

**City Council****Motion Without Notice**

MM36.31	ACTION			Ward: All
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**Strengthening Tree Protection - by Councillor Jaye Robinson, seconded by Councillor Mike Colle**

*\* Notice of this Motion has not been given. A two-thirds vote is required to waive notice.  
\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Planning and Housing Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.  
\* This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

**Recommendations**

Councillor Jaye Robinson, seconded by Councillor Mike Colle, recommends that:

1. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to provide additional annual training to Committee of Adjustment and Toronto Local Appeal Body members on the valuation of trees and ecosystem services.
2. City Council request the General Manager, Parks Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building and the City Solicitor, to refine the Tree Declaration Form as part of the Building Permit application process to further clarify Tree By-law requirements.
3. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, to include in the upcoming report to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee, consideration of developing updated educational materials on Toronto's Tree By-laws and Tree Protection Zones, including information on the consequences of By-law violations and how residents can report contraventions, to be posted on the City of Toronto's website and included in future materials.

**Summary**

Toronto is known around the world for its abundance of parks, expansive greenspaces, and sprawling ravine network. With an estimated 11.5 million trees, Toronto's canopy coverage is an impressive 28-31 percent and provides annual benefits worth over \$55 million, including carbon sequestration, pollution removal, energy savings, and runoff reductions. When healthy, mature trees are removed, it takes decades or even centuries for saplings to restore their benefits.

The City has invested significant resources in protecting and enhancing Toronto's tree canopy. In 2017, City Council adopted the Toronto Ravine Strategy, providing an interdivisional

framework for the management of our precious ravine system. City Council has also taken numerous steps to emphasize the importance of trees in the development review process, including introducing annual training for Committee of Adjustment members on Tree By-law related considerations in development applications.

Despite the progress the City has made on tree protection and preservation, mature trees are still not routinely prioritized in the minor variance process. Recently, the Committee of Adjustment approved a minor variance application which resulted in the removal of an approximately 250-year-old Sugar Maple tree, despite a memo from Urban Forestry recommending the application be refused. In many cases removals occur without proper permits, leaving residents to navigate By-laws and educate themselves on opportunities for engagement with very little time to respond.

This Motion is urgent because new tree removal permits and minor variance applications are submitted every day, and urgent action is needed to prevent the unpermitted removal of trees, reinforce their value in the planning process, and provide residents the information necessary to report Tree By-law contraventions.

### **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM36.31