

A man in a blue t-shirt and green shorts is using a shovel to dig in a garden bed. A woman in a blue t-shirt and grey pants is kneeling nearby, working with plants. The background shows a dense green garden and a city skyline with several tall buildings, including the CN Tower.

Urban Forestry Grants & Incentives
IMPACT REPORT
2017-2020

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Land Acknowledgment

The City of Toronto acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. The City also acknowledges that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaty signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

Disclaimer: Some of the photos represented in this report were taken pre-pandemic.



© Matt Forsythe

Our partners have helped plant

53,325
trees and shrubs,

and engaged over

150,000
people

Growing the Urban Forest Together

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Successfully growing an urban forest and increasing canopy cover in any major city is challenging under the best of circumstances. Between the needs of trees, people, and the built environment, cities are some of the toughest and harshest places to grow trees. But that is exactly what we have done together in Canada’s largest urban centre.

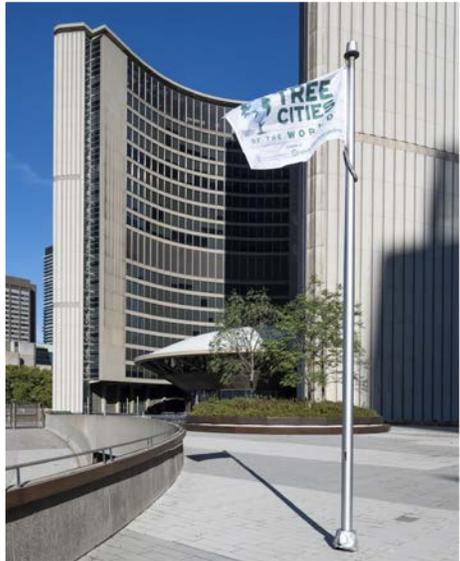
Recent studies have shown that Toronto’s canopy cover increased from 26.6-28% to 28-31% between 2008 and 2018. All of this we accomplished in the face of climate change, rapid development, a growing population, invasive species, ice storms, and, in 2020, a global pandemic.

This past year the City of Toronto was internationally recognized for its leadership in urban forestry. We were recognized as a *Tree City of the World* by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and received the Champion of Trees Award from the Arbor Day Foundation. All of which would not have been possible without the support of City Council and the dedicated staff, volunteers and partners that have been fundamental to the success of our tree planting and

stewardship efforts on private land. Sustained long-term success depends on everyone’s continued help and support as we work towards increasing canopy cover right across Toronto.

This report will showcase and celebrate the impact of the Urban Forestry Grants and Incentives Program. Under this program over \$13 million has been invested and leveraged in matching dollars since 2017. Together with our incredible partners, we have been able to plant over 53,000 trees and shrubs and engage over 150,000 people on private land since 2017. We couldn’t have done it without you! Thank you!

Amory Ngan
Project Manager, Tree Planting Strategy



Tree City of the World Flag Raising ceremony



Honoured by
**the Arbor Day
Foundation**
with the 2020 Champion of Trees Award

About Urban Forestry Grants and Incentives

Urban Forestry Grants and Incentives is a program of the Urban Forestry Branch in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division of the City of Toronto. It was established in 2017 to expand Toronto’s canopy cover. With a focus on planting and stewardship on private land, the program fosters partnerships and collaborations with homeowners, landowners and not-for-profit organizations that advance the City’s strategic priorities to invest in people and neighbourhoods, and to tackle climate change and build resilience.



Our Impact

2017 – 2020



Trees and Shrubs Planted or Distributed:

53,325

3,644
Backyard Tree Planting Program

35,589
Community Planting & Stewardship Grant

3,356
Greening Partnership Grant

10,736
Tree Giveaways



People Engaged

154,504

1,736
Backyard Tree Planting Program

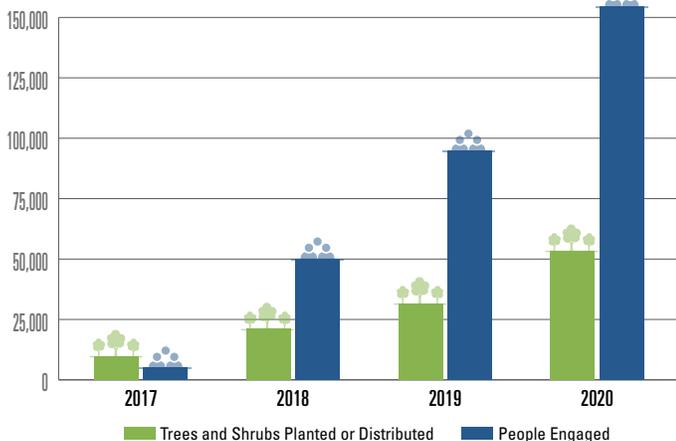
47,658
Community Planting & Stewardship Grant

