of trees we are protecting. Other municipalities protect trees >15 and 20cm DBH. Trees ≥30cm DBH are less than 12% of the trees in Toronto. (see Figure 1)

Comparison of Local Municipalities with Private Tree By -laws

Municipality	Size of Tree Protected
City of Cambridge	>20cm
Town of Oakville	>15cm
City of Mississauga	>15cm
Town of Burlington	>20cm
City of Toronto	≥30cm

2. Fully protect healthy private trees that are of protected size and make it harder to take them down. Remove permissions to injure or destroy healthy trees where development is “as-of-right” from the Municipal Code Chapter 813. On most properties houses can be renovated or even re-built around existing trees but with that clause there is no incentive for developers and investors to do so when it is cheaper and faster for them to just take them down.
3. Integrate Urban Forestry recommendations into Planning Reports that go to the COA. Every month, often multiple times a month, the LBNA is at the COA speaking for the protected trees that an applicant wants to destroy in our community. Often, we have the situation where Urban Forestry will object but Planning says they have no problem. The COA is left to sort it out with one staff report saying refuse and the other saying approve and the Trees often lose. This should not be acceptable if the City is serious about achieving 40%.
4. Protect the trees the city is planting. None of those 1,220 trees that we gave away this year for planting on private property are protected and won't reach protected size of 30cm DBH for decades. These are our future urban forest and an important part of Toronto's green infrastructure. It takes hundreds of new trees to replace just one large tree that is removed. Let's protect them so they can do their job for future generations.
5. Require more replacement planting on site when trees need to be removed. Currently Toronto has a 1:1 replacement planting when private, healthy trees are removed regardless of size. The Town of Oakville requires more trees to be planted the bigger the tree removed. The remove 1 huge tree to replace it with a sapling should no longer be a viable option and new development should provide sufficient planting space for replacement trees on the same property where they are removed.

To achieve the goal of 40%, which we strongly support, it is critically important to increase the protection of existing trees in addition to planting new. While the loss of trees is immediate, it takes years for newly planted saplings to grow enough to add to the tree canopy. Thank-you for your considerations of our recommendations.

Sincerely,



Judy Gibson
 Vice Chair, Long Branch Neighbourhood Association
 Chair, Tree Canopy Preservation and Enhancement Committee

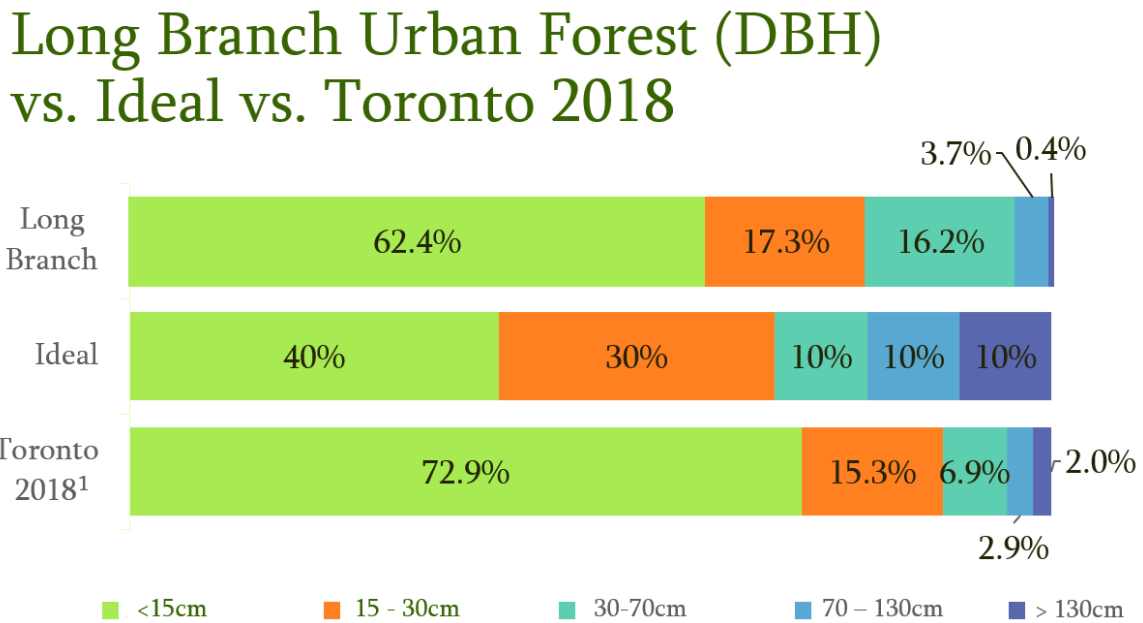
Table 1: Long Branch has experienced the greatest Tree Canopy loss (-43.4%) in all of Ward 3 and all of Etobicoke according to the 2018 Tree Canopy Study conducted by the City of Toronto

2009 - 2018 Toronto Tree Canopy change by Etobicoke-York Ward*

Ward	Neighbourhood	Number	2018	2009	Change	% change
3	Long Branch	19	15.00	26.50	-11.50	-43.4
3	New Toronto	18	15.25	8.70	6.55	75.3
3	Mimico	17	16.49	13.40	3.09	23.1
3	Alderwood	20	26.83	24.70	2.13	8.6
3	Stonegate-Queensway	16	43.40	32.20	11.20	34.8
3	Islington-CityCenter West	14	15.73	15.40	0.33	2.1
3	Kingsway South	15	42.55	46.90	-4.35	-9.3
Total Ward 3			25.04	23.97	1.06	4.4

* Source: City of Toronto 2018 Tree Canopy Study ; KBM Resources Group Lallemand inc./BioForest Dillon Consulting Ltd; Duinker, P and Steenberg, J. Dalhousie University Appendix 1: Canopy Change by Neighbourhood 2009-2018: 253

Figure 1: Tree sizes by Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) in Long Branch vs Toronto vs the Ideal (2018 Tree Canopy Study)



¹ City of Toronto. (2019). [CanopyTO](https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ie/bgrd/backgroundfile-141367.pdf). Retrieved from <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ie/bgrd/backgroundfile-141367.pdf>

Figure 2: Tree Canopy loss in Long Branch from 2009 - 2018

