



March 22, 2026

Toronto City Council

Mayor Olivia Chow and City Councillors

**IE 27.8 Tree By-law Review Report**

The Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association (CSVSWRA) supports changes to the Tree By-law that will protect more trees and will enhance protection of our existing tree canopy. Our communities are characterized by lots larger than those found in older parts of the city and are well-treed. Because of our mature trees, we could be described as the lungs of Toronto.

City data shows that the large lots in our community have resulted in significant speculative activity. Starter homes that are relatively affordable are snapped up by profit-driven developers, converted to unlicensed rooming houses and allowed to deteriorate. Once these houses become uninhabitable, they are demolished to make way for large luxury houses. Unfortunately, many by-law protected trees become collateral damage during the process. CSVSWRA urges Toronto City Council to support these changes. The importance of a healthy tree canopy cannot be underestimated, **and is key to Toronto's social and economic viability**. As our planet faces serious consequences caused by climate change, trees reduce daytime urban heat by 9 degrees Celsius, mitigate flooding caused by sudden, severe storms and improve air quality.

City planners, investors and property owners appear **unaware of the enormous benefits that a mature canopy provides as described**. The following table shows the enormous benefits provided by trees that are allowed to mature.

Cumulative Benefits Over 75 Years						
Tree Species	Lifespan (Years) <sup>1</sup>	Time to 30 cm Diameter (Years) <sup>1</sup>	Overall Benefits (C\$)	CO2 Sequestered (kg)	Rainfall Runoff Prevented (litres)	Air Pollution Removed (C\$)
White Pine	200	66	2,099	1,234	164,345	229
Sugar Maple	75	66	1,045	1,369	151,390	121
Silver Maple	100	36	1,396	4,206	207,356	193
Black Maple	200	60	898	2,159	132,101	104
White Oak	200	60	1,294	1,370	222,917	457
Basswood	150	36	1,887	2,269	363,081	290

<sup>1</sup> Will vary with characteristics of where tree planted and ambient climate  
 All scenarios were conducted using iTree v2.11.1 assuming **Good** tree condition and the same location parameters

**Annual Ecosystem Services Performed By Toronto's Trees, 2018 (Source: 2018 iTree Eco data) From: 2018 Toronto Tree Canopy Study**

Benefit	Total Benefit (C\$)
Energy Savings	8,279,540
Gross Carbon Sequestering	4,039,488
Pollution Removal	37,909,683
Avoided Runoff	4,845,926
<b>Total Annual Benefits</b>	<b>55,074,637</b>

CSVSWRA supports the following changes to the Private Tree Bylaw.

### **Lower the Private Tree Bylaw Size Threshold**

Urban Forestry was directed to assess lowering the protected tree size in 2021.

- By 2007, Vaughan, Aurora and Richmond Hill had lowered the protected tree size to 20 cm and over;
- In 2020, Burlington lowered the protected tree size to 20 cm and over;
- In 2022, Mississauga extended protection to tree 15 cm and over and Newmarket lowered the threshold to 20 cm.

The City of Toronto is lagging behind neighbouring municipalities. The protected tree size needs to be lowered to at least 20 cm **immediately**. Protecting smaller trees now is key to protecting our existing tree canopy. We cannot afford to wait until 2027.

### **Increase Fines for Illegal Removal of Bylaw Protected Trees**

Removal of bylaw protected trees without a permit is considered, by some developers, as a cost of doing business. Fines are added onto the construction costs of a building and the end user pays the fine rather than the company that is disregarding the bylaw. Urban Forestry recommends:

- Increased public access to bylaw infractions and permits issued to destroy/damage mature trees;
- Update penalties and fees;
- Increase the ration of replacement trees required for bylaw contraventions;
- Protect newly planted private trees through enforcement actions and development approvals.

CSVSWRA supports higher financial penalties for illegal tree removals. At present, the maximum penalty payable as per the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813 - Trees is \$500 to \$100,000.00, and a special fine of \$100,000.00 under Subsection 370 (1) (d) City of Toronto Act 2006. How often has the maximum penalty been applied in the City of Toronto?

### **Distinctive Tree Protection**

- The report proposes to provide additional protection to large important trees that are over 61 cm in diameter.

The majority of Toronto residents support increased protection for trees on privately owned property. In particular, 85 per cent agree the City should do more to protect healthy trees on private property and 67 per cent support increased financial penalties.

CSVSWRA urges you to support these important changes to our Private Tree Bylaw.

Yours truly,

Alan J. Burt,

EP, M.Env.Sci, Director, Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association

Attached: [examples of what is happening in our neighbourhoods.](#)

**BEFORE and AFTER**



The new construction dug right to the property line, this raised concerns for safety, as well as for the health of the mature trees on the property line. **Video taken of illegal tree removal over the weekend**  
<https://youtu.be/oPCmS7UJerg>



Character of Oakridge Pre-2016 developments

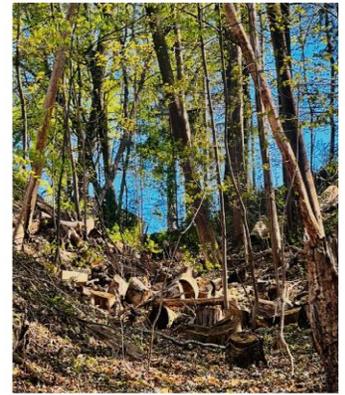


#74 Oakridge now due to OMB over-turning COA decision



Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association

This is not infill, this is creating a new subdivision one house at a time by stealth. Developers are changing our bylaws through variances and consideration is not given to existing residents and environment and our TREES...







See link to “Scarborough Yellow Brick Road”, a Memory Book which is the culmination of work by the Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association, association members, community members and local students to raise awareness about climate change & the importance of the urban tree canopy in Toronto. <https://www.bluffsmonitor.com/wp-content/uploads/flipbook/122/book.html>

What has changed since this 1958 areal photo of Kingston Road looking east from McCowan compared to the second photo .....



It took 70 years to grow our magnificent tree canopy!