49,390
Greening Partnership Grant

9,893
Tree Giveaways

45,827
Direct Outreach & Engagement

Cumulative Impact



68
Groups
Funded

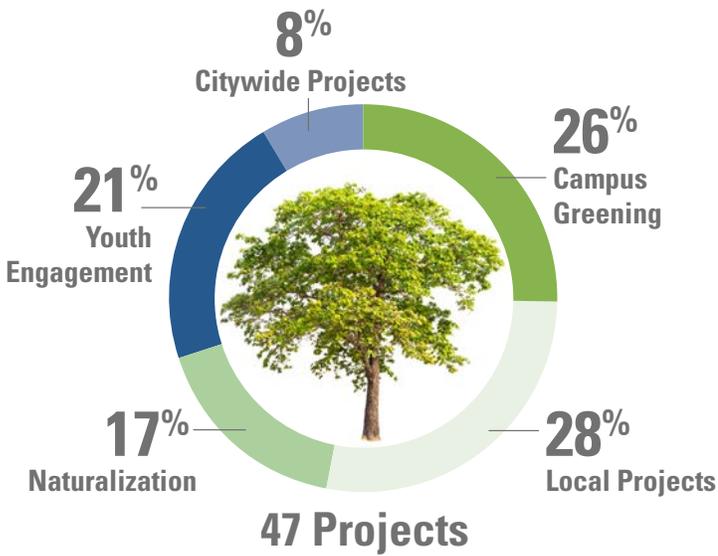


132
Projects
Funded

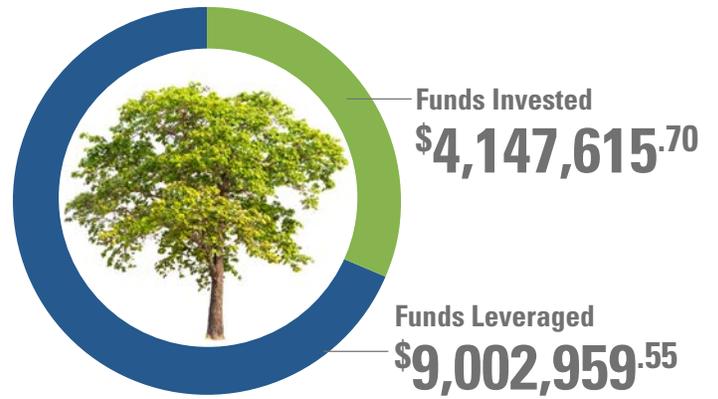


492
Events

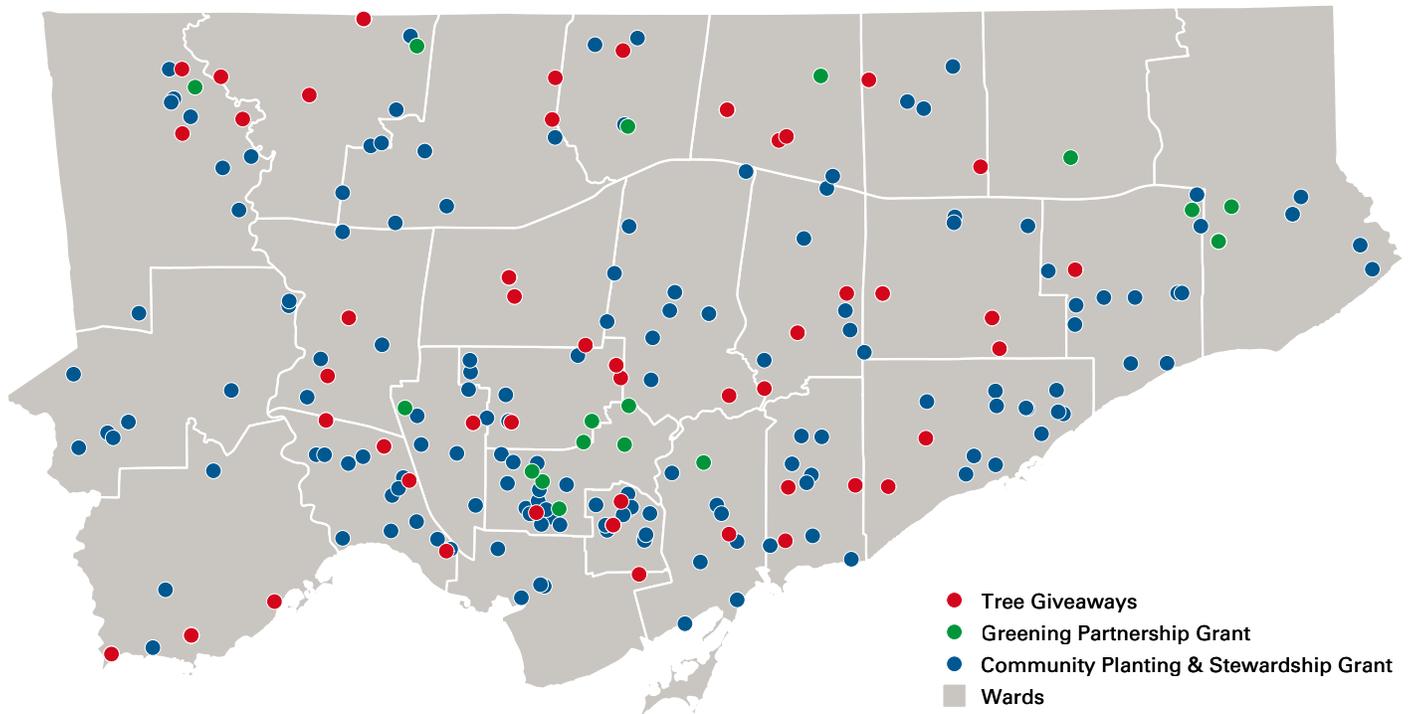
Types of Grant Projects



Funds Invested and Leveraged



Grant Project and Giveaway Sites (2017-2020)



Making the Difference

Our community grants allow us to invest in community-led projects that grow the urban forest through tree planting and stewardship on private land. They help achieve social and economic goals and advance the City of Toronto’s strategic priorities to invest in people and neighbourhoods, and to tackle climate change and build resilience.

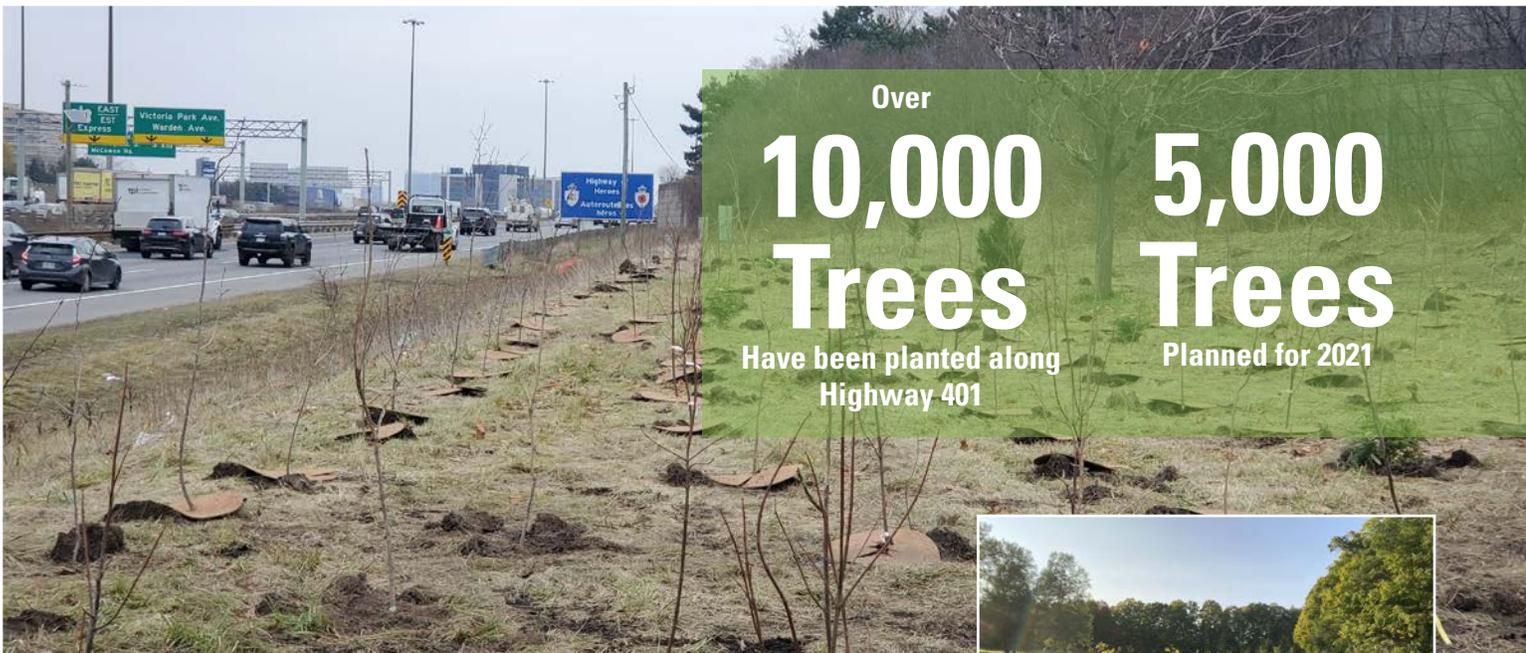
Funding is available to a wide-range of community partners including eligible non-profit organizations, public school boards, hospitals, colleges, universities, and non-profit housing providers through our two dedicated funding streams: the Community Planting and Stewardship Grant, and the Greening Partnership Grant.

Fourteen projects were selected from 20 applications submitted in 2020 to receive funding in support of tree planting and stewardship on private land. Over 13,000 trees and shrubs will be planted through these exciting projects. They will engage and educate communities through planting events, educational workshops, citizen science, and youth programming.

Greening North America’s Busiest Highway

The Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign is transforming part of North America’s busiest highway into a living green memorial for every Canadian who gave their life in the service of their country. Over 10,000 trees have been planted along the Highway 401 in Toronto alone, with another 5,000

trees planned for 2021. Every tree planted will help remove air pollution, create wildlife habitat, reduce storm water run-off and provide wind and snow breaks along busy stretches of roadway.



© Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign

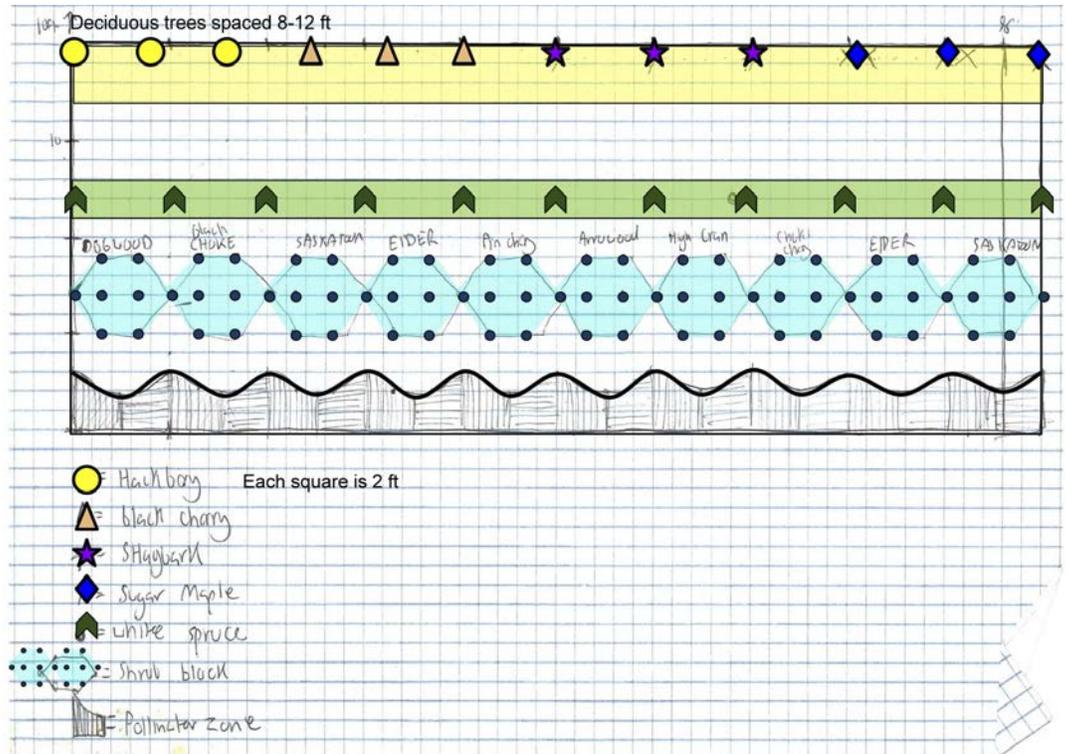


© FoodShare Toronto

1,500
Native trees and shrubs

Agroforestry in Etobicoke

FoodShare Toronto is creating a shelterbelt and wildlife habitat at the 3-acre urban farm located at Burnhamthorpe Collegiate Institute. Running alongside Highway 427, the shelterbelt will use 1,500 native trees and shrubs to increase canopy cover, create wildlife habitat, act as a windbreak for the farm and provide an outdoor classroom for students to learn about urban forestry and career paths in arboriculture.



Rough sketch of the proposed shelterbelt. The shelterbelt will create a living buffer between Burnhamthorpe Collegiate Institute and Highway 427 and will help reduce noise, salt, and pollution on the farm.

© FoodShare Toronto



Giving You the Tools to Grow the Urban Forest

Toronto is the first city in Canada to offer the Arbor Day Foundation’s Community Canopy program. Through this exciting program, Toronto residents are able to reserve free trees using an innovative online mapping tool that takes the guesswork out of where to plant a tree on their property. The mapping tool ensures that they plant the right tree in the right place, and identifies the ideal planting location to help maximize the air, water, energy, and carbon benefits of

their new tree. This is made possible through peer-reviewed scientific research from the USDA Forest Service’s i-Tree software to calculate estimated benefits. This program will help ensure barrier-free access to trees and benefits they provide, support equitable distribution of canopy cover, and help grow Toronto’s canopy cover.



© Arbor Day Foundation



Reserve free trees using an innovative
Online Mapping Tool



© Green Thumbs Growing Kids

Inspiring the Next Generation of Tree Stewards

Elementary school students in the St. James Town, Regent Park and Cabbagetown communities will be able to grow native trees from seeds sourced, collected and planted, all as part of their curriculum. Green Thumbs Growing Kids is providing students with a hands on learning experience, where students learn about indigenous culture, growing Toronto’s urban forest and how to become stewards of the land by connecting to nature. Successfully grown trees will

be distributed to community members and any surplus trees will be used in the Toronto District School Board’s (TDSB) naturalization programs.



Bringing More Trees to Community Housing

Toronto Community Housing (TCH) tenants across Toronto are enjoying greener spaces thanks to the unique partnership between Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF), TCH and the City of Toronto. Together, they are working to increase the number and diversity of trees at community housing locations across the city. LEAF works closely with tenants and staff to identify planting sites, develop stewardship teams and provide training and tree care resources. Large caliper trees are supplied and installed by the City of Toronto.



© 2020 Lianna Lopez/LEAF



© 2020 Lynn Charafeddine/LEAF

Hands on experience for underrepresented youth



© 2020 LEAF

Training Tomorrow's Leaders

Underrepresented youth in urban forestry and arboriculture such as women, newcomers, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ persons will gain valuable experience in the fields of arboriculture, urban forestry and community engagement thanks to LEAF's Young Urban Forest Leaders program, setting them on the path to become tomorrow's leaders. Participants gain hands-on skills, mentorship and networking opportunities with urban forest leaders and experts while engaging with their local communities in tree planting and stewardship initiatives.

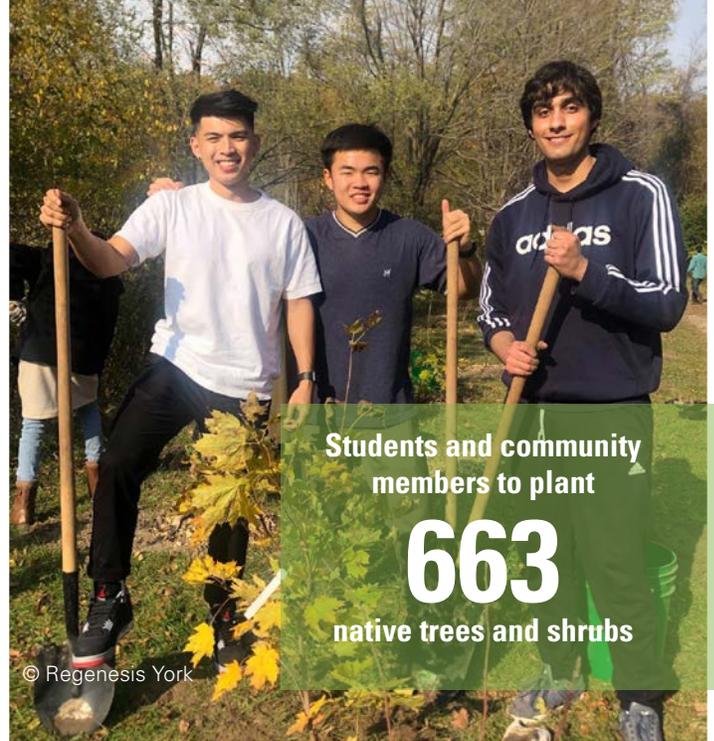
Celebrating and Growing the Community Canopy

Close to a thousand native trees and shrubs will be added to Toronto's canopy cover in 2021 through the Long Branch Neighbourhood Association's (LBNA) efforts in celebrating and growing the urban forest. Working with residents, students and volunteers, LBNA is identifying suitable planting sites for trees and shrubs on private property throughout Long Branch and the surrounding neighbourhoods. LBNA has planted over 1,000 native trees and shrubs since 2018.



Youth-Led Campus Greening

The Regenesys Campus Forestry Student Planting Initiative empowers students to become leaders of change in creating more sustainable and livable campuses and communities. Building on previous successful student led planting initiatives, participants will organize fellow students and community members to plant 663 native trees and shrubs at York University's Keele and Glendon College campuses, University of Toronto Scarborough campus and the Neill-Wycik Student Residences.



Students and community members to plant

663

native trees and shrubs

© Regenesys York

Naturalizing College Campus

Seneca College's Newnham Campus will soon be greener thanks to the Seneca Naturalization Project, which will create a more sustainable and naturalized landscape. Over 1,200 native trees and shrubs will be planted to increase

canopy cover and will provide hands on learning opportunities for students in Environmental Landscaping and Technology programs. Existing lawns will be renaturalized with native vegetation to increase biodiversity, reduce Seneca's overall carbon footprint and create a more inviting space for students, employees and the community.

Seneca



Over
1,200
native trees and shrubs
will be planted

© Seneca College



Supporting Affordable Housing through Trees

Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area has been building affordable housing for families in Toronto for over 30 years. The Reunion Crossing project will create a livable

community for low-income families with 20 safe and affordable housing units, easy access to transit and landscaping enhanced by nearly 300 native trees and shrubs.

These trees will not only beautify the community but increase resident’s quality of life by improving air quality, reducing home energy use and increasing access to green space.



Habitat for Humanity
Greater Toronto Area
Brampton, Caledon, Durham Region,
Toronto & York Region

© Habitat for Humanity GTA



Transforming a Brownfield Site

The University of Toronto Scarborough is transforming a 10-acre former brownfield site into an urban farm dedicated to teaching, community engagement and research. A variety of native trees and shrubs will be planted on and around the campus farm that will increase biodiversity, provide shade and cooling benefits and increase accessible green space for students and surrounding communities.



© University of Toronto Scarborough

Greening Toronto’s School Grounds

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is the largest school board in Canada serving 247,000 students in 583 schools and is one of the largest landowners in Toronto. The TDSB is strategically planting native trees on school grounds across Toronto, striving to provide a vibrant, healthy and diverse urban forest so that all students have green spaces to gather and play.



© TDSB

Greening the Story Arts Centre



The Centennial College Story Arts Centre Campus is becoming a more vibrant and greener space for staff, students and community members to enjoy. Portions of the campus will be transformed from grass lawn to naturalized and diverse habitat by planting a variety of native trees,

shrubs and perennials. Work will be undertaken by Centennial College staff and students with attendees learning about the importance of native species, increasing canopy cover and pollinators in urban spaces.



Transforming Our Community and Commercial Spaces



Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) is planting over 1,700 trees in Toronto with the help of

school groups, communities and private property owners as part of the Toronto Tree Cover Project. Eligible residential, commercial, industrial and institutional landowners can take advantage of TRCA’s tree planting expertise and services including consultation with TRCA staff and the supply, delivery and installation of native trees and shrubs and help expand Toronto’s urban forest.



© TRCA

Success Stories

Partners in Community Greening

Over 650 trees and shrubs have been planted across 40 properties of Canada’s largest social housing provider, Toronto Community Housing (TCH) since 2018. This is the result of a first-of-its-kind partnership between LEAF, TCH, and the City of Toronto.

With funding from the City of Toronto, LEAF is able to engage with TCH tenants and facilities management staff in developing planting plans for TCH sites with low canopy cover. The City of Toronto will then supply and install large caliper trees. Once planted, the trees are cared for by tree care teams made up of local tenants and site staff who have received hands-on training and resources from LEAF on proper tree care and maintenance to ensure the successful establishment and long-term survival of the trees.



© 2019 Lam Tran/LEAF



© 2019 Lam Tran/LEAF



© 2019 Daniela Serodio/LEAF

Community Grants

These trees provide shade, reduce pollution, intercept rainfall, and increase the quality of life for TCH tenants right across Toronto. This project is made possible through the support of its partners who have helped match the City of Toronto’s grant funding, including Park People, a TD Green Space Grant from TD Bank Group and the Arbor Day Foundation, Cohen & Master Tree and Shrub Services, and TS Arborist Services.

Empowering Indigenous Youth

We are proud to support Nikibii Dawadinna Giigwag – Anishinaabemowin for Flooded Valley Healing – an Indigenous Youth Program that weaves together Elder-led cultural teachings with landscape architecture design & environmental conservation field work.



An employment, mentorship, and pathway to postsecondary education program at the University of Toronto Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design, this program is culturally and spiritually grounded, interdisciplinary, experiential, community engaged, and responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.

Eight youth and two graduate students are employed full-time in the summer through partnerships with Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations. Youth are introduced to a range of knowledges and practices that define our

relations with the environment. They engage in various methods of research, design, and realization of actual green infrastructure projects with partner organizations, including community tree planting, medicine gardens, green roofs, public landscapes, and conservation areas. Teachings shared by Elders, Knowledge Keepers and mentors strengthens participants’ self-confidence, cultural identity, and connection to land through ceremony. The curriculum, training, and mentorship are supportive of the needs, gifts, and voices of the youth.



Grassroots Tree Champions

The Bayview Village Association was one of the first community groups to offer tree giveaways to local residents in 2017 as the City of Toronto began to expand tree planting support on private land.

Since then, the Bayview Village Association has helped match over 800 native trees and shrubs with local residents for planting on private property in Bayview Village and the surrounding area. Their determination and dedication meant that residents were able to continue to have access to native trees and shrubs through curbside pick-up during COVID-19.

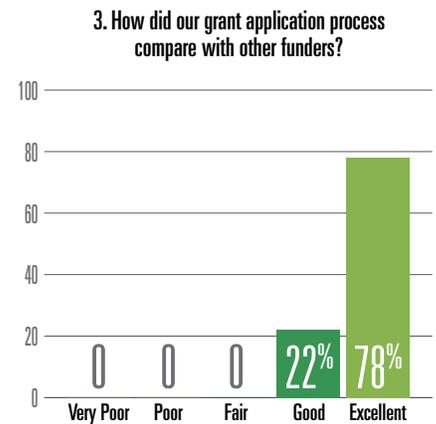
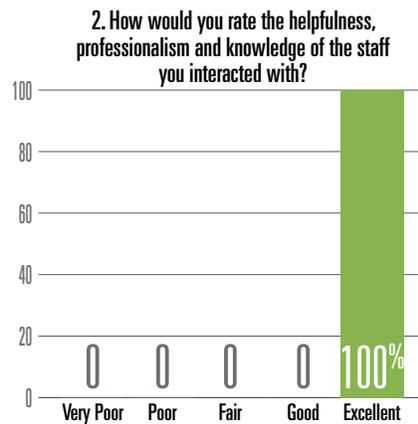
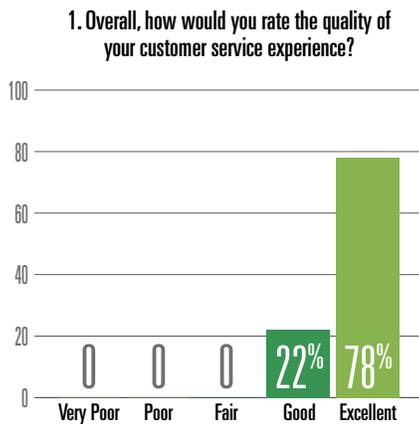


Your Feedback



Our partners provide outstanding experiences to residents across Toronto that inspires action in sustaining and growing the urban forest. Providing our partners with exceptional customer experience is vital to fostering the

kind of partnership and collaborations we need to increase our canopy cover. We asked them how we did and the results are in.



“The technical grant application process (form and templates) were far easier to use than those used in comparable applications from other funders. The grants staff were readily available, professional, and courteous. I look forward to working with them further on this and other funding streams.”

“Excellent experience. It was great having staff there as support and a source of knowledge throughout the application process. Now if only all of our funders provided a customer service experience like this. Thank you!”

“Staff are very knowledgeable and helpful. They respond quickly to any inquires and are very considerate toward applicants/grantees.”

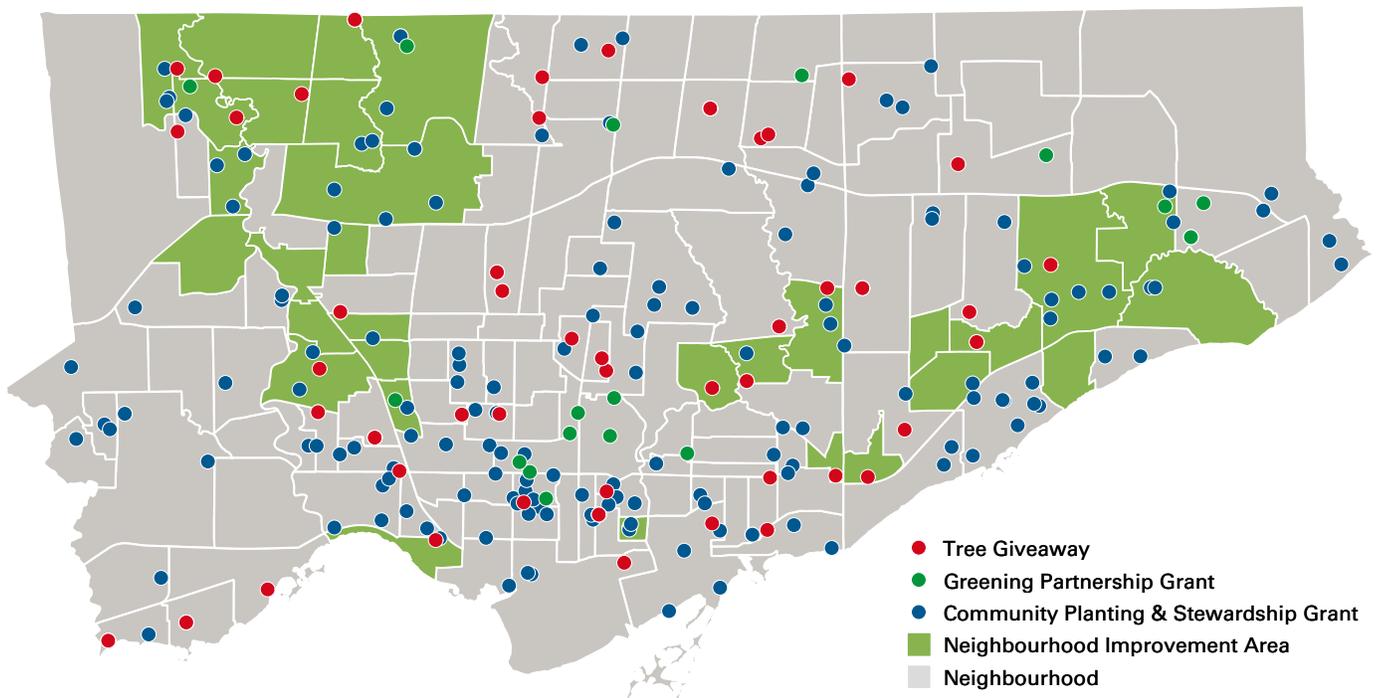
Looking Forward

Transforming the Way We Grant

An exciting new cloud-based grants management system will transform the way grants are awarded and administered. The new Toronto Grants, Rebates and Incentives Portal (TGRIP) will mean a one-window approach for our partners, where they can apply for funding, enter into agreements, and complete all reporting in a single system so they can spend less time on paperwork and more time

focusing on their mission. For City staff, this means a new enterprise-wide system that will increase staff productivity, support cross-Divisional data sharing and improve customer service and client relationships. This will support a more strategic approach to grant-making that is rooted in data-driven decision-making. Stay tuned for more details as we look to roll out the new system in 2021.

Grant Project and Giveaway Sites in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (2017-2020)



Closing the Gap

Ensuring equitable distribution of canopy cover goes hand in hand with the City of Toronto's equity and inclusion strategies. We are proud that the projects we fund have helped remove barriers and increased access to trees and their many benefits right across Toronto. Ensuring that our programs remain fair, inclusive, and accessible to all residents is a continuous process that requires a systematic approach.

In 2021, an equity lens and framework will be further integrated into how we design our funding programs and how we evaluate and fund individual projects. This means assessing equity impacts at the application stage, and using a data-driven approach to measuring, analyzing, and addressing gaps to outcomes and equitable distribution of canopy cover.

Our Team



Amory Ngan,
Project Manager,
Tree Planting Strategy



Tara Mabon,
Operations Support Officer

Grant Review Panel

The Grant Review Panel is composed of City staff and independent external experts who evaluate grant applications and make funding recommendations. We are very grateful to the many individuals who have shared their knowledge, experience and expertise as members on the various Grant Review Panels between 2017 and 2020.

- Trena Cesario
- Uyen Dias
- Carolyn Doyle
- Ann Marie Farrugia
- Jacqueline Hamilton
- Jennifer Hoffman
- Lisa Kohler
- Anne Koven
- Augusto Mathias
- Megan McCrae
- Amory Ngan
- Barbara Powell
- Christine Tu
- Ray Vendrig

Leadership Team

Janie Romoff
General Manager,
Parks, Forestry and
Recreation

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry

Ray Vendrig
Manager, Urban Forest
Renewal

A healthy and expanding urban forest, incorporating sound urban forestry practices and community partnership

10 year vision of Strategic Forest Management Plan

Thank you

A sincere thank you to City Council, senior management, and to all our partners and supporters who make our work possible.

We are especially grateful to the Community Funding Unit in the Social Development, Finance & Administration Division for their incredible support, advice, and guidance in the development of the Urban Forestry Grants and Incentives Program from its inception. Thank you to Barbara Powell and the rest of her team.

We would also like to thank the urban forestry staff whose invaluable contributions have paved the way for the work we do today, including Ray Vendrig, Connie Pinto, Dan Hammerschlag, and many others.



Contact Us

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f Nature in the City
t @TOTrees