



Infrastructure and Environment Committee
c/o Nancy Martins
10th Floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen St W
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

January 8, 2019

Dear Members of the City of Toronto Infrastructure and Environment Committee

Re: Agenda Item IE11.1 2018 Tree Canopy Study - Urgent need to Strengthen Tree Protection in Toronto

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide our perspective on the findings of the 2018 Tree Canopy Study. Overall we were pleased to see that the Tree Canopy increased by 1.8% across the City and that the number of trees has increased to 11.5 Million through the various tree planting initiatives in the City. We believe very strongly in the importance of planting long lived native tree species and the Long Branch Neighbourhood Association and its members look forward to continuing to plant more trees on Private property in 2020 with our goal of close to another 1,000 trees this year.

Not surprising to us, but still very disappointing, is to see that Long Branch is one of the Neighbourhoods that lost tree canopy (-1.9%) and even more so was the loss in total leaf area and the corresponding reduction in the value of our Green Infrastructure (-11.5%) in spite of our efforts. In 2007 Long Branch was recorded as having a 26.5% tree canopy. Now our neighbourhood's tree canopy is down to 15%.

Although the Emerald Ash Borer and various wind and ice storms have taken their toll on our mature trees, the biggest controllable opportunity to increase the Tree Canopy in Long Branch lies in the need for much stronger Tree Protection of healthy, mature trees.

Recent findings from the capstone project of one of the Master of Forest Conservation Students at the University of Toronto looked at the "Impact of Residential Intensification on Urban Forest in Long Branch Neighbourhood, Toronto". The full report will be available shortly, but the key finding was that where new undersized lots were created, the canopy loss was 55.7%. And on the adjacent properties to these undersized lots it was 24%.

We would hope that this Committee would agree with us that this is unacceptable at a time where we are trying to achieve a Canopy of 40% and the City of Toronto has declared a Climate Emergency and recently launched its 1st Resilience Strategy that integrates Toronto's major Climate and Environmental Plans to advance the vision of a more resilient Toronto.

Some recommendations we would urge this Committee to consider are as follows:

- 1) Mechanisms and incentives need to be put in place so that development proposals in single and multiple residential zones put the preservation of healthy mature trees and plantable space as the priority. Particularly in those Neighbourhoods where the tree canopy is below 40%.
- 2) “As of right” development footprints in single and multiple residential zones should no longer be allowed to routinely trump and be permitted to remove healthy mature protected trees.
- 3) We should lower the DBH requirements for what is the size of a protected tree on Private Property and consider extending protection for trees that are between 20 – 30cm DBH.
- 4) When an application is made to injure a protected private tree, the applicant should be required to post a bond to ensure the tree survives the injury and construction.

Planting new trees today is critically important for future generations and something that must continue, but it will take decades for those trees to grow and benefit our communities and the environment. Therefore, it is important that we equally focus on retaining every single, healthy existing tree we can.

Everyone can play a role in tree stewardship, but we need much stronger measures for tree protection to ensure that those Tree Stewardship efforts can deliver the results we need in our Neighbourhoods and City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judy Gibson', written in a cursive style.

Judy Gibson
Vice Chair, Long Branch Neighbourhood Association
Chair, Tree Canopy Preservation and Enhancement Committee
Email: longbranchnato@gmail.com