

02/02/2026



City Clerk
City of Toronto
c/o Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON. M5H 2N2

RE: PH27.1 – Growing Space for Trees: Protecting and Enhancing the Tree Canopy While **Supporting Infill Housing and Addressing Concerns with Iceberg Homes** – Opposition to Reclassification of Pools and Hot Tubs

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

I am writing on behalf of Solda Pools Ltd., a Greater Toronto Area-based swimming pool and hot tub company that has served Toronto homeowners for over four decades.

We support the City of Toronto's efforts to protect and enhance the urban tree canopy and to address concerns related to oversized residential development. However, we respectfully wish to raise concerns regarding the proposed amendment that would reclassify outdoor swimming pools and hot tubs so they no longer qualify as soft landscaping within rear yards.

Although this amendment may appear technical, we believe it would result in several unintended and consequential impacts:

- Excluding pool and hot tub water surfaces from soft landscaping calculations would cause many otherwise compliant backyard projects to fall below required landscaping thresholds on a technical basis, even where substantial planting and green space are provided.
- This change would significantly increase the number of applications requiring minor variances.
- Homeowners would experience increased costs, delays, and uncertainty.
- Additional pressures would be placed on the Committee of Adjustment and City staff for matters unrelated to building mass or substantive hardscape expansion.

Swimming pools and hot tubs are not equivalent to hard paving or building mass. They are non-occupiable water bodies that are typically integrated into landscaped environments, frequently accompanied by permeable surfaces and planting plans, and can be designed to fully comply with tree preservation, drainage, and stormwater management requirements.

A blanket exclusion of these features does not sufficiently distinguish between structural hardscape and contained amenity water features.

In addition, backyard pools and hot tubs provide demonstrable social and health benefits, including serving as multi-generational gathering spaces, supporting local “staycation” activity, offering low-impact and therapeutic exercise opportunities, and creating safe, supervised environments for swimming and water-safety instruction.

In light of the above, we respectfully request that Council consider the following actions:

1. Remove or amend the proposed provisions that exclude swimming pool and hot tub water surfaces from rear-yard soft landscaping calculations; and/or
2. Direct staff to develop a more balanced policy framework that advances tree canopy objectives while permitting reasonable backyard amenities where tree preservation and drainage standards are satisfied.

We respectfully urge Council to avoid unintended policy outcomes that may place unnecessary burdens on homeowners and diminish an established residential amenity that provides meaningful social and health value.

Thank you for your consideration. We would welcome the opportunity to participate in further consultation on this matter.

Sincerely,

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