



**City of Toronto**  
**Environment, Climate and Forestry Division**

Tree Bylaw Amendment  
Community Engagement Summary Report

**EVENINGS+**  
**WEEKENDS**  
CONSULTING

October 23, 2025

## Executive Summary

In September 2025, the Environment, Climate and Forestry Division (ECF Division) and Evenings & Weekends Consulting (E&W) conducted community engagement to gather public perspectives on proposed amendments to the tree bylaws and the division's overall approach to future amendments. The goal of this project was to meaningfully engage with key constituency groups, Indigenous community members, and City of Toronto residents to understand their priorities, desired outcomes, and needs regarding tree protection so that the ECF Division's ongoing decision-making is grounded in community input. Through a combination of surveys and focus groups, participants shared strong and constructive feedback on how the bylaws could balance environmental protection, equity, and practicality for residents.

**Overall, participants expressed broad support for the proposed amendments.** Support was particularly strong for lowering the private tree bylaw threshold to 20 cm, increasing penalties and compensation requirements for unauthorized removals; and introducing a new "Distinctive Tree" category to safeguard large, healthy trees. The majority of participants also supported creating of a dedicated fund to support maintenance of mature trees on private property, with clear priority for residents in low canopy and Neighbourhood Improvement Areas; amendments to the Official Plan that incentivize developers to preserve trees during construction; and introducing ravine-related application fees, provided that voluntary stewardship projects remain exempt.

In addition to feedback on the currently proposed amendments, participants emphasized several key themes to guide the ECF Division's ongoing approach. There was a clear desire for **stronger collaboration** between the ECF Division and community members, with participants wanting to be regarded as partners in caring for the urban forest. The majority of participants encouraged integration of **biodiversity goals** into canopy strategies, consider bylaw amendments that formally recognize both the ecological significance of native species, and the **cultural significance of trees to Indigenous communities**. **Education and public awareness** emerged as a recurring priority, with residents strongly suggesting city-wide education initiatives on tree care, bylaw compliance, and the broader benefits of the urban canopy; alongside adoption of a more **transparent, accessible communication approach** around bylaw enforcement, fines, and permit decisions. Finally, participants underscored the importance of **equity in resource distribution** and to continue prioritizing supports in low canopy and equity-deserving neighbourhoods.

Collectively, the feedback affirms strong public support for the proposed bylaw amendments, alongside opportunities to build greater trust, equity, and shared stewardship amongst key constituency groups and City residents.

## Project Introduction

The Environment, Climate and Forestry Division (ECF Division) leads the City of Toronto's work in urban forestry and on key environmental priorities, including Toronto's goal to reach 40% tree canopy cover by 2050. The ECF Division's goal is to help create a thriving city that empowers all communities and maintains Toronto's global leadership in environmental stewardship for future generations. The ECF Division leads the City's response to climate change; maintains, protects, plants, and plans for a more diverse urban forest; supports the development of a circular economy; helps reduce the environmental impact of the City's internal operations; and seeks to build an equitable and resilient city.

In September 2025, the ECF Division contracted Evenings & Weekends Consulting (E&W) to engage with four key constituency groups on the Division's proposed tree bylaw amendments. The current tree bylaws have not been revised since 2015, and since that time the community climate has shifted. As well, previous engagements regarding the bylaws mainly focused on internal business needs, and did not engage city residents.

The goal of this project is to meaningfully engage with key constituency groups – Indigenous community members, arborists, the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), and residents associations – and City residents to understand their priorities, desired outcomes, and needs regarding tree protection so that the ECF Division's ongoing decision-making is grounded in community input.

To support this project, E&W strategists were responsible for:

- Reviewing relevant organizational data including previous engagement reports, current bylaws and proposed amendments.
- Designing a community engagement campaign and facilitating 4 virtual community meetings (focus groups) for key constituency groups.
- Compiling and analyzing insights from these community meetings, alongside quantitative data from the City-administered survey and ECF Division led public consultation sessions, into a summary report that documents process, insights, and recommendations from all participants.

### Summary of Proposed Bylaw Amendments for Review

1. **Private Tree Bylaw Threshold:** The current threshold of 30 cm in diameter protects the most important trees that provide the greatest environmental and social benefit. The City is exploring lowering this threshold to protect more trees earlier in their growth.

2. **Contravention and Enforcement Fees and Fines:** To improve deterrence and incentivize compliance, the City is considering higher financial penalties for tree Bylaw contraventions. This could include supplementary fees for illegal removals, higher fines, and increased compensation requirements.
3. **Distinctive Tree category creation:** A new “Distinctive Tree” category is being considered to recognize and better protect large, healthy trees 61 cm in diameter and over. Under this approach, removal permit applications refused by Urban Forestry would require Community Council approval, while injury permits could continue to be approved by staff.
4. **Incentives for private property owners to protect trees:** the City is considering a dedicated fund to support the care of mature trees on private property that would help offset the cost of maintenance. The City is exploring changes to its Official Plan that would give developers more flexibility in how they design buildings, as long as the design helps preserve protected trees.
5. **Ravine Bylaw Application Fees:** The City is considering introducing fees to help cover the cost of reviewing and processing permits. Voluntary stewardship projects, involving planting native trees, removing invasive species, or restoring habitats, would be exempt from the fees.

## Methodology

Eight community engagement meetings were conducted over a 2 week period from September 15th, 2025 to September 23rd, 2025. The E&W team facilitated 4 virtual meetings; the City facilitated 4 virtual meetings and 2 in-person meetings. Notes from the City-led engagement meetings were shared with the E&W team to be included in the analysis. Additional feedback or questions regarding the tree bylaw amendments sent via email to project staff were also included in the analysis; responses were requested by September 25, 2025. Participants in each meeting as well as interested participants who could not attend the scheduled meeting were invited to send feedback.

Honoraria was distributed to Indigenous participants in the following meetings to honour the traditional knowledge shared: Missisaugas of Skugog Island First Nation; Six Nations of the Grand River; and Urban Indigenous Community Members.

During each meeting, City staff presented information on the context and content of the proposed bylaw amendments to frame the following discussion, and answered questions and recorded comments on these topics. Then, participants were facilitated through a series of questions designed to engage community members on specific feedback

regarding the proposed bylaw amendments; and their priorities, desired outcomes, and needs regarding tree protection. The questions can be found in [Appendix A](#).

A virtual engagement survey was conducted in conjunction with the community engagement meetings between September 1st to 24th, 2025. The survey was administered directly by the City of Toronto, using their own data collection platform. A spreadsheet of the raw data collected was shared with the E&W team for analysis. More information on the survey’s methodology can be found in the [Survey Insights section](#).

In total, the project engaged 6,577 participants.

<b>Community Meeting (In alphabetical order)</b>	<b>Date or duration</b>	<b>Participants Engaged</b>
Arborists	September 15, 2025   9:30am-11:00am	43
Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD)	September 15, 2025   1:00pm-2:30pm	2
Mississaugas of Skugog Island First Nation	September 22, 2025   4:00pm -5:00pm	2
Public Consultation   North York Reference Library	September 15, 2025   5:00pm-8:00pm	11
Public Consultation   Long Branch Public Library	September 17, 2025   2:00pm-5:00pm	16
Public Consultation   Virtual	September 15, 2025   6:30pm-8:00pm	19
Public Consultation   Virtual	September 17, 2025   11:00am-12:30pm	15
Resident Associations	September 16, 2025   11:00am-12:30pm	25
Six Nations of the Grand River	September 23, 2025   1:30pm-2:30pm	1
Urban Indigenous Community Members	September 16, 2025   2:00pm-3:30pm	3
Engagement Survey	September 1-24, 2025	6,430
Additional Feedback via Email	September 1-25, 2025	10
<b>TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS</b>		<b>6,577</b>

# Community Engagement Meeting Summaries

## Consultations with Constituency Groups

**Arborists Meeting** September 15, 2025 | 9:30-11:00 AM | Virtual  
43 participants at start

### Considerations for Proposed Amendments

#### Lowering the Private Tree Bylaw Size Threshold

- There was no clear consensus regarding the proposal to lower the private tree bylaw size threshold.
- Some participants, regardless of their approval of the amendment, felt that other aspects such as type of trees (natives vs. invasives), overall health, and crown coverage should also be considered alongside the DBH threshold.
- Some participants felt that further reducing the threshold will likely result in less compliance from homeowners and residents, as many already feel that the permit application fees, tree replacement costs, and the process overall are viewed as prohibitive.
- Participants acknowledged that the review of the threshold is inevitable as many other cities have lowered their threshold for tree protection.
- Some participants indicated that they appreciate the City’s approach to looking at the maximum stem size as part of the threshold.

#### Selected comments

*“Measurements should be re-centred around best management practices to ensure consistency across different regimes.”*

*“The bylaw exemption requirement for trees to be 100% dead, rather than 70% puts people in an awkward position. They either need to wait for the tree to fully die, which puts owners and arborists in a dangerous position.”*

#### Compliance and Enforcement

- Participants did not engage specifically on the proposed amendment regarding the contravention and enforcement fees and fines, but many expressed concerns around the current system of enforcement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One participant shared that they view the current enforcement system as reactive rather than being proactive, and others shared that there are perceived issues with a lack of enforcement over the weekend.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comments</b></p> <p><i>“It’s a reactive enforcement system currently. We could establish a licensing system for companies - generates revenues and improves transparency.”</i></p> <p><i>“There are a lot of trees that seem to be removed over the weekend, would you increase the bylaw officers to be available on weekends.”</i></p>
<p><b>Distinctive Tree Category</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some participants expressed concerns about Community Council members lacking the technical expertise or understanding of strategic canopy growth goals to make informed decisions on tree removals.</li> <li>• The involvement of Community Councils was also named by one participant as slowing down an already lengthy permit approval process for the individual property owners they work with.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tree Preservation Incentive</b></p>	<p>No direct input provided by participants.</p>
<p><b>Ravine Bylaw Application Fees</b></p>	<p>No direct input provided by participants.</p>
<p><b>Considerations for Overall Bylaw Approach</b></p>	
<p><b>The benefits of trees and urban forest</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants felt that trees have immense benefits on their personal physical and mental wellbeing, as well as many benefits on their broader communities as a whole.</li> <li>• Participants noted that trees and Toronto’s urban forest can offer significant financial benefits to residents, with positive impacts on wastewater management and health outcomes reducing overall costs for municipalities and households.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comments</b></p> <p><i>“The urban forest is invaluable to my way of life (beauty/ecology/breathing/shade/health) - I regard them very highly.”</i></p> <p><i>“Tree coverage can actually decrease taxes for residents because costs are saved in other areas of health and wellbeing. Let’s communicate this impact more holistically.”</i></p>

<p><b>Communication &amp; public education</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beyond the more obvious positive impact on mental health that trees and urban forest provides, some participants pointed out that trees can offer tax or cost saving opportunities for individuals, and that these benefits are often unknown to the general public.</li> <li>● One attendee also shared that some residents see trees as a nuisance (i.e. preventing them from being able to develop on lands) and that with increased education, individuals may be more aware of the benefits trees can bring. Another participant expressed that they would like to see conversation around the benefits of trees to start in school. Several participants mentioned that there is still a lot of work to be done by the City to communicate the positive impacts of trees and that in a city as diverse as Toronto, there is also work to be done to showcase the various cultural and spiritual connections and relationships to trees and the urban forest.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comments</b></p> <p><i>“Some citizens see trees as a barrier to development, which stops them from building. We can change that narrative and emphasize the benefits that trees offer.”</i></p> <p><i>“I keep thinking about public education and awareness. People don’t know why trees need to be protected.”</i></p>
<p><b>Invasive vs native trees</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Multiple participants brought up that the City currently uses the same approach to tree protection whether the tree is a native or invasive species, and that bylaws should accommodate exemptions for the removal of invasive trees. They also expressed concerns around the fact that residents who want to remove invasive tree species from their private yard that meet the current or proposed threshold have to potentially bear significant costs to be able to remove these trees.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comment</b></p> <p><i>“Naturalization requires a city-wide exemption around species that are regulated under Ontario’s invasive species act. Written authorization is currently required, but the City protects the tree of heaven as though it was any other tree.”</i></p>
<p><b>Administration, permit fees &amp; other requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participants shared some feedback and concerns about the existing permit and application process; mainly regarding the length of time to obtain a permit, the current flat fee structure that feels inequitable for low income residents, especially for those who move into homes and later discover they must spend additional resources to deal with a lot of invasive or hazardous trees.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comments</b></p>

*“The deposit return speed is highly variable, but often drags on for weeks or months. Homeowners can be strapped for cash, so the \$5-10k is really challenging for people. Can this process be simplified to expedited payment?”*

*“If someone buys a house and the backyard is filled with invasive trees, and they now need a permit for every tree, it will be arduous and cost-prohibitive. Will there be considerations around making certain invasive species exempt?”*

*“Permits take so long that some owners choose not to do it the proper way to avoid it.”*

- Participants also identified opportunities to improve the current process and increase transparency. These recommendations included putting more of the onus on the consulting arborist during the development process (for development applications), ensuring that submissions are done by certified arborists and allowing public access to tree removal/injury permits (similar to building permits).

**Selected comments**

*“There is currently no way for individuals to independently verify city tree permits. This creates distrust among the community, people become irate as they believe we are acting in bad faith. There’s a feeling of inequity, as in some areas of the City challenges every decision and in other areas it’s a “free for all” where arborist companies are acting rogue.”*

**Building Industry  
and Land  
Development  
(BILD) Meeting**

September 15, 2025 | 1:00-2:30 PM | Virtual  
2 participants at start

**Considerations for Proposed Amendments**

**Lowering the Private  
Tree Bylaw Size  
Threshold**

- One participant brought up strong concerns around this specific proposed tree bylaw. They shared that in light of a national housing crisis, additional “red tape” placed on tree protection will negatively impact developers’ ability to efficiently increase housing supply. From their perspective, there is a need for a careful balance that cannot be solely based on the diameter of the tree. They encouraged seeking other options to offset tree loss that are fiscally responsible for developers.

<p><b>Compliance and Enforcement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One participant shared that the cost implications of escalating fees is a challenge for builders and developers, especially in the context of building more affordable housing. They expressed that higher penalties and application fees will limit the developers’ ability or willingness to take on certain projects.</li> <li>● The same participant shared that developers have competing obligations that they need to meet in a timely manner, and higher fees and fines may hinder their ability to meet those obligations required to develop housing supply. (e.g. delays due to permit obtention process for tree removal may compete with the terms from the sales agreements that outlines when a project needs to be delivered by)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Distinctive Tree Category</b></p>	<p>No direct input provided by participants, but the group expressed not being in favour of any of the proposed amendments.</p>
<p><b>Tree Preservation Incentive</b></p>	<p>No direct input provided by participants, but the group expressed not being in favour of any of the proposed amendments.</p>
<p><b>Ravine Bylaw Application Fees</b></p>	<p>No direct input provided by participants, but the group expressed not being in favour of any of the proposed amendments.</p>
<p><b>Considerations for Overall Bylaw Approach</b></p>	
<p><b>The benefits of trees and urban forest</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One participant shared that, as a resident, they see both the benefits and concerns of having trees in the neighbourhood. They provide shade during hot summers, but also can be disruptive when there are major storms (e.g. branches coming down and blocking streets).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Shift focus to meeting clearly defined targets</b></p>	<p>One participant shared that from an industry perspective, all the proposed amendments would implement “red tape” that is problematic in the middle of a national housing shortage and crisis. Their recommendation was to focus on setting and meeting clear targets (e.g. tree canopy and coverage) but not proceed with any of the new proposed bylaw amendments, or future amendments that politicize tree canopy development (e.g. involve Community Councils in the permit process).</p>

<b>Socializing the proposed changes and internal consultation</b>	One participant expressed concerns how these changes may be in conflict with other priorities from the city and departments, such as the building and planning division, and questioned what the current process was to engage this part of the City in the process. They also indicated that BILD would like to engage in further conversation once the City’s ECF Division has a clearer sense of what directions the proposed amendments will take.
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<b>Residents Associations</b>	September 16, 2025   11:00 AM-12:30 PM   Virtual 25 participants at start
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<b>Considerations for Proposed Amendments</b>	
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<b>Lowering the Private Tree Bylaw Size Threshold</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few participants supported this amendment, but emphasized that other considerations must be taken into account before offering a sweeping protection threshold: namely, that invasive species should not be included even if their diameter meets the lowered threshold.</li> </ul>
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<b>Compliance and Enforcement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many participants expressed support for higher fees and fines for bylaw contravention alongside concerns that the bylaws are not being enforced effectively to begin with; as well, with lack of oversight, illegal tree removal and their financial penalties will be interpreted as “the cost of doing business” by land development projects and individual property owners, rather than a deterrent.</li> <li>• Many participants shared stories involving frustration and confusion when attempting to report tree bylaw contraventions. They named long and ineffective timelines for action, inaccurate information from 311, and lack of enforcement availability on weekends and evenings.</li> <li>• One participant noted that residents must also be involved in supporting the bylaws and their effectiveness; they have a voice in requesting the City better distribute resources for bylaw enforcement to meet participants’ concerns.</li> </ul>
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**Selected comments**

*“More trees would have been saved if the tree bylaws office had more resources.”*

*“It is prudent for all of us to request more funding for bylaws if we are individually witnessing that enforcement is not happening. We should do that as residents.”*

<b>Distinctive Tree Category</b>	No direct input provided by participants.
<b>Tree Preservation Incentive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants agreed with the approach outlined by the proposed fund supporting residents with tree maintenance, especially for newly planted trees.</li> </ul>
<b>Ravine Bylaw Application Fees</b>	No direct input provided by participants.
<b>Considerations for Overall Bylaw Approach</b>	
<b>The benefits of trees and the urban forest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several participants expressed the urban forest is important to their well-being, and key to a healthy environment.</li> <li>One participant said the forest is calming, and they enjoy visiting other neighbourhoods to enjoy their mature canopy in the absence of one in their own neighbourhood.</li> <li>Several participants stressed the need for tree protection, and consideration for the impacts on people’s way of life (e.g. lack of shade makes it unpleasant to spend time outdoors); and the long period of time needed for new trees to mature.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comments</b></p> <p><i>“The urban forest is hugely important. I used to have silver maple in every house in my neighbourhood that provided shade. Lots have now died of natural causes, but people are not replanting new trees and I feel like it’s very hot without any shade. Residents should be encouraged to replant trees.”</i></p>
<b>Transparency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several participants expressed that increased transparency directly affects their confidence in the bylaw system overall. For example, some participants expressed they were not sure where to go to understand the outcomes of their reported issues or contraventions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comments</b></p> <p><i>“It would be nice to also be able to see what’s going on in terms of tree status in individual neighborhoods so you can check if someone has been allowed to cut down a tree or not.”</i></p> <p><i>“We don’t know what the outcomes are when we report issues or contraventions to the city. Would appreciate knowing what had been done.”</i></p>

- One participant noted that building permits and their related decisions are publicly viewable on a portal, and the City could consider a similar tool to increase transparent communication.

**Selected comment**

*“An interesting topic coming up is that neighbours or members of the public do not have visibility into permits or compliance enforcement from the City. Unlike Building Permits, for example, where it’s all publicly viewable on a portal. It could boost transparency and confidence in the system for these materials to be made public.”*

**Biodiversity and Invasive vs. native species**

- A key consideration expressed by many participants was that all bylaw amendments should reflect biodiversity as an outcome and prioritize ecologically appropriate planting. As much as possible, bylaws should encourage the promotion and protection of native species and the removal of invasive tree species.

**Selected comment**

*“It’s not just a question of the tree. What species is this tree, how does it contribute to biodiversity, the overall tree canopy. Some trees are more important to wildlife than others. It is important for the bylaws to take this into consideration.”*

- This included suggestions for permit exemptions and easier removal for invasive tree species, as long as they are supplemented with a replacement plan – for example, Norway maples or tree of heaven, which provide canopy but at the expense of other native trees’ growth.

**Selected comment**

*“It is important to acknowledge biodiversity as an outcome. bylaws don’t seem to make a lot of difference between native and non native species. I’m unclear about how it actually works - are there guiding bylaws for navigating invasive species in the ravine for private individuals? Bylaws need to have more of a focus on native trees and taking into consideration the overall environment.”*

**Advocacy needs**

- Participants agreed that the bylaws are a useful tool to support tree protection efforts, and are indicative of the City’s commitment to growing its tree canopy.
- However, one participant voiced that bylaws and their enforcement only goes so far, and there is a need to consider how this is also a provincial issue (e.g. provincial laws override bylaws, and provincial government favours development). A suggestion was made to collaborate with other municipalities to push back against provincial approaches.

**Selected comment**

*"We see developers gaming the system , there is an inability to deal with the planning approval to support protecting trees and canopy. Council needs to make a strong plea and work with other municipalities to oppose provinces' approach to respect this matter."*

## Consultations with First Nations Community Members

<b>Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation</b>	
September 22, 2025   4:00-5:00   Virtual 2 participants at start	
<b>Considerations for Proposed Amendments</b>	
<b>Lowering the Private Tree Bylaw Size Threshold</b>	Support focusing on size as well as the cultural significance of specific species of trees to Indigenous Peoples e.g. sugar maple, which thrives in urban landscapes.
<b>Compliance and Enforcement</b>	There are often trees removed for development purposes and rules are not always clear. There must be inventory and accounting for the number of culturally significant trees before they are impacted so there is an accurate record for enforcement.
<b>Distinctive Tree Category</b>	Fully support this initiative.
<b>Tree Preservation Incentive</b>	Concern about the definition of "healthy" and that being used to remove trees when some are more resilient and contribute to the landscape and ecosystem e.g. Ash trees can bounce back and are an important part of the ecosystem but some may be currently defined as unhealthy.
<b>Ravine Bylaw Application Fees</b>	Interested in participating in permit reviews. More collaboration can enhance relationships and work towards a partnership to ensure the health of the ravine ecosystem. While this doesn't trigger the duty to consult, still support leveraging municipality relationships. Suggestion to bring in Federal funding to help promote stewardship.
<b>Considerations for Overall Bylaw Approach</b>	

<p><b>Protecting culturally significant trees and practices</b></p>	<p>Some trees have cultural significance and must be protected and/or Indigenous Peoples must be compensated if they are impacted, including accounting for Indigenous spiritual and cultural loss.</p> <p>Williams Treaty territories can provide a list of culturally significant trees and work with partners to address concerns. Metrolinx is an example of a working partnership.</p> <p>While size is addressed, bylaws should also address cultural impact, native species.</p> <p>Many Indigenous Peoples have cultural and spiritual practices attached to trees and ecosystems e.g. foraging, harvesting. Cultural knowledge is connected to place.</p> <p><b>Selected comment</b></p> <p><i>“Having a municipality recognize the cultural significance is unprecedented.”</i></p>
<p><b>Strengthening relationships</b></p>	<p>Ongoing collaboration and partnership with Indigenous Peoples is necessary. Anishinaabe have a responsibility to steward the land; protect land, water, and non-human relations.</p>
<p><b>Climate change and sustainability</b></p>	<p>Must balance development and green spaces. Proposal to collect seeds before trees are removed to preserve genetic lineage after they are removed. Concerns raised about non-native trees and their impact and ability to thrive.</p> <p><b>Selected comment</b></p> <p><i>“Climate change is here.”</i></p>

**Urban Indigenous Community Members Meeting** September 16, 2025 | 2:00-3:30 PM | Virtual  
3 participants at start

**Considerations for Proposed Amendments**

<p><b>Lowering the Private Tree Bylaw Size Threshold</b></p>	<p>No direct input provided by participants.</p>
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<p><b>Compliance and Enforcement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One participant shared that they don't believe that more enforcement will have positive results, and that the City should instead focus more on educating residents about the benefits of trees, and existing bylaws.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comment</b></p> <p><i>"I don't think enforcement is the way to go, when folks on the receiving end can afford the ticket anyway. We need more education. And then maybe when there is enforcement, it's more than a fine, but a criminal charge."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One participant shared that while they have seen a lot of efforts to support replanting trees when a tree has been taken down, what they've witnessed is that often the trees that are planted are not a species that can thrive in the specific environment, and will likely not survive in the long run. They raised a need for more education or support with land stewardship from the City.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comment</b></p> <p><i>"If people are given property rights and are building large-scale businesses on the land, it should be mandatory that they be educated about what they're about to tear down. People have put in lots of replanting in the Cherry Beach area, for example, but what they're planting won't do well there. And the waterfront, an ecological masterpiece, isn't being properly taken care of, and needs to be."</i></p>
<p><b>Distinctive Tree Category</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants did not specifically provide input on this proposed amendment, but did discuss the Ontario Heritage Tree Program whose discontinuation influenced the current proposed amendment for a Distinctive Tree designation.</li> <li>One participant shared concerns around the very low number of designated heritage trees in the City, and the lack of recognition that certain tree species have significant meanings for Indigenous communities. They expressed that the City should explore the opportunity to recognize and protect more old trees as heritage trees, and to find ways to increase and preserve trees that offer food,</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comment</b></p> <p><i>"If you're seeking to respect cultural practices, you don't cut a tree unless you actually need to. Cedar trees and maple saplings in particular are hard to find, and we use a lot of cedar and maple saplings in ceremony."</i></p>
<p><b>Tree Preservation Incentive</b></p>	<p>No direct input provided by participants.</p>
<p><b>Ravine Bylaw Application Fees</b></p>	<p>No direct input provided by participants.</p>

## Considerations for Overall Bylaw Approach

### The benefits of trees and urban forest

- All participants expressed the significance of trees. It was noted that rather than just perceiving trees as capable of providing beneficial resources to us, it is our responsibility to respect and care for trees.
- One participant noted that for many urban Indigenous people in Toronto, there may have been limited opportunities to engage with the land growing up and the City is well positioned to cultivate a landscape where all people, especially Indigenous peoples, can engage with land stewardship, ceremony, and traditional or spiritual practices involving trees.

#### Selected comment

*“The trees are very significant to our way of life as Indigenous people. The trees don’t need us to survive; we need them. They provide us with shelter, ceremony, food. We live off the land. Trees are spiritual beings and our relatives, and before we cut them down, we talk to them. The spirit of trees and animals watch us in the bush – a validation that they’re there, and doing well, and protecting us. People get upset with Indigenous folks when we want to protect the earth, but our trees are so important to us. We seek to honour them. My kids won’t even hit a tree.”*

### Education and shifting public perceptions

- All participants indicated that there is a real need for education around the benefits of trees and best practices in land stewardship. One participant raised that education on such topics is especially important for children and youth.

#### Selected comments

*“More programming for educating children on the importance of land stewardship and how to talk to trees, identify them and their ages, respect them. I do that with my own kids.”*

*“Kids learning what the City’s tree bylaws even are would be helpful.”*

### Land stewardship and dealing with invasive species

- Participants raised concerns around the perceived lack of proper land stewardship or how land stewardship seems to be more of an afterthought rather than seen as a priority. Their comments seemed to be more towards land stewardship on public or large development areas than private backyards. There were also concerns around the lack of distinction between native and invasive tree species, with the latest potentially having significant negative ecological impacts.

#### Selected comment

	<p><i>"We have trees that don't help, invasive species such as Manitoba maples and others, which don't provide nutrients but crowd out others and bring in destructive bugs. The City, which has taken over the "lease" of the land, so to speak, should be responsible for advancing this work. Rather than supporting food sovereignty, we villainize land stewards."</i></p>
<p><b>Indigenous cultural practices and access to spaces with trees</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants all shared how important and significant trees are for Indigenous communities and the interconnected relationships that Indigenous Peoples have with trees. Some shared deep frustrations when it comes to having access to outdoor spaces with trees (and water) for Indigenous cultural practices. The frustrations seem to be of twofold: 1) a lack of access to space (whether public or private), and 2) a lack of understanding about who within the City has the ability to support them with gaining access to these spaces.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comments</b></p> <p><i>"A lot of the existing spaces for cultural practices are too oriented to educating non-Indigenous people, which is important, but as an Indigenous person you need a space for yourself, too. Accessible land stewardship is critical, where you know who to talk to and don't go in circles as you're passed from one department to another."</i></p> <p><i>"People shouldn't need to pay to have access to a community plot. We need access to the land itself and shouldn't need to leave the city for it. When we talk about decolonizing, it's this kind of self-sovereignty and self-determination for Indigenous people that we mean. That's what Land Back is."</i></p>
<p><b>Decision-making influence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One participant noted that although bylaws increasing tree protection efforts and recognition of Indigenous cultural practices are a good start, they do not address the authority of provincial government and its' ability to override municipal decisions. Advocacy is needed to push back against this authority.</li> <li>• In addition, Indigenous communities are often consulted for input on policies or bylaw amendments but are not actually given concrete decision-making influence in the process – this contributes to experiences of tokenization.</li> </ul> <p><b>Selected comment</b></p> <p><i>"I feel frustration at the provincial government superseding municipal laws, regardless of our important cultural practices. There should be pushback against the province, asserting the value of the five points indicated in this question [land-based practices, your individual connection to trees, your communities' connection to trees, cultural practices, and land stewardship.] That could be built into the bylaws. There should be prior Indigenous consultation before any trees are cut down, before a permit is granted. We need more of a voice on City Council as well. A lot of people at the City look at dollar signs more than sustainability for future generations."</i></p>

**Working towards meaningful engagement in decision making process and (re)building trust**

- Several participants expressed some level of concern about the engagement process to discuss the tree amendments. While they acknowledged that such engagements can take a lot of time and resources, some participants felt that rather than seeking their actual inputs on the different amendments, the City was seeking their validation through the session.
- Some participants shared that based on their personal experiences, they do have a lot of mistrust in how engagements are done at the City level with Indigenous community members, and that they often feel like their voices are tokenized. There is a sense that participants would have preferred either being engaged to discuss where they see opportunities to support advancing the City’s tree canopy goals – having a stronger influence or actual decision-making power in the current and future proposed amendments.

**Selected comments**

*“I thought the City’s presentation was informative, but I think it’d be good to go through each of the changes to the bylaws and let us be part of the decision-making – or are these changes already done deals and you’re just presenting it to us for comment? Our recommendation: go slowly one by one through proposed changes, and then let us give our thoughts.”*

*“I was invited to sing for the trees being cut down at Trillium Park, next to Ontario Place – and now some parts of the City say they have no idea that cutting down those trees was happening. So now I don’t trust or work with the City. The City doesn’t get consent from Indigenous peoples, but will tokenize us to do what they wish. And people have no idea that meetings such as today’s are even happening, and many would’ve loved to attend.”*

**Six Nations** September 23, 2025 | 1:30-2:30 | Virtual  
1 participant at start

**Considerations for Proposed Amendments**

**Lowering the Private Tree Bylaw Size Threshold**

No direct input provided by participants.

**Compliance and Enforcement**

Seek recognition for cultural impact of tree removal and replacement with non-native species. Tree needs for them to thrive should be considered, not just developer needs.

<b>Distinctive Tree Category</b>	Consider adding Indigenous names to trees. Currently, very southern/colonial perspective embedded in preservation frameworks. Tree-planting must consider whether trees are native to the area and what their impact could be on the ecosystem.
<b>Tree Preservation Incentive</b>	Prioritize preservation over removal and first assessing how the tree can be maintained or alternatively addressed.
<b>Ravine Bylaw Application Fees</b>	No direct input provided by participants.
<b>Considerations for Overall Bylaw Approach</b>	
<b>Cultural significance of trees</b>	Trees are culturally and spiritually important for Indigenous Peoples and ecosystems and must be protected. They play a large role in Haudenosaunee traditions.
<b>Support for Indigenous Knowledge and ecosystems</b>	Consider the whole ecosystem, not just individual trees. Indigenous knowledge must be preserved and education is important. Offer financial incentives for stewardship to protect ecosystems. Encourage a spirit of preservation and collaboration.

## Public Consultations

<b>Public Consultations: In-Person</b>	September 15, 2025   5:00pm–8:00pm   11 participants at start September 17, 2025   2:00pm–5:00pm   16 participants at start  Note: The notes for both in-person public consultations are combined into one summary.
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<b>Considerations for Proposed Amendments</b>	
<b>Lowering the Private Tree Bylaw Size Threshold</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants were mostly supportive of this initiative. Some were unsure.</li> <li>• Where there was resistance, it included for unspecified reasons (asking for exemption, claiming higher indiscriminate tree volume and real estate development hurdles); financial reasons (employing arborist on top of permit fees); overall valuation logic (native vs invasive trees vs permit exemption for nut-bearing trees that are a ‘nuisance’, whether private or city trees)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some asked for clarification by tree species and diameter relationship or coverage under Private Tree Bylaw</li> <li>● One person agreed with overall goal of protection, growth promotion of trees and canopy, however tempered by ask for unlicensed education on how this isn't just a 'cash grab'</li> </ul>
<b>Compliance and Enforcement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The majority of participants indicated support for this amendment.</li> <li>● Amendment/approach should focus on 'bad actors' - including public education on illegal cutting hotline, balancing consequences with optimal red tape and real estate builder incentives, differentiating between renovations and in-fill housing enforcement, and improving 311 bylaw officer enforcement speed</li> <li>● Financial penalty details - one participant was happy about making fees recoverable through property tax.</li> </ul>
<b>Distinctive Tree Category</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The majority of participants indicated support for this amendment.</li> <li>● Participants suggested clearly incorporating the overall 40% canopy goal by 2050; and introducing an exception appeals process.</li> <li>● Some pushback on detail of 61cm figure, given claim that large trees already protected and will be a hurdle to building much-needed housing supply.</li> <li>● Participants voiced a need to differentiate between native and invasive trees for the distinctive tree category.</li> <li>● Concerns about the procedural experience of Community Council that hopefully isn't expensive - requiring lawyers/experts, and red tape. Participants asked for specific examples of what this process looks like in practice e.g. a case where Urban Forestry staff approves removal/injury permits after in-person inspection and only sending appeals to community council</li> </ul>
<b>Tree Preservation Incentive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The majority of participants indicated support for the Tree Maintenance Fund. Most participants supported the Official Plan amendment but many were unsure.</li> <li>● Majority of participants were concerned about financial aspects - including funding breakdowns and sources, need to couple funding with community education, and eligibility (ie whether or not limited to native trees)</li> <li>● Other concerns include fairness, abuse prevention, confusion around what qualifies as an equity deserving area, the elderly population's ability to physically</li> </ul>

	<p>contribute to preservation, and need to have a 'native philosophically' aligned approach tree protection and ravines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific areas of the City were named as areas of priority for tree replanting and renewal.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ravine Bylaw Application Fees</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most participants were supportive of this amendment.</li> <li>• For participants who opposed this amendment, they voiced concerns around bylaw fees in general (e.g. stifling home building; specific considerations for TRCA, municipal or federal projects; discouraging ravine property owners)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Considerations for Overall Bylaw Approach</b></p>	
	<p>No direct input provided by participants.</p>

<p><b>Public Consultations: Virtual</b></p>	<p>September 15, 2025   6:30pm-8:00pm   19 participants at start September 17, 2025   11:00am-12:30pm   15 participants at start</p> <p>Note: The notes for both virtual public consultations are combined into one summary.</p>
<p><b>Considerations for Proposed Amendments</b></p>	
<p><b>Lowering the Private Tree Bylaw Size Threshold</b></p>	<p>No direct input provided by participants.</p>
<p><b>Compliance and Enforcement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regarding compliance, participants expressed that developers and unlicensed contractors are perpetrators of illegal tree removals, which then go 'unpunished'; however, property owners and contractors generally named as who needs to be held accountable for tree damage</li> <li>• Concern that developer priorities (i.e. garden suites, paving over yards) are what often 'wins' over tree protection.</li> <li>• Inconsistent rules (ie setback distances) across wards undermines tree preservation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regarding the current state of enforcement, participants expressed 311 is seen as ineffective, with residents reporting delays and lack of knowledge about after-hours programs; there is a punitive perception of tree bylaws rather than a supportive view; ‘tree hugger’ label for residents protecting trees; and UF civil lawsuits and lack of coordination reduces impact.</li> <li>● Participants said future approaches to bylaw enforcement must include increased fines/penalties, especially for developers and repeat offenders; improved coordination between Urban Forestry, legal teams, and police. There was a suggestion to make tree bylaws “applicable law” to prevent development from overriding tree protection.</li> <li>● Education component must be interwoven - participants shared experiences of landscapers or arborists misinforming the public; frustration that the heritage tree nomination programs suspended without clear communication; lastly, residents are unaware generally of tree bylaws, ecological policies, and their rights.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Distinctive Tree Category</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The starting point of community value of trees could be used to subset distinctive tree categories, e.g.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ utility - shade, beauty, biodiversity, emotional impact, role in climate resilience</li> <li>○ urban forest benefits - mental well-being, neighborhood character, ecological health</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Participants encourage outlining exemptions from distinctive tree categorization from a small list of invasive species</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tree Preservation Incentive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participants also encouraged the use of ‘carrot-and-stick’ approach that celebrates tree stewardship instead of punishing violations.</li> <li>● A suggestion was made to implement tax breaks for maintaining or planting large trees.</li> <li>● Promoting community programs like NeighbourWoods could accompany any funding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ravine Bylaw Application Fees</b></p>	<p>No direct input provided by participants.</p>
<p><b>Considerations for Overall Bylaw Approach</b></p>	

<p><b>Priority Areas</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tree bylaws should focus on preservation, bylaw compliance and enforcement in ESAs and habitats like High Park’s Black Oak Savannah.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Approach to Tree Maintenance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A pain point named was when trees are poorly pruned / removed, especially by City contractors. A few participants suggested clarifying pruning rules to prevent over-pruning and unnecessary damage; and to address overhanging branches and neighbor disputes with clearer bylaw language</li> </ul>

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## Key Takeaways: Community Engagement Meetings

- **Addressing concerns related to current tree bylaws:** the City may want to consider whether or not they should look at advancing the work needed to address some of the concerns with the current tree bylaws requirements or processes. Common themes that we heard about are related to:
  - Providing exemptions for removing invasive species
  - Decreasing the response time for investigating reported infractions to tree bylaws, or creating an alternative to reporting tree infractions to 311
  - Providing bylaw enforcement options outside of regular working hours (e.g. weekends and evenings)
  - Strengthening public education and awareness on why the City has tree bylaws exist and why they matter, how a healthy tree canopy is a benefit to all community members
  - Ensuring that adequate support for land stewardship is provided to residents who may have either less resources or other limitations to care for their private trees
  - Providing more access/visibility on approved tree removal permits
  - Finding ways to make the existing application process less resource intensive (especially for residents and those who might be low income), and quicker
- **Exploring engagement format for future consultations**
  - Based on the format of the engagements (a presentation with discussions following; and larger number of participants), protecting more time for the discussions would likely allow participants to engage and expand on their thoughts, and lead to collecting more input overall.

- For future engagement on similar topics, consider sharing pre-reading/pre-recorded materials that provide context prior to the meeting. (e.g. Recording the presentation on the proposed tree bylaw amendments) Space at the beginning for a Q&A to answer clarification questions could also be included.
- Consider the level of accessibility of the virtual platform used and/or provide a quick “how to guide” to participants, especially when engaging with groups that may be less likely to be “tech-savvy”.
- For future bylaw amendment consultations, consider doing the initial engagement around broader questions rather than focusing specifically on proposed amendments. This could look like doing an engagement around broad themes (barriers, opportunities, hopes and dreams, what can help to achieve a 40% tree canopy), and then a discernment session that shares the findings from the engagement and the proposed amendments for validation and further discussion.
- For the current proposed amendments to the tree bylaws, we would recommend ensuring that further engagement occurs with the City’s identified groups of interest, such as Indigenous community members.
- To respect the duty to consult and to facilitate ongoing, reciprocal partnerships with Indigenous community members, groups, and nations, we recommend the ECF Division follow these general engagement protocols – alongside considering development of Division-specific protocols for engagement.
  - Involve Indigenous communities as early as possible in the amendment development process. Provide clarity on how and when their insights will be used (what decision-making is being influenced).
  - Meet community members “where they’re at” and ask what information would support their full participation in the meeting.
  - When conducting land / territorial acknowledgements, consider sharing your personal connection or gratitude to the land acknowledged. Acknowledge your familial roots and their connection to the land.
  - Provide a gift (honoraria) to participants that is representative of \$150 per hour of time contributed to respect the wisdom shared, the time/need to make alternate arrangements to attend the meeting, and account for engagement fatigue. From an equity lens, it also accounts for and addresses the fact that some folks in the meeting (like City staff or external consultants) were paid to attend the session, whereas participants we sought for their valued insight are

not paid in a reliable way; perhaps they even had to pay to attend the session. Aim to provide honoraria in a timely manner (e.g. 7 business days).

- Properly credit and uplift the individuals, communities, or organizations whose insight you utilized to inform future deliverables, or external and internal communications.
- As Indigenous identities and communities are not monolithic, seek to build specific protocols for engagement with specific groups/nations in collaboration with them. This could include: how outreach is conducted, how meetings are opened/conducted, location and timing, and different methods for sharing gratitude and/or honoraria,.

## Survey Insights

### Methodology: Survey

The survey was administered directly by the City of Toronto, using their own data collection platform. The survey was open to respondents from September 1st, 2025 to September 24th, 2025. A spreadsheet of the raw data collected was shared with the E&W team for analysis. In total, 6,430 responses were recorded.

For the purpose of the analysis, our team has excluded the responses from respondents who selected that they neither work or live in Toronto (243 responses), or did not continue the survey past the first question (178 responses). As a result, **6,009 responses were included in the analysis below**. While this is a fairly low percentage of responses compared to the amount of residents and workers in the city, the rate of responses should be compared to previous response rates for similar engagements conducted by the City, in order to assess whether the sample size is significant enough to draw clear conclusions on the views of residents.

Respondents were able to skip any questions they wanted to, and our team recorded these skipped responses as “no response.” The percentage of respondents presented in the analysis below includes “no response” responses. In some cases, a significant number of respondents selected that option.

Demographic questions asked were fairly limited, and as a result, it was not possible to identify common themes among specific equity-deserving communities or key constituency groups identified by Urban Forestry (e.g. *property owners versus renters, low income vs high income residents, individuals representing the interest of a developer versus*

*their individual interest, whether respondents identify as Indigenous or part of an equity-deserving community, etc.).* In order to apply an equity lens to our analysis, our team has highlighted data from respondents who indicated living in a Neighbourhood Improvement Area (NIA) via responses to the “What is your postal code?” The postal codes identified as representative of NIAs are listed in [the postal codes table](#). However, a large portion of respondents did not share their postal code or input a typo in their postal code – therefore, the summary may not fully represent the perspectives of these residents.

To allow for a more in-depth analysis, it is recommended that when appropriate, future engagement surveys expand the “About You” section to include questions on household income, race, family structure, gender identity, age, and whether respondents are part of a key constituency groups as identified by the ECF Division (arborists, BILD, Indigenous community members, and members of resident associations). This would allow the ECF Division to identify and address unique needs or areas of opportunities or concerns that may not be surfaced otherwise.

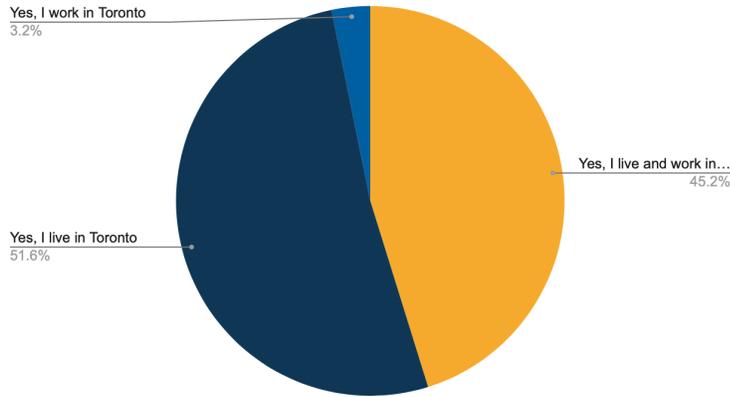
Lastly, as part of our scope of work, we were contracted to conduct an in-depth analysis of the quantitative data generated through the survey. While our team did look at the qualitative data (i.e. open responses), we did not conduct an in-depth qualitative analysis of these data sets. Instead, we looked at emerging or common themes across these open responses – therefore, some nuances may not be surfaced in the summary below.

## **Respondents’ Demographic Profile**

A large portion of respondents did not share their postal code, had typos in their postal codes, and/or lived outside of Toronto (for individuals who selected “Yes, I work in Toronto”). The areas most represented were M6P (3.20%), M6H (2.91%), M6G (2.71%), M6S (2.54%), M4J (2.41%), M4C (2.26%), M4L (2.11%), M5A (2.02%), M4K (1.97%). **17.44%** of respondents are **located in NIAs**.

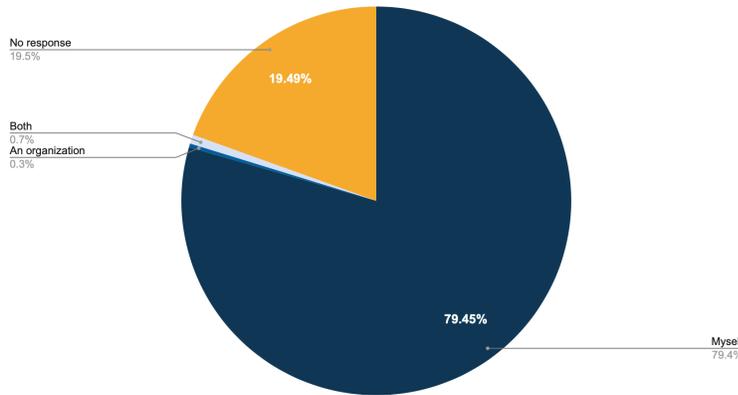
## Connection to Toronto

Do you currently live or work in Toronto (% of respondents)



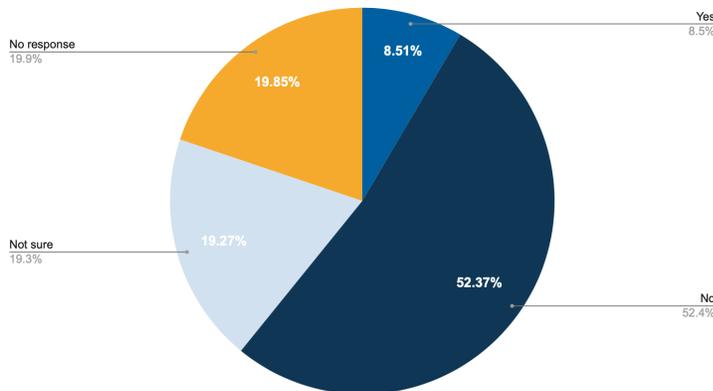
The vast majority of respondents indicated that they either live in Toronto (51.8%) or live and work in Toronto (45.2%). A very small percentage of respondents identified as individuals who only work in Toronto (3.2%).

Are you completing this survey on behalf of yourself or an organization?



The vast majority of respondents completed the survey as individuals. Very few responses were from a respondent representing an organization. However, 19.49% of respondents selected “no response,” making it difficult to know if their perspectives were those of a resident or an organization.

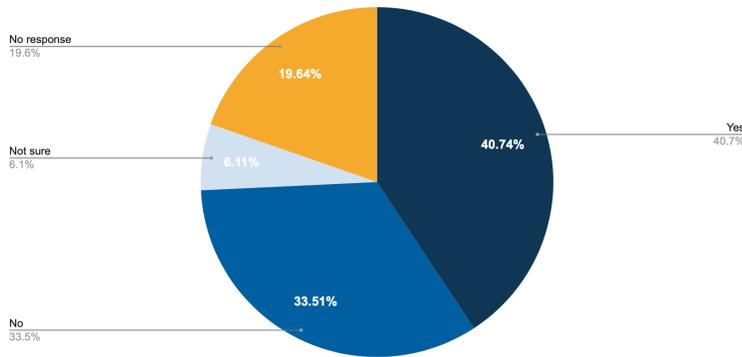
Do you live in a ravine-protected area?



8.5% of respondents stated they live in a ravine-protected area. However, it’s important to note that a fairly significant number of respondents (19.27%) weren’t sure, and are likely unaware of what a ravine-protected area is.

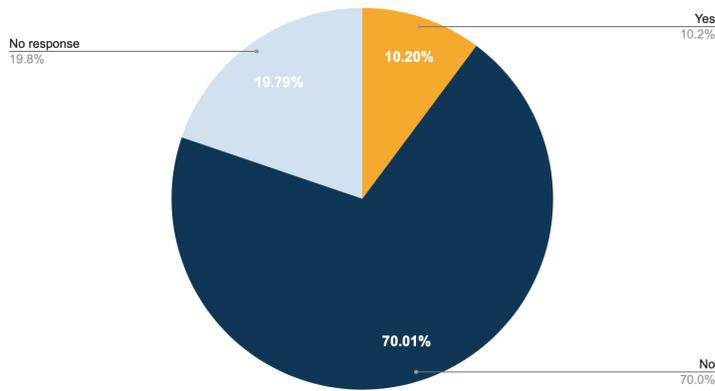
Do you currently have one or more large trees (over 30 cm in diameter) on your property?

40.74% of respondents currently have one or more larger trees on their property.



Have you ever applied for a tree removal or injury permit?

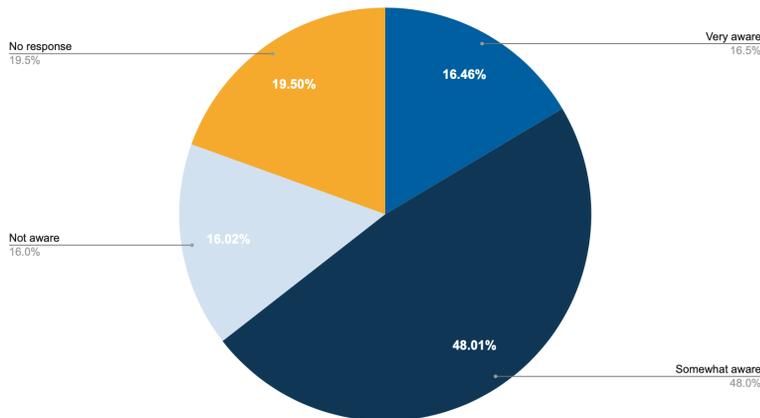
10.2% of respondents have applied for tree removal or injury permits.



The survey did not explicitly ask if individuals had previously removed trees without obtaining a permit, or if they were aware that a permit was required for tree removal or for managing tree injury.

How would you describe your level of awareness of the City's tree by-laws?

48.01% of the respondents indicated that they are somewhat familiar with the City tree bylaws, while 16.46% indicated that they are very aware of these bylaws.

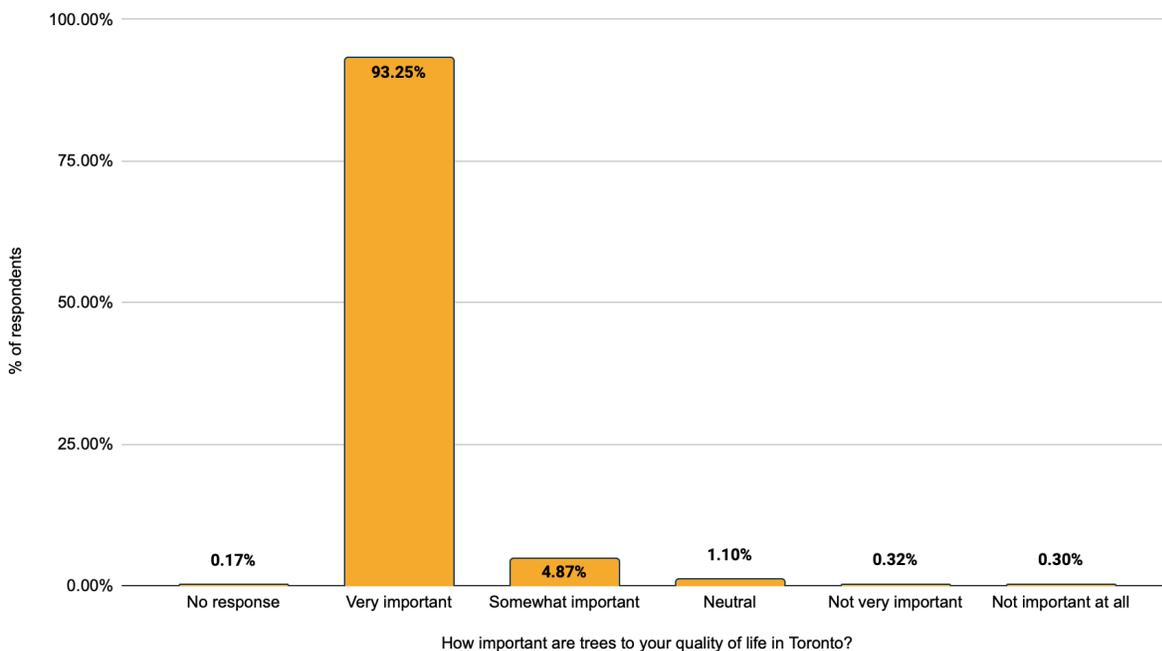


## Respondents' Views on Trees

### View on the importance and values of trees

Quantitative survey data indicates **an overwhelming number of respondents view trees to be “very important” (93.25%) or “somewhat important” (4.87%) to their quality of life in Toronto.** This is in line with the sentiments shared by many participants in the community meetings, who felt that trees were an important aspect of their life and provided many benefits to them, such as physical and mental wellbeing. It is interesting to note that respondents who selected “not very important” or “not important at all” were largely from respondents who either live or live and work in Toronto, indicating that respondents who commute from another city to work in Toronto still acknowledge that tree canopy is important to their quality of life while in Toronto.

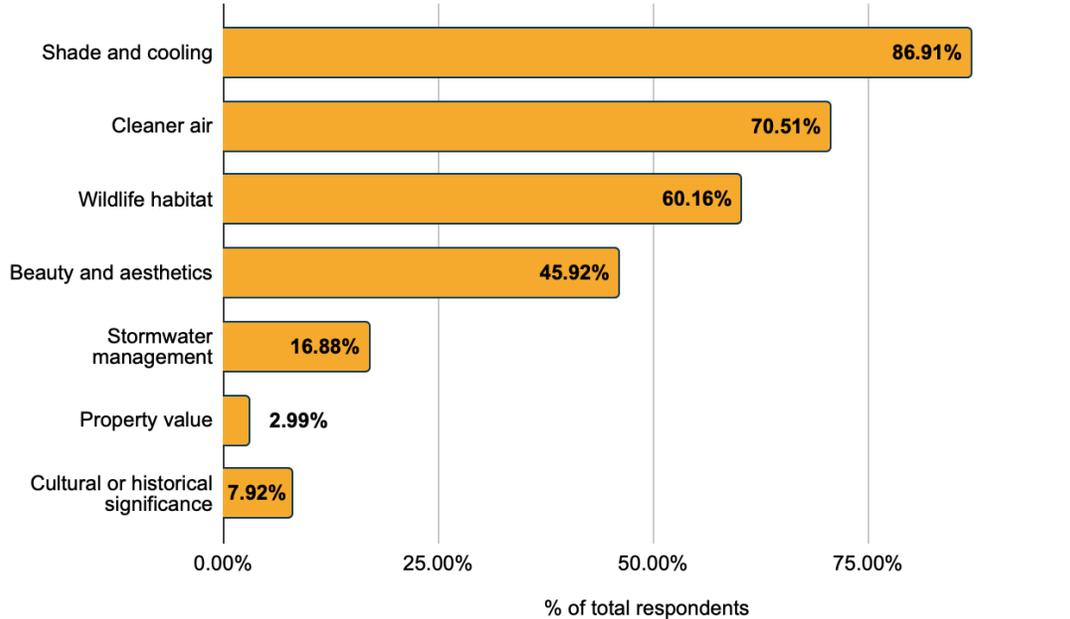
How important are trees to your quality of life in Toronto?



**Respondents were also asked to share the types of benefits they value the most about trees and urban forests. “Shade and cooling”** (selected by 86.91% of respondents), **“Cleaner air”** (selected by 70.51% of respondents), and **“Wildlife habitat”** (selected by 60.16% of respondents) were the top three values identified. “Beauty and aesthetics” also ranked quite high compared to “stormwater management,” “property value,” and “cultural significance”. The results are very similar when looking at responses by residents who live in a NIA. For future engagements, consider collecting data on the demographic background of individuals, and analyzing trends amongst particular populations or who

selected these values (e.g. was property value selected by homeowner or developers; who feels that trees have a cultural or historical significance).

**What benefits of trees do you value most? (Select up to 3)**

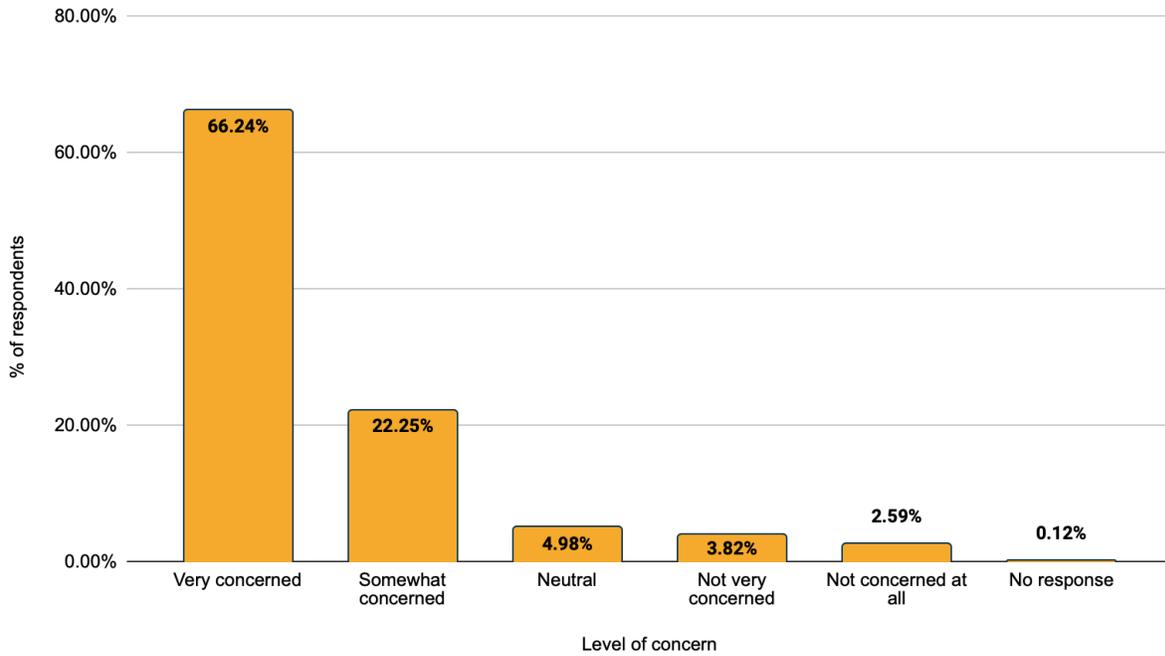


**Concerns about trees and views on the role of the City in tree protection**

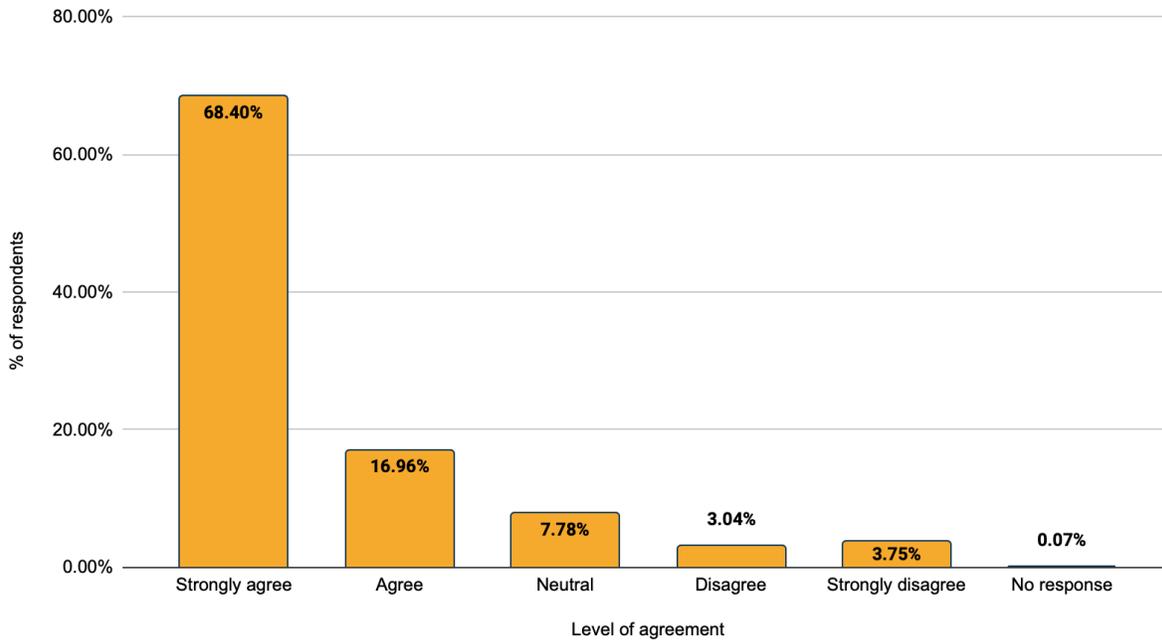
Overall, quantitative data indicates that the **vast majority of respondents (85%) are concerned with the loss of trees in their neighbourhood**, with 64.44% expressing that they are “very concerned” (66.24%), and 22.25% “somewhat concerned.” A similar percentage of respondents (around 85%) also **“strongly agree” or “agree” that the City should do more to protect trees in neighbourhoods across the city.**

For respondents that live in a NIA, results are similar with 88.2% expressing concern about the loss of trees in their neighbourhood (67.28% indicating that they are either “very concerned” and 20.95% indicating that they are “somewhat concerned”), and 83% indicating that they expect the City to do more to protect trees and urban forest in their neighbourhoods.

### How concerned are you about the loss of trees in your neighbourhood?



### Should the City do more to protect healthy trees on private property?



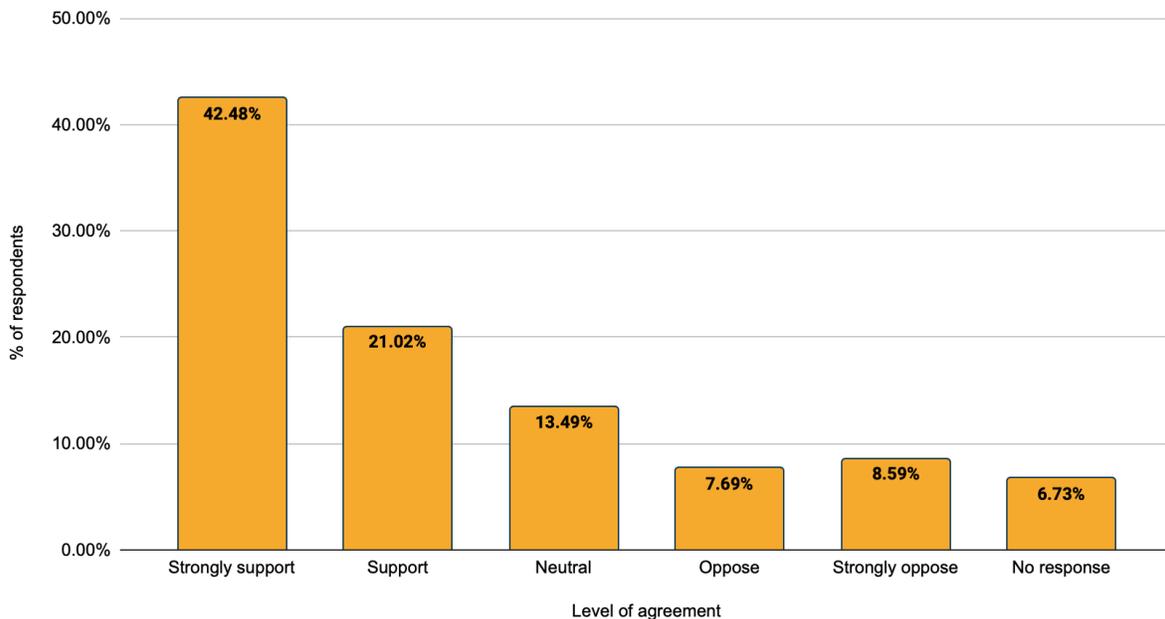
## Respondents’ Feedback on Proposed Tree Bylaw Amendments

### Lowering the Private Tree Bylaw Threshold

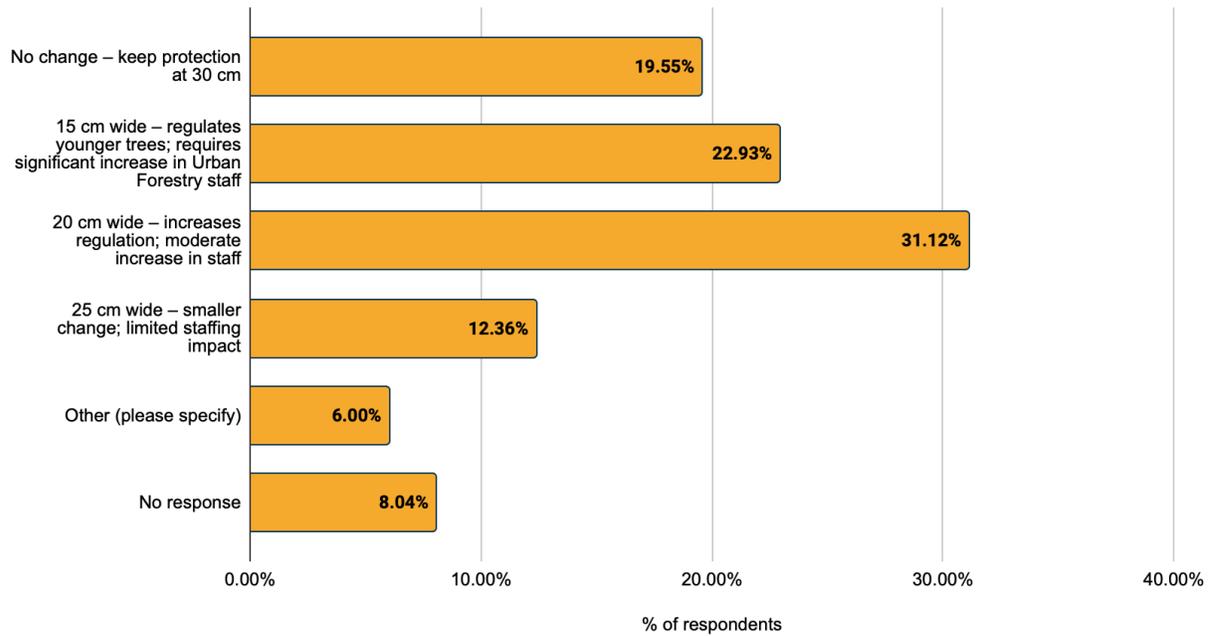
A little over **60% of respondents indicated being in favour of lowering the private tree bylaw threshold under the current 30 cm threshold.** While a significant portion of respondents were in support of a change, the specificities of this change are less easily apparent. 31.12% of respondents selected that the threshold for protection should be 20cm, followed by 22.93% of respondents in favour of a threshold of 15cm, and 19.55% indicating that they would prefer no change at all. An even lower number of respondents were in favour of a more minimal change to a 25cm threshold.

Regarding respondents who had obtained a permit in the past, it is interesting to note that this group is less supportive of lowering the size of the threshold for tree protection on private property—with only 49% of respondents selecting they “strongly support” or “support” the proposed amendment. Close to a third (33%) of respondents from this category indicated that they would like no change to the threshold, and a quarter (25%) of them selected a change to a 20cm wide threshold.

Do you support lowering the size threshold for tree protection on private property (currently 30 cm)?



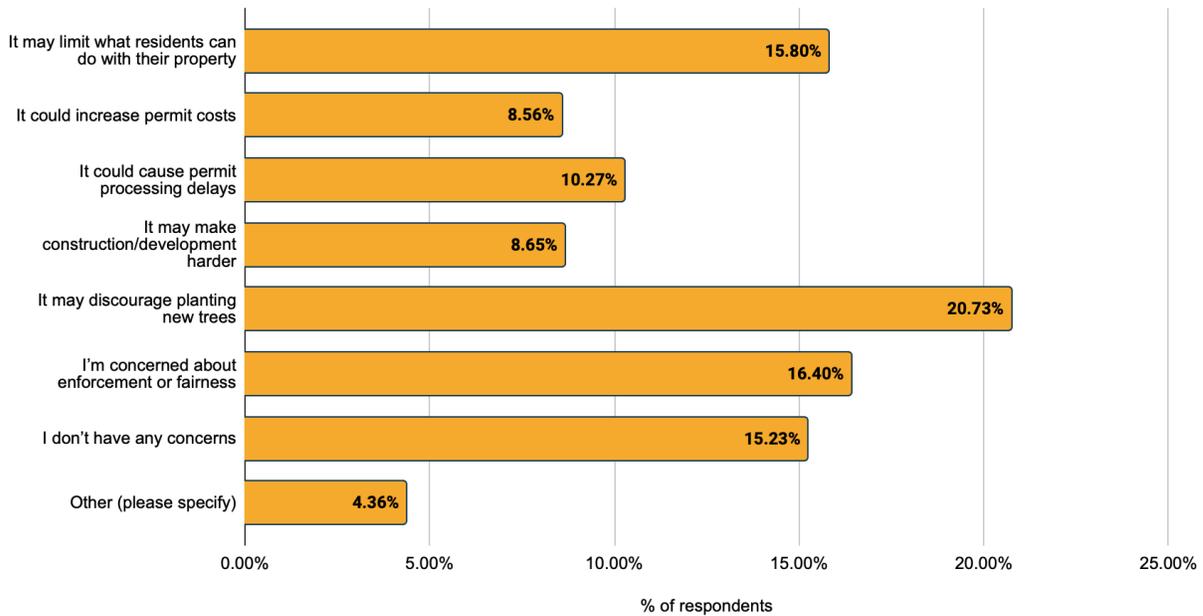
### What size should trigger protection under the Private Tree Bylaw?



For those who expressed some level of concern about a potential change in the protection threshold, the top concerns were regarding **discouraging people from planting new trees** (20.73%), **fairness about enforcement** (16.40%), and **limiting what residents can do on their property** (15.80%).

Respondents who selected the “other” option commonly expressed concerns about **protecting invasive tree species or trees that could prevent a danger to homes/properties** in situations where the City denies permit to remove invasive or sick trees or trees on private property because they meet the threshold, and the sense that **enforcement is already lacking** and that lowering the threshold would make it even more difficult, or likely result in **property tax increases** to support the need for additional enforcement.

If you have concerns about lowering the private tree protection threshold, which of the following apply? (Select all that apply)



## Compliance and Enforcement

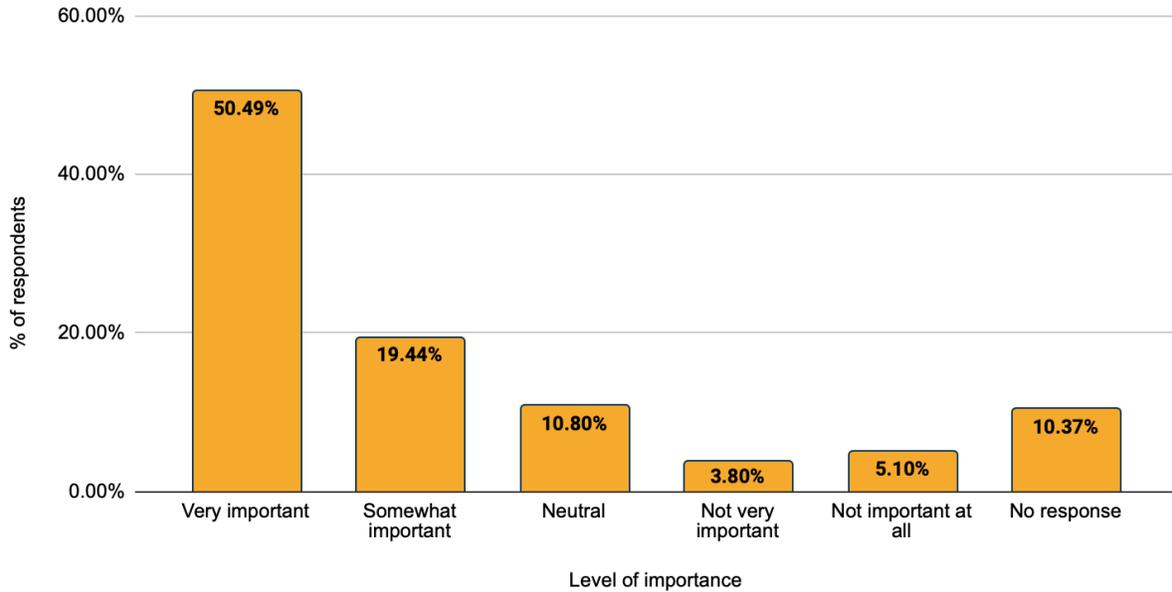
**70% of respondents** indicated that **having higher financial penalties** for tree bylaw contraventions is “very important” or “somewhat important.” A similar percentage of respondents (**67.25%**) expressed that they **either “strongly support” or “support” increasing the financial penalties** for tree bylaw contraventions. Overall, respondents are **very supportive of the proposed increase in the replanting compensation requirement for unauthorized tree removal**, with **70% of the respondents** either “strongly supporting” or “supporting” the increase.

It is interesting to note that respondents from NIAs expressed slightly higher support for all the above measures. 75% of residents from a NIA are in support of increasing financial penalties for tree bylaw infractions. Close to 80% of respondents from a NIA also support increasing the replanting compensation requirement for unauthorized tree removal.

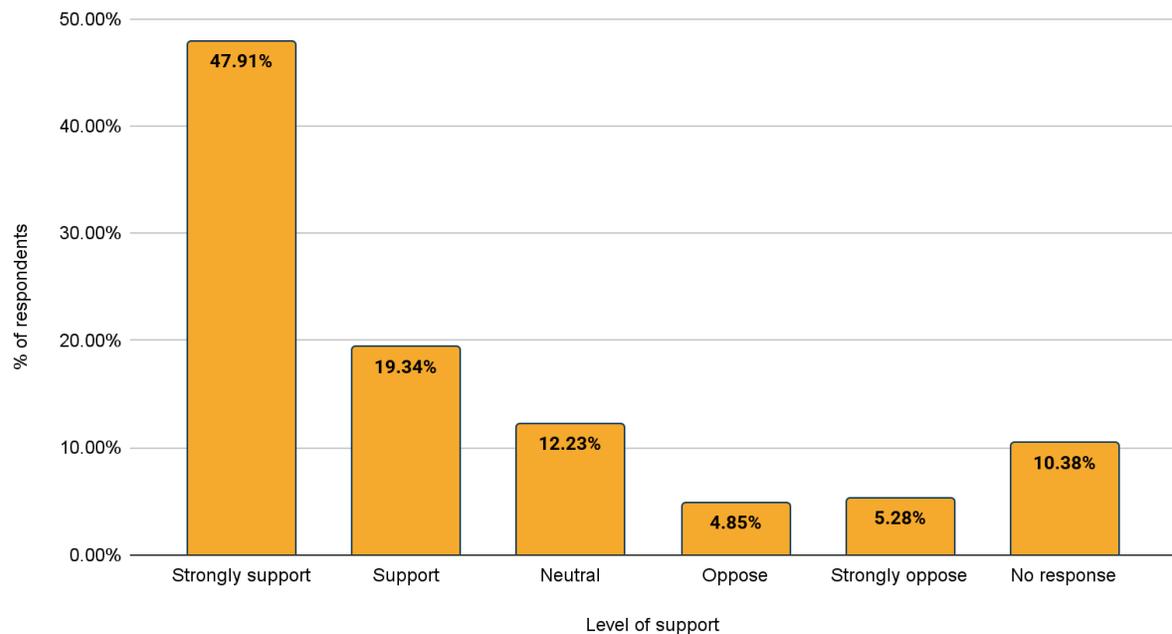
Within the qualitative responses, we noted common themes regarding fees and penalties. Some respondents expressed a desire to differentiate between land developers/builders and individual property owners/residents in penalties that should be applied for tree bylaw contraventions (e.g. the financial burden could be much more significant for an individual than a developer). They also expressed worry that developers or individuals with significant financial resources wouldn’t be deterred by higher fees. Others argued that property owners/residents should be able to do what they want when it comes to the private portion

of their property, and shouldn't be fined or have to apply for a permit when removing trees on private property—especially when removing invasive species or trees that pose a safety hazard.

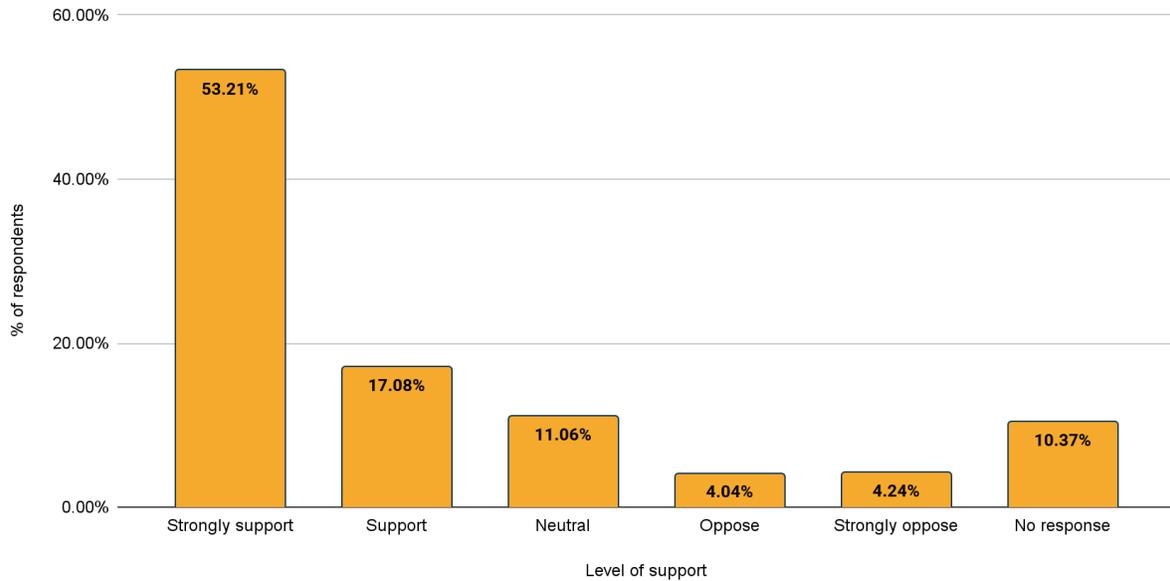
### How important is it to have higher financial penalties for tree bylaw contraventions?



### Do you support increasing financial penalties for tree bylaw contraventions?



Do you support increasing the replanting compensation requirement for unauthorized tree removal (typically five replacement trees for every one tree removed without a permit)?

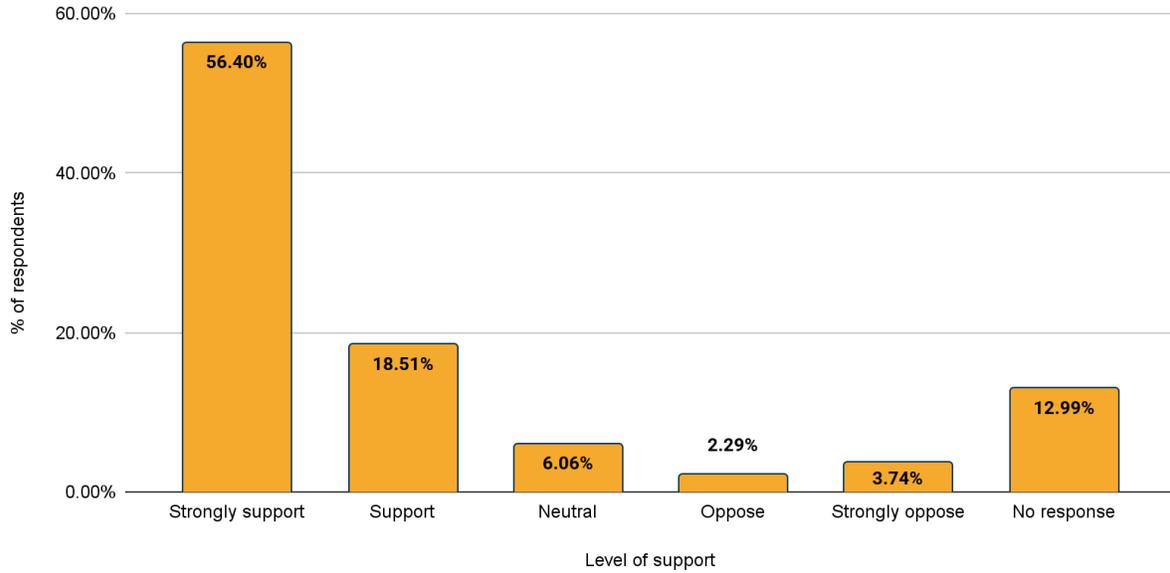


### Distinctive Tree Category

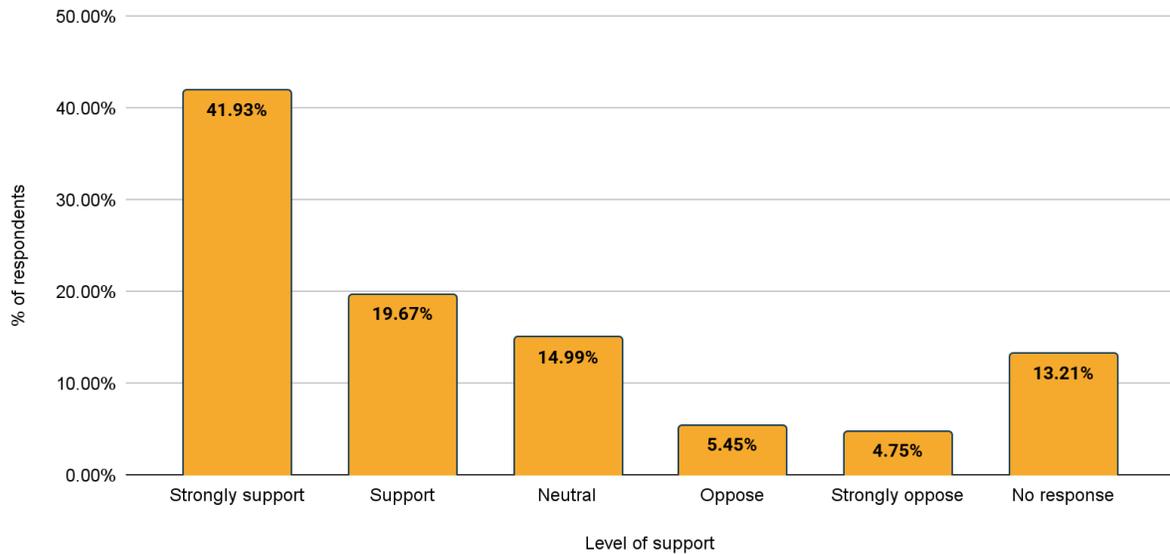
**75% of respondents** supported **creating a “Distinctive Tree” category** under the tree Bylaws, **60% supported refusing a removal permit for a tree identified as a “Distinctive Tree,”** and **70%** of respondents also indicated that the removal of “Distinctive Trees” **should require Community Council approval.**

On the issue of refusing removal permits for trees deemed as “distinctive trees,” it is worth noting concerns raised by a few respondents on how this amendment may be in competition with affordable housing and public transit developments and projects.

Do you support creating a “Distinctive Tree” category in the Tree By-laws to better protect large, healthy trees?



Should a permit to remove a Distinctive Tree be refused by the City even if there is approval or a permit in place for development or construction (e.g. a building permit that necessitates the Distinctive Tree’s removal).



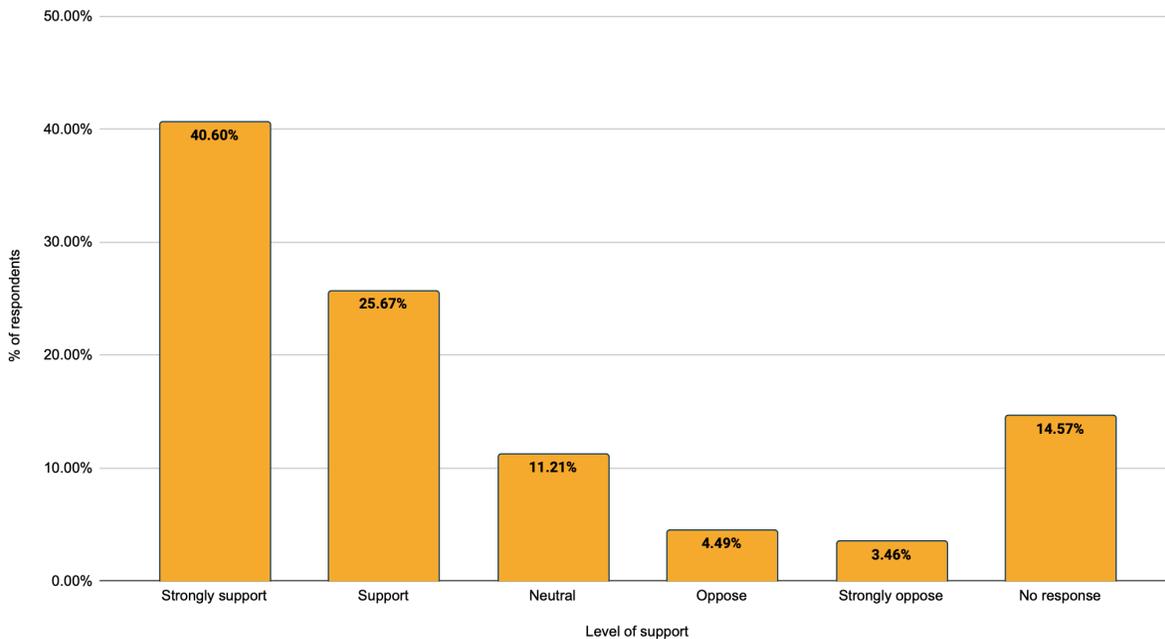
## Tree Preservation Incentives

**65% of respondents support the creation of a fund** to help private property owners maintain large and healthy trees. About **75% of respondents also support prioritizing these funds to support equity-deserving communities**, such as NIAs and low tree canopy neighbourhoods. 52.13% of respondents “strongly support” and 21.19% “support” updating the Official Plan to incentivize tree preservation during development.

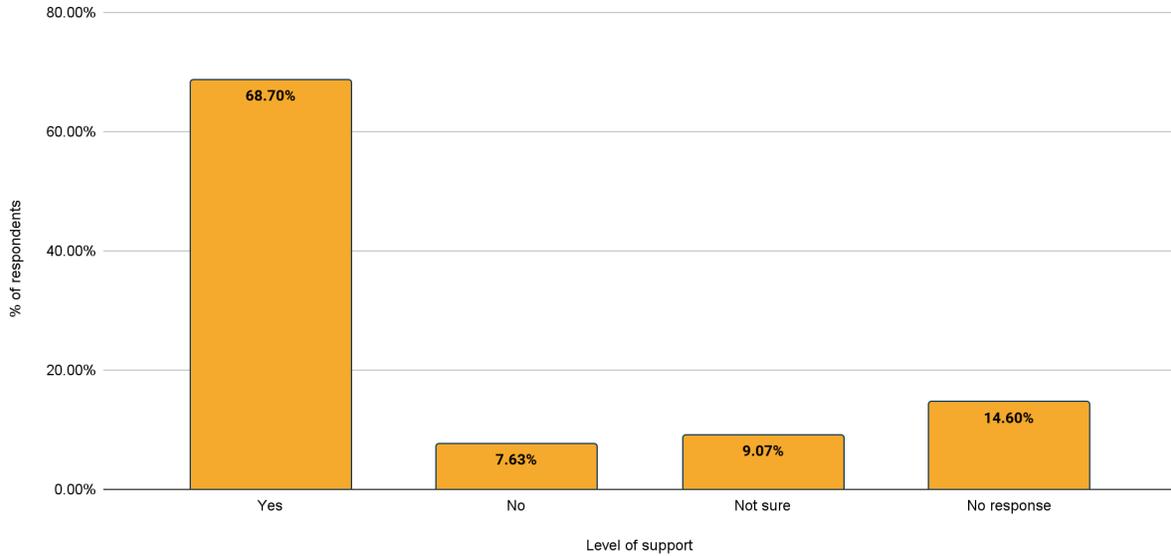
Residents from NIAs overwhelmingly support the prioritization of funding resources towards equity-deserving communities, with over 90% of respondents expressing support for this amendment. Close to 90% of respondents also support updating the Official Plan to incentivize tree preservation during development.

Residents who had previously obtained a permit are also in strong support of the creation of a fund to help private property owners maintain large and healthy trees (70.85%), as well as allocating funds towards equity-deserving communities and low canopy areas in priority neighbourhoods (86.64%).

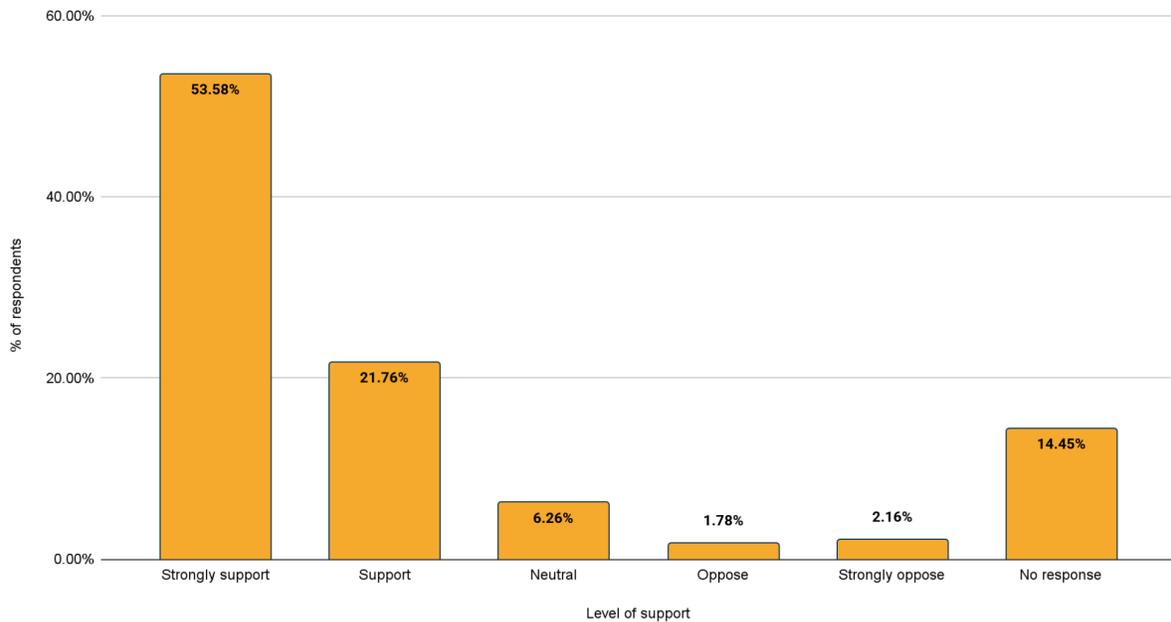
Do you support creating a fund to help private property owners maintain large, healthy trees?



Do you support prioritizing funding resources to equity-deserving communities, such as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and low tree equity neighbourhoods, to help address barriers to tree care and improve canopy cover?



Do you support updating the Official Plan to incentivize tree preservation during development?

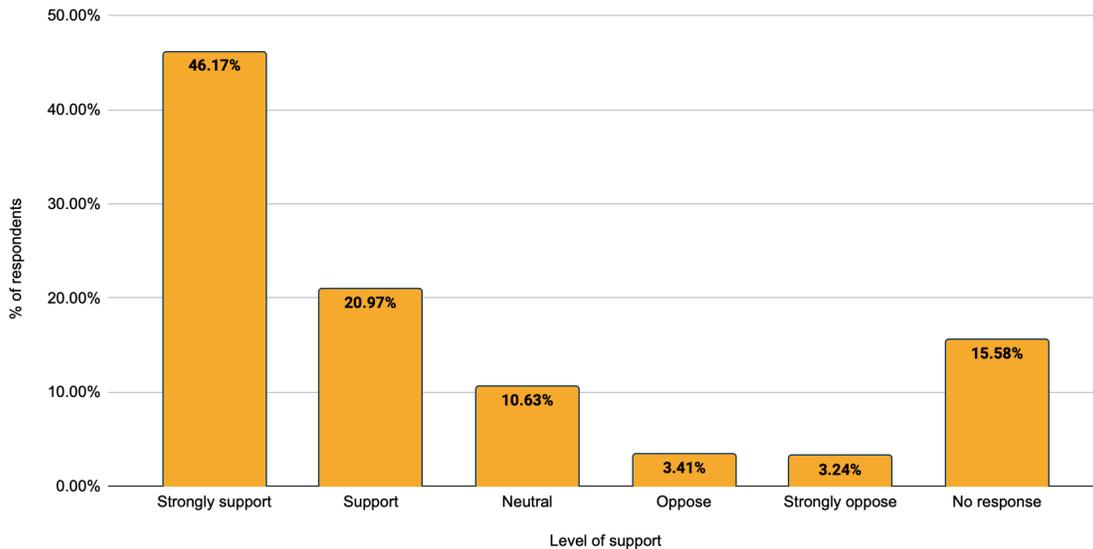


## Ravine Bylaw Application Fees

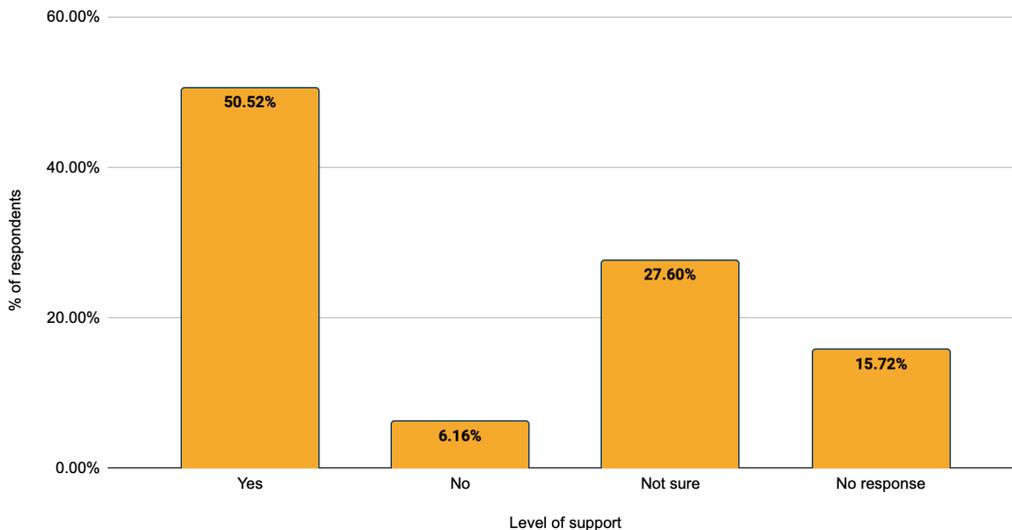
**67%** of respondents are in **support of introducing application fees for tree removal, injury, or alteration of grade work in ravine-protected areas**. Around **55%** of respondents **agreed that voluntary stewardship projects should be exempt** from these fees.

For residents who identified themselves as living in a ravine-protected area, the results are similar regarding their support for introducing fees for tree removal, injury, or alteration of grade work in ravine-protected areas, with 54.49% who “strongly support” and 19.34% who “support” the proposed amendment. There is a slightly higher percentage of respondents living in a ravine-protected area that agree with having voluntary stewardship projects be exempted from these fees (58.59%), and an even higher percentage for residents who had experience with obtaining a prior permit relating to a tree bylaw (61.56%).

Do you support introducing application fees for tree removal, injury, or alteration of grade work in ravine-protected areas?



Should voluntary stewardship projects be exempt from these fees?



## Respondents' Priorities and Preferences

Respondents were asked to rank five concepts in order of priority for the tree bylaw review. They also had the option to include other concepts through an open-ended prompt. Overall, respondents identified **"Better protection for large, mature trees" as the top concept to prioritize for the current and proposed review** (selected by over 55% as their top priority concept and 25% as their second priority concept).

The following concepts were ranked similarly in terms of their level of importance for respondents: **"Higher financial penalties for tree bylaw contraventions"** (selected by over 14% as their top priority concept and 21.5% as their second priority concept), **"Protecting additional smaller trees"** (selected by over 8% as their top priority concept and 30% as their second priority concept), and **"Tree preservation incentives"** (selected by over 15% as their top priority concept and 16% as their second priority concept). **"Ravine permit applications"** were the lowest priority concept selected.

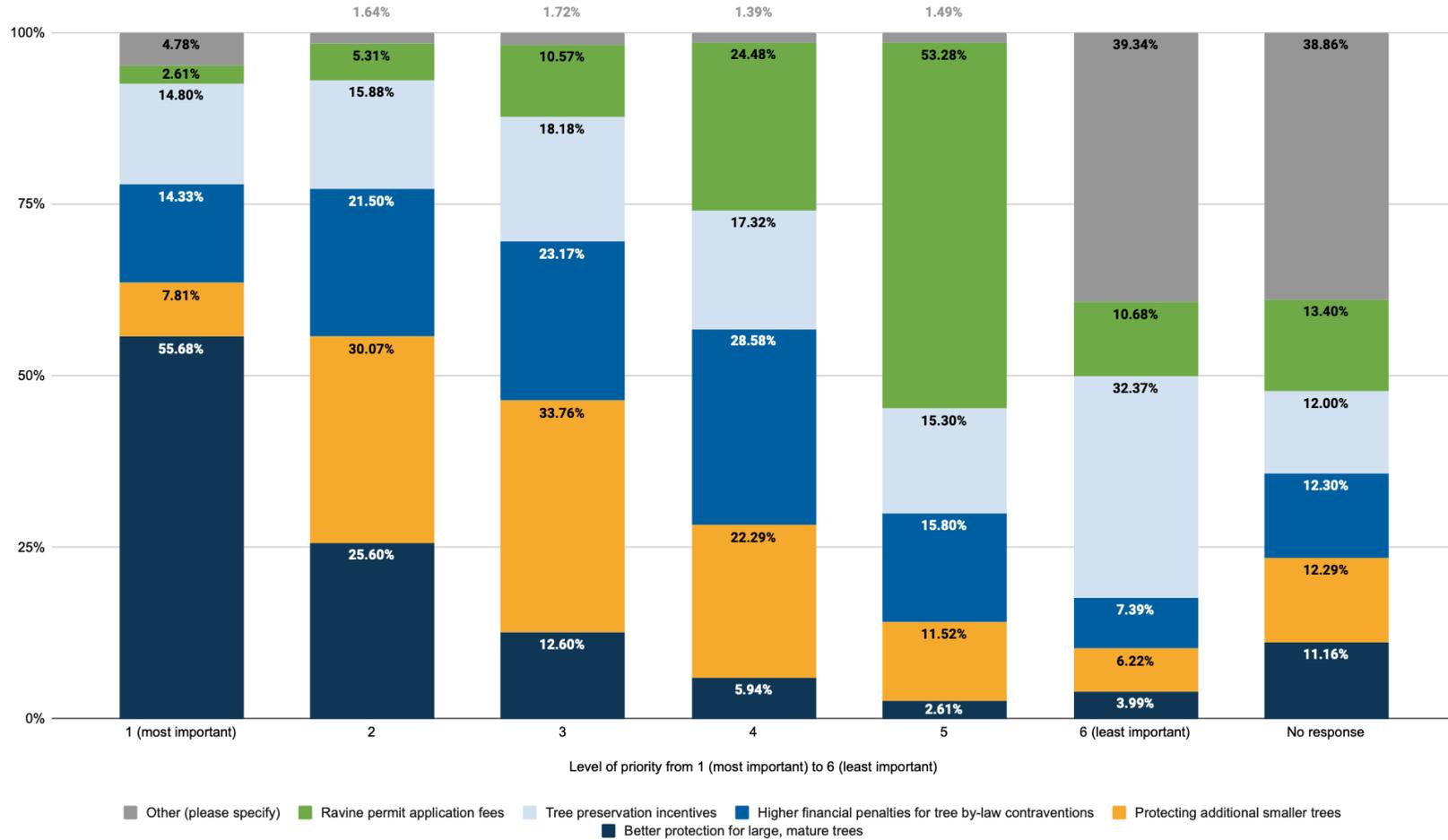
The above results were similar to residents from NIAs, with *"Higher financial penalties for tree bylaw contraventions"* having a slightly higher level of importance than *"Protecting additional smaller trees"* or *"Tree preservation incentives."*

When reviewing the priority concepts submitted as "other," there were many diverse ideas and opinions. For example, some individuals feel very strongly about not having any tree bylaws for private properties. Below is a high level summary of some of the "other" priority concepts that were raised. Some of these ideas may already be in place, and may simply need to be better communicated to residents.

- Doing more public education on the role trees play, their benefits, and how to best care for them.
- Providing incentives and resources for caring for trees on private properties (e.g. several respondents mentioned that the cost of properly maintaining trees can be prohibitive for some and that not well maintained trees can become hazards for neighbors).
- Providing exemptions to the current tree bylaws for the removal of invasive tree species.
- Providing exemptions to remove trees that are hazardous (e.g. roots are likely to damage sewer systems, etc.)
- Ensuring that there are the required resources to support enforcement of existing tree bylaws.
- Increasing the tree canopy on public and commercial properties, including front yards.

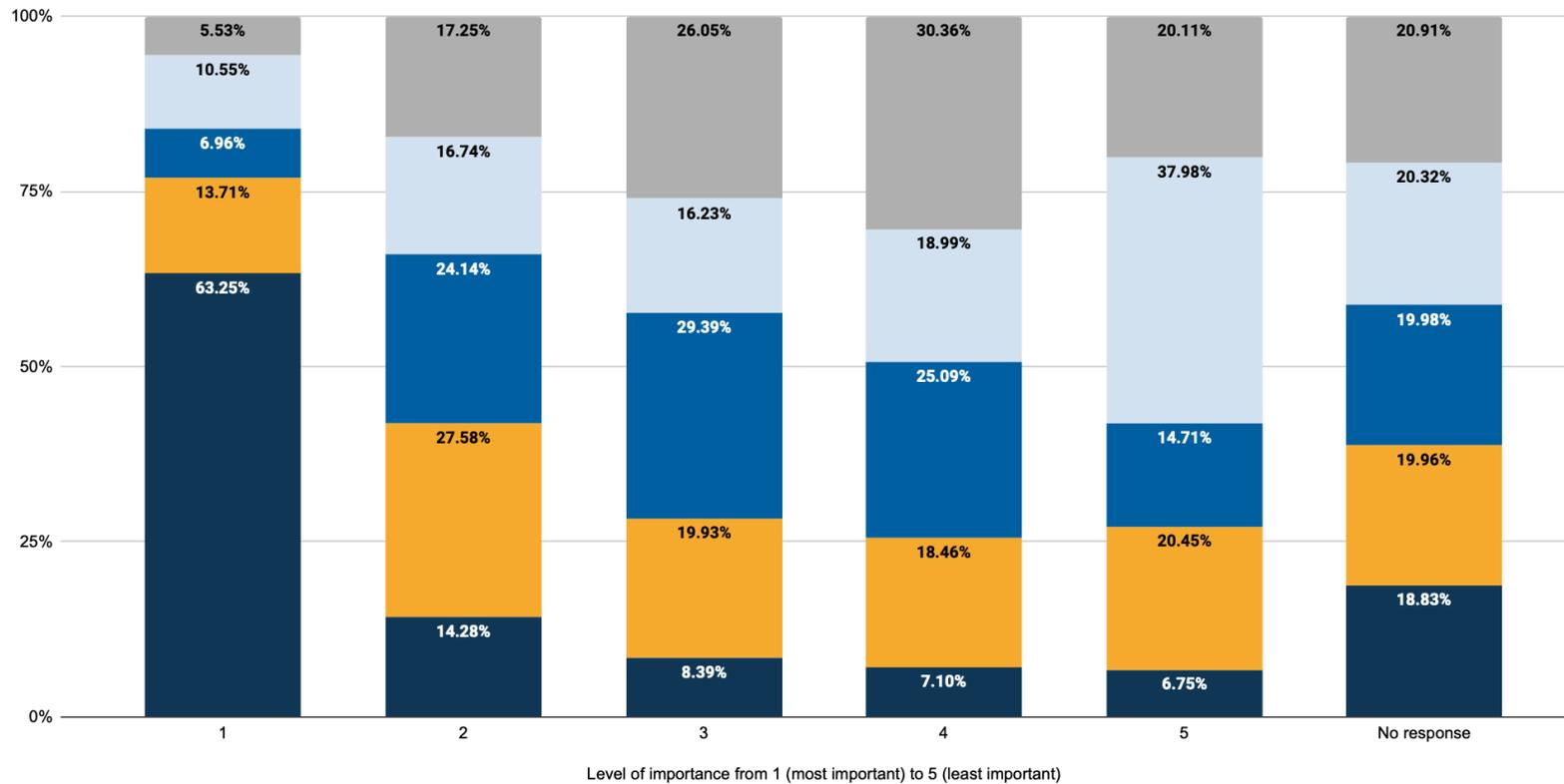
- Ensuring that financial penalties are proportionate to the household income (i.e. developers to pay a higher financial penalty than a small household).

Please rank the following concepts in terms of priority for the Tree By-law Review (1 = most important, 6 = least important)



Respondents were then asked to rank five goals concepts in order of importance for the three bylaw review. Overall, respondents identified **“Helping nature and making our city more resilient to climate change”** as the top goal to prioritize for the tree bylaw review (selected by over 63% as top priority goal). This was followed by **“Making sure tree bylaws are followed and enforced”** (selected by 14% as top priority goal and 28% as second priority goal) and **“Giving better support and advice to residents with trees”** (selected by over 7% as top priority goal and 24% as second priority goal). Both **“Finding the right balance between protecting trees and building homes or infrastructure”** and **“Making the tree bylaws fair, clear, and easy to understand”** were ranked lower. **“Helping nature and making our city more resilient to climate change”** was overwhelmingly selected as a top or second priority goal by 75% of residents from NIAs.

Which of the following goals do you think are most important for the Tree By-law Review? Please rank them from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important)



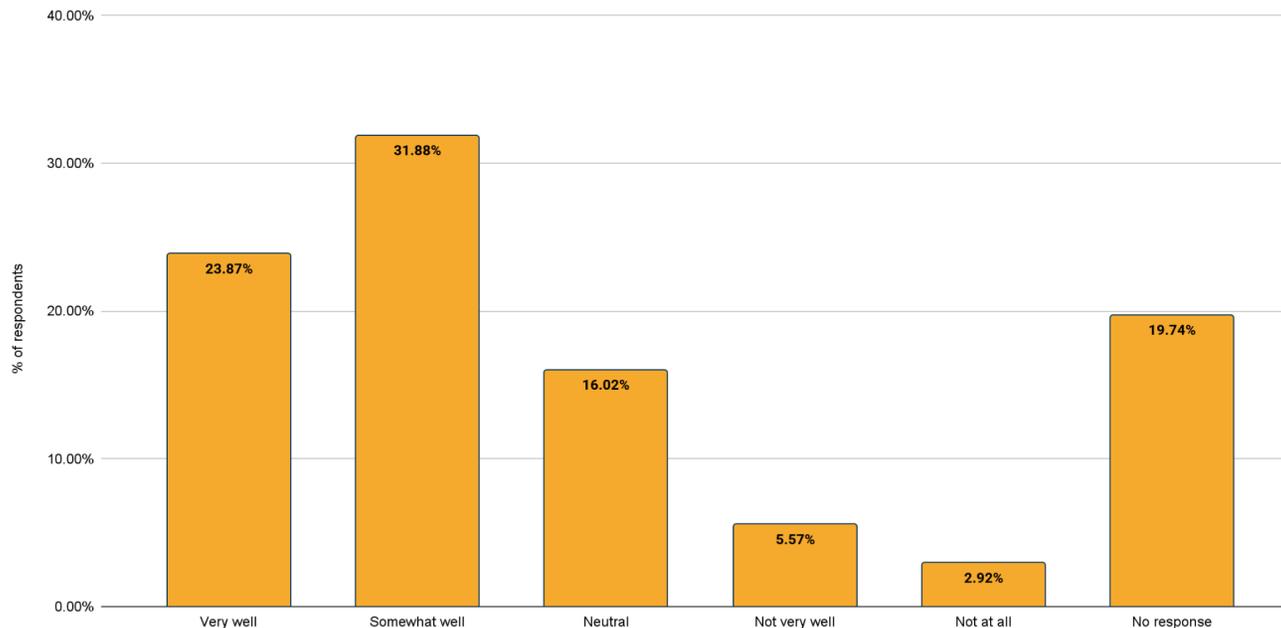
■ Making the tree by-laws fair, clear, and easy to understand
 ■ Finding the right balance between protecting trees and building homes or infrastructure
 ■ Giving better support and advice to people who own property
 ■ Making sure tree by-laws are followed and enforced
 ■ Helping nature and making our city more resilient to climate change

When asked whether or not they feel that the proposed changes **balance the protection and enhancement of the city’s tree canopy while also supporting development**, 56% of respondents expressed they felt it did “very well” or “somewhat well.” A significant portion of respondents (20%) provided no response—upon reviewing the data, many of these respondents are individuals who did not complete the survey in its entirety.

Respondents who do not agree that the proposed changes balance the protection and enhancement of the city’s tree canopy while supporting development expressed in the open-ended space provided that they either think/feel that:

- the City should not dictate what residents can do on their private property and are advocating for less restrictions and overall tree bylaws,
- the additional amendments are felt as potentially costly and even more onerous for individuals, some even saying that they feel more like “cash grabs”, and/or that
- the City should put more of the focus on preserving and expanding tree canopy on public properties, and/or putting the focus more on developers and builders rather than individual residents.

How well do you feel the proposed changes balance the protection and enhancement of the City’s tree canopy while also supporting development?



## Key Takeaways: Survey

- **Lowering the Private Tree Bylaw Threshold:** the survey data indicates that there is a desire to **move ahead with lowering the protection threshold**. However, there is less of a consensus on what the new threshold should look like. If the City decides to move ahead with the amendment, the 20cm wide threshold was the most popular option across most respondents who were in favour of a change. There are also a few considerations to keep in mind with moving ahead with changes to this bylaw. These include:
  - Communicating on the estimated financial impacts related to needs of additional resources to support enforcement,
  - Addressing existing residents' concerns about the perceived lack of current enforcement capacity, and
  - Considering how to address residents' concerns about the preservation of invasive tree species or injured trees/trees deemed dangerous to property structures that meet the threshold.
- **Compliance and Enforcement:** the data from the survey indicates that there is a desire to **move ahead with higher financial penalties for contravention of tree bylaw**, as well as **increasing the replanting compensation requirement** for unauthorized tree removal. In addition, the City may want to take into consideration some of the following, based on concerns expressed by some of the respondents:
  - Should there be penalties applied when invasive species or species that are toxic to pets or children are illegally removed rather than native species, and
  - Should penalties look different for repetitive offenders vs. first time offenders?
- **Distinctive Tree Category:** the data from the survey indicates that there is a desire to **move ahead with creating a "distinctive tree" category**, as well as refusing removal permit for "distinctive tree" even when prior building/development permits have been approved, and to also ensure that approval from Community Council is obtained when the removal of a "distinctive tree" is required. The City ECF may always want to take into consideration the following point made by some of the respondents:
  - How will the City navigate "competing" priorities of building affordable housing, developing public transit, all while preserving "distinctive trees" that may be on pre-approved development sites/projects. How will the process

work between the various divisions of the City that will be involved in this decision making process?

- **Tree Preservation Incentives:** the data from the survey indicates that there is a desire to **move ahead with the creation of a fund to help private property owners maintain large, healthy trees, with funding resources being prioritized for equity-deserving communities.**  
**Updating the Official Plan to incentivize tree preservation during development was also overwhelmingly supported by respondents.** While proposed amendments under the Tree Preservation Incentives were well supported by respondents, they were also identified as the lowest priority concepts by respondents.
- **Ravine Bylaw Application Fees:** the data from the survey indicates that there is a desire to **move ahead with the introduction of an application fees** for tree removal, injury, or alteration of grade work **in ravine-protected areas.** Half of the respondents also shared that voluntary stewardship projects should be exempt from these application fees.
- **Additional considerations:**
  - **Distinction between native and invasive trees:** An initial scan of the qualitative data indicates a clear request from respondents that the City look into addressing the differences between native and invasive species. Many respondents have expressed deep concerns about the City's perceived approach of prioritizing preserving the canopy at the expense of removing well-known invasive species such as tree of heaven because they meet other criteria from the existing and potential tree bylaws.
  - **Education:** Some respondents indicated a need for further education on the tree bylaws requirements to residents, the holistic benefits of having trees including spiritual, cultural, economic, social, and physical health benefits, and the impacts of planting invasive trees in order to promote planting and preservation of native trees.
  - **Enforcement:** Some respondents expressed concerns around the existing enforcement capacity. Some indicated that they don't feel that calls about tree bylaws infractions are either not attended to or take a very long time to be addressed. It may be worth (if not already in place) making data more easily available to residents regarding the average response time, status of infractions, etc.; as well as other available methods we heard through other engagement methods (e.g. after hours standby)

- **Private versus public/commercial property:** several respondents expressed very strong concerns about further expanding on the existing tree bylaws amendments for private properties. Many felt the City should focus on increasing the canopy and maintenance of trees on public or commercial property, or work with developers rather than focusing on trees on private properties of small household/individual residents (e.g. not large scale development projects). Some individuals raised concerns regarding the financial burden that applying for permits and/or maintaining private trees can represent for individuals.

## Key Takeaways: All Engagement Methods

The tables below summarize the key takeaways from all methods of community engagement. These key takeaways consider the overall high approval rating for the proposed bylaw amendments from the survey with the nuances expressed in community meetings. Ongoing engagement with Indigenous community members is recommended to ensure their perspectives are meaningfully represented through the bylaw review process. Lastly, as stated above, the survey included limited demographic data and does not accurately account for the potential over- or under-representation of particular populations or constituency groups.

### Key Takeaways: Considerations for Proposed Bylaw Amendments

Proposed Amendments		Key Takeaways
<b>Lowering the Private Tree Bylaw Threshold</b>	The current threshold of 30 cm in diameter protects the most important trees that provide the greatest environmental and social benefit. The City is exploring lowering this threshold to protect more trees earlier in their growth.	<p>The majority of participants support this amendment in full and lowering the threshold to 20cm.</p> <p>Consider exemptions to this threshold for the removal and replacement of select invasive tree species that have a negative impact on biodiversity.</p>
<b>Compliance and Enforcement</b>	To improve deterrence and incentivize compliance, the City is considering higher financial penalties for tree bylaw contraventions. This could include supplementary fees for illegal removals, higher fines, and	<p>The majority of participants support increasing the compensation requirement for unauthorized tree removal. Most participants support the supplementary fees for illegal removals, and higher fines, but strongly suggest these are accompanied by review and potential revision of the current approach to bylaw enforcement.</p> <p>Consider the feasibility of revising the current approach to bylaw compliance and enforcement:</p>

	<p>increased compensation requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increasing availability of bylaw enforcement on weekends, and public education on after hours standby;</li> <li>● Exploring how to further move towards proactive and preventative (rather than reactive) measures that mitigate contraventions;</li> <li>● Identifying further opportunities for public education on the tree bylaw amendments and requirements, and why protecting urban trees is critical;</li> <li>● Exploring the feasibility of shortening the current response time for inspection based on reported infractions;</li> <li>● and increasing transparency on the status of infractions and approved permits.</li> </ul> <p>Consider differentiating between land developers/builders and individual property owners/residents when setting fine amounts for contraventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider differentiating the fine amounts based on where the infraction occurs (i.e. if developers committing infractions in low canopy areas pay higher fees)</li> <li>● Consider if fines should be lower for residents of NIAs.</li> </ul> <p>Consider a tiered approach to compensation planting for individual property owners/residents (i.e. more variety in sizes to accommodate existing trees on property).</p> <p>Consider a collaborative approach between City staff and individual property owners/residents in the compensation planting process to increase follow-through and tree care education.</p>
<p><b>Distinctive Tree Category</b></p>	<p>A new “Distinctive Tree” category is being considered to recognize and better protect large, healthy trees 61 cm in diameter and over. Under this approach, removal</p>	<p>The majority of participants support the creation of a Distinctive Tree Category for trees 61cm+ in diameter.</p> <p>Consider clearly defining and communicating the criteria for a “healthy” tree. Consider the feasibility to include recognition of native species and trees of</p>

	<p>permit applications refused by Urban Forestry would require Community Council approval, while injury permits could continue to be approved by staff.</p>	<p>significant cultural and spiritual value to Indigenous communities, whether or not they meet the proposed 61cm in diameter criteria, in the “Distinctive Tree” category.</p> <p>Consider the feasibility of including the resilience of specific tree species in the urban environment when defining criteria for a healthy tree. (i.e. Ensure full exploration of recovery options and prioritizing resilient trees.)</p> <p>Consider the feasibility of making the criteria or decision matrix utilized by Community Council to approve tree removal permit applications publicly accessible.</p>
<p><b>Incentives for private property owners to protect trees</b></p>	<p>The City is considering a dedicated fund to support the care of mature trees on private property that would help offset the cost of maintenance.</p>	<p>The majority of participants support implementing a dedicated fund for tree maintenance, and prioritizing funding for residents in NIAs and/or low canopy areas.</p> <p>Consider the needs of and support residents with limited mobility, who benefit from the tree but may not be able to contribute to everyday maintenance, when determining activities eligible for funding.</p> <p>Consider that the inequitable distribution of mature trees may translate to the underrepresentation of applicants who live in NIAs or low canopy areas.</p> <p>Consider supplementing the dedicated fund initiative with regular educational sessions about tree care, fostering a community approach to tree maintenance, especially in identified NIAs and/or low canopy areas.</p> <p>Consider exploring the feasibility of a property tax rebate for individual property owners/residents that maintain trees that will or are actively contributing to the City’s tree canopy target.</p>
	<p>The City is exploring changes to its Official Plan that would give</p>	<p>The majority of participants support changes to the Official Plan that incentivize tree preservation.</p>

	<p>developers more flexibility in how they design buildings, as long as the design helps preserve protected trees.</p>	<p>Consider tree protection to also include preserving a healthy environment for trees to grow, and accountability for tree health post-build.</p> <p>Consider including recognition of native species and trees of significant value to Indigenous communities as protected trees.</p>
<p><b>Ravine Bylaw Application Fees</b></p>	<p>The City is considering introducing fees to help cover the cost of reviewing and processing permits. Voluntary stewardship projects, involving planting native trees, removing invasive species, or restoring habitats would be exempt from the fees.</p>	<p>The majority of participants support introducing ravine-related permit application fees, and that voluntary stewardship projects are exempt from these fees.</p> <p>Consider exploring opportunities for education and increasing transparency around ravine-related applications for property owners (i.e. on process, fees, responsibilities, and support available).</p>

### Key Takeaways: Considerations for Ongoing Approach to Bylaw Amendments

Key Theme	Considerations
<p>Perception in community, and partnership opportunities</p>	<p>Even with different stances regarding the method/approach towards reaching canopy goals, respondents affirmed that they perceive Urban Forestry as having an influential and important role in (1) tree protection, (2) promoting environmental resilience and (3) improving experiences with the tree bylaw system.</p> <p>Across engagement methods, participants expressed a desire to be more involved or connected to the work undertaken by Urban Forestry.</p>
<p>Community-led approaches and land stewardship</p>	<p>There is strong support and energy behind directly empowering communities with knowledge and resources to undertake local tree stewardship, in line with Indigenous</p>

	<p>traditional knowledge and values.</p> <p>Consider shifting decision-making and strategy towards interpreting residents as partners and collaborators in caring for the urban forest; explore approaches that are grounded in collaboration and trust (vs. traditional approaches that are punitive or reactive).</p>
<p>Equity in resource distribution</p>	<p>Overall, approaches that incentivize and empower residents are encouraged; however these initiatives must account for and proactively address the inequitable distribution of benefit. Continuing to prioritize resources and outreach for residents in identified NIAs or low canopy areas is strongly encouraged.</p> <p>To use the proposed maintenance fund as an example: homeowners who have large trees are the ones mainly benefiting from them in the form of reduced heating, water absorption, home value, and relief from sun. Residents in NIAs or low canopy areas come from a different starting place: they may not yet have large trees in their community, they may be renting and have little influence over a tree’s maintenance; and if not accounted for, will be contributing to the maintenance of trees in higher-canopy areas through taxes funnelled to this program.</p>
<p>Education, Public Perception of Trees, and Advocacy</p>	<p>A strong desire was expressed for city-wide education on the benefits of reciprocal relationships with trees; what care and maintenance looks like and what resources are available to support this; and the overall urban canopy strategy.</p> <p>Including proactive, education-focused approaches that reframe trees as essential are considered key in influencing all factors that contribute to long-term tree protection and canopy growth. (e.g. land development approaches, community investment and involvement in tree maintenance)</p> <p>The Division was also seen as well positioned to advance public education around the equity concerns surrounding trees, the canopy, biodiversity, the devaluation of environmental stewardship work, and low canopy/low tree equity areas; as well as</p>

	directly influence positive health outcomes for equity-deserving communities by advancing tree canopy growth.
Biodiversity Goals and Tree Species	Across all engagement methods, participants expressed a need to include biodiversity goals in the overall canopy cover goal. To many participants, their interactions the current bylaws and/or information on the city’s plan for growing tree canopy do not reflect biodiversity goals and were seen as evaluating invasive species (that negatively impact native flora and fauna) on the same level as native and non-invasive species (which participants expressed are key for long-term fostering accessibility for cultural practices, climate and environment health, and ultimately, positive health outcomes overall for all residents).
Bylaw Compliance	<p>Consider the numerous reasons why individual residents do not comply with the current bylaws. Participants expressed that non-compliance is often linked to process complexity; prohibitive costs for arborist report, permit application, and compensation planting; and lack of resources required to maintain trees, especially those with nuts or fruit. Tree protection is then seen as a hassle where ‘undue hardship’ is placed on the resident, motivating residents to seek alternate (illegal) ways to remove trees on their property. Overall, enforcement through fees and fines was perceived as discouraging tree removal for individual residents.</p> <p>Generally, residents prefer to have a high canopy neighbourhood and view trees to be beneficial to their quality of life, but (perceived) lack of support and agency are a driving force behind contraventions.</p> <p>What would it look like to invest in approaches that are collaborative with residents: such as offering more agency around options for compensation planting; alongside education of how the methods suggested provide long-term benefits individually and for the neighbourhood? Participants expressed that greater agency, transparency, and education could support long-term goals.</p>
Transparency and	Overall, respondents voiced a desire to be more informed about bylaw enforcement

<p>Communication</p>	<p>decisions and actions; what fees and fines collected are used for; and opportunities to influence bylaw amendments. Understanding the rationale behind tree removals, injuries, and approved/denied permits fosters greater public trust, even if there are individual disagreements with the decisions made.</p> <p>We heard that generally, a lack of transparent communication discourages engagement. To support ongoing and productive community engagement, consider feasible opportunities to increase transparent communication regarding the above.</p>
<p>Relationship Between Land Development and Tree Bylaws</p>	<p>Continuing current efforts is encouraged. Even amongst key constituency groups that have opposing opinions on tree bylaw interaction with land development, the proposed changes to the Official Plan that incentivize tree protection in development plans were considered promising. More information on the Official Plan amendment is required for all key constituency groups to provide further, informed input.</p>

## APPENDIX A: Community Engagement Session Questions

Question	Goal
<p>1. How do trees and the urban forest contribute to your work, community, or way of life?</p>	<p>Understand the impacts that tree bylaws have or will have on communities.</p> <p>Shape equitable lens for developing/revising tree bylaws.</p> <p>This invites diverse perspectives, from professional, cultural, environmental, and community lenses.</p>
<p>2. What outcomes should be prioritized when updating the City’s Tree Bylaws?</p> <p>(e.g. protecting mature trees, encouraging new planting, balancing development with green space, improving tree health, respecting cultural practices, etc.)</p>	<p>Understand the priorities of different constituency groups regarding tree bylaws.</p>
<p>3. What challenges or barriers do you currently face when interacting with the City’s Tree Bylaws?</p>	<p>Identify pain points in engagement, permitting, and compliance.</p>
<p>4. What would address these challenges, and help you or your community benefit the most from the City’s Tree Bylaws?</p>	<p>Identify potential solutions that address pain points.</p> <p>Prompt on the following if no initial responses: financial incentives, clearer processes, education, and recognition of traditional knowledge.</p>
<p>5. What do you believe would be the most effective tools in protecting and growing Toronto’s tree canopy?</p> <p>(e.g. financial penalties, stronger enforcement, financial incentives, increasing required permits)</p>	<p>Understand thoughts/ priorities relating to approaches to canopy protection and growth: e.g. stronger enforcement including financial penalties like fees or fines, incentives, smaller trees requiring permits for removal/injury.</p>

<p>6. Do you have any other feedback, concerns, or ideas you'd like the City to consider as it updates the Tree Bylaws?</p>	<p>Open the floor for feedback not prompted by the engagement questions.</p>
<p><b>Additional Questions for Indigenous Participant Groups</b></p>	<p><b>Goal</b></p>
<p>3. What are your thoughts on the ways that the City's Tree Bylaws could affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● land-based practices,</li> <li>● your individual connection to trees,</li> <li>● your communities' connection to trees,</li> <li>● cultural practices,</li> <li>● land stewardship.</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to the goal of Questions 1 and 2: Understand the specific impacts of tree bylaws on the land-based, traditional cultural practices of Indigenous community members.</p> <p>Question is worded to respect varying levels of connection participants have to their culture</p>

## APPENDIX B: Engagement Survey Questions

1. Do you currently live or work in Toronto?
  - Yes, I live in Toronto
  - Yes, I work in Toronto
  - Yes, I live and work in Toronto
  - No, I neither live nor work in Toronto

### Section 1: Your Views on Trees

1. How important are trees to your quality of life in Toronto?
  - Very important
  - Somewhat important
  - Neutral
  - Not very important
  - Not important at all
2. What benefits of trees do you value most? *(Select up to 3)*
  - Shade and cooling
  - Cleaner air
  - Wildlife habitat
  - Beauty and aesthetics
  - Stormwater management
  - Property value
  - Cultural or historical significance
3. How concerned are you about the loss of trees in your neighbourhood?
  - Very concerned
  - Somewhat concerned
  - Neutral
  - Not very concerned
  - Not concerned at all
4. Should the City do more to protect healthy trees on private property?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## **Section 2: Feedback on Tree Bylaw Concepts**

### **Lowering the Private Tree Bylaw Threshold**

Under the current Tree bylaw, trees on private property are protected once they reach 30 cm in diameter at breast height (DBH). This threshold determines when a permit is required for injury or removal, helping to manage tree protection as trees mature. The current threshold of 30 cm protects the most important trees that provide the greatest environmental and social benefit.

The City is exploring lowering this threshold to protect more trees earlier in their growth.

5. Do you support lowering the size threshold for tree protection on private property (currently 30 cm)?
  - Strongly support
  - Support
  - Neutral
  - Oppose
  - Strongly oppose
6. If you have concerns about lowering the private tree protection threshold, which of the following apply? (*Select all that apply*)
  - It may limit what residents can do with their property
  - It could increase permit costs
  - It could cause permit processing delays
  - It may make construction/development harder
  - It may discourage planting new trees
  - I'm concerned about enforcement or fairness
  - I don't have any concerns
  - Other (please specify)
7. What size should trigger protection under the Private Tree Bylaw?

- 15 cm wide – regulates younger trees; requires significant increase in Urban Forestry staff
- 20 cm wide – increases regulation; moderate increase in staff
- 25 cm wide – smaller change; limited staffing impact
- No change – keep protection at 30 cm
- Other (please specify)

### **Compliance and Enforcement**

To improve deterrence and incentivize compliance, the City is considering higher financial penalties for tree bylaw contraventions. This could include supplementary fees for illegal removals, higher fines, and increased compensation requirements.

8. How important is it to have higher financial penalties for tree bylaw contraventions?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Neutral
- Not very important
- Not important at all

9. Do you support increasing financial penalties for tree bylaw contraventions?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

10. Do you support increasing the replanting compensation requirement for unauthorized tree removal (typically five replacement trees for every one tree removed without a permit)?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

### **Distinctive Tree Category**

Large, healthy trees 61 cm in diameter and over provide significant environmental and community benefits. A new “Distinctive Tree” category is being considered to recognize and better protect these trees. Under this approach, removal permit applications refused by Urban Forestry would require Community Council approval, while injury permits could continue to be approved by staff.

11. Do you support creating a “Distinctive Tree” category in the Tree Bylaws to better protect large, healthy trees?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

12. Should a permit to remove a Distinctive Tree be refused by Urban Forestry even if there is approval or a permit in place for development or construction (e.g. a building permit necessitates the Distinctive Tree’s removal).

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

13. Should the removal of Distinctive Trees require Community Council approval?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

### **Tree Preservation Incentives**

With 55% of the city’s trees located on private property, both tree planting and long-term maintenance are essential. While the City offers programs to support planting, there are currently no initiatives that help with the maintenance of mature trees on private land. The cost of maintaining large-growing trees can be a barrier to preservation.

To help address this, the City is considering a dedicated fund to support the care of mature trees on private property, especially those identified as Distinctive Trees. Qualifying private property owners would be eligible for a grant or incentive that would help offset the cost of maintenance of large, healthy trees.

14. Do you support creating a fund to help private property owners maintain large, healthy trees?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

15. Do you support prioritizing funding resources to equity-deserving communities, such as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and low tree equity neighbourhoods, to help address barriers to tree care and improve canopy cover?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

The City is exploring changes to its Official Plan to better protect trees during new development. The goal is to encourage builders to keep more trees that are protected by the tree bylaws.

The proposed change would give developers more flexibility in how they design buildings, as long as the design helps preserve protected trees. This would apply to Neighbourhoods and Apartment Neighbourhoods (all residential areas under the Official Plan), and builds on Official Plan Amendments introduced through the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) [initiative](#).

For example, if a new home needs to be moved closer to the street to save a tree in the backyard, and that change doesn't meet current zoning rules, the City could approve it. Urban Forestry would support this kind of exception because it helps protect a valuable tree.

16. Do you support updating the Official Plan to incentivize tree preservation during development?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

### **Ravine Bylaw Application Fees**

Currently, application fees for removing or injuring bylaw protected trees apply on private and City property, but not in ravine-protected areas. To ensure a more equitable and consistent approach across the city, the City is considering introducing these fees in ravines to help cover the cost of

reviewing and processing permits. Voluntary stewardship projects, involving planting native trees, removing invasive species, or restoring habitats, would be exempt from the fees.

17. Do you support introducing application fees for tree removal, injury, or alteration of grade work in ravine-protected areas?
  - Strongly support
  - Support
  - Neutral
  - Oppose
  - Strongly oppose
18. Should voluntary stewardship projects be exempt from these fees?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not sure

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### **Section 3: Priorities and Preferences**

19. Please rank the following concepts in terms of priority for the Tree Bylaw Review (1 = most important, 6 = least important):
  - Better protection for large, mature trees
  - Protecting additional smaller trees
  - Higher financial penalties for tree bylaw contraventions
  - Tree preservation incentives
  - Ravine permit application fees
  - Other (please specify)
20. Which of the following goals do you think are most important for the Tree Bylaw Review? Please rank them from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important):
  - Helping nature and making our city more resilient to climate change
  - Making sure tree bylaws are followed and enforced
  - Giving better support and advice to residents with trees
  - Finding the right balance between protecting trees and building homes or infrastructure
  - Making the tree bylaws fair, clear, and easy to understand

21. How well do you feel the proposed changes balance the protection and enhancement of the City's tree canopy while also supporting development?

- Very well
- Somewhat well
- Neutral
- Not very well
- Not at all

**Section 4: About You (Optional)**

22. Any additional comments or suggestions? *(Open-ended)*

23. Are you completing this survey on behalf of yourself or an organization?

24. If you selected "An organization" or "Both," please provide the name of the organization:  
*(Open-ended)*

25. What is your postal code? *(Open-ended)*

26. Do you live in a [ravine-protected area](#)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

27. Do you currently have one or more large trees (over 30 cm in diameter) on your property?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

28. Have you ever applied for a tree removal or injury permit?

- Yes
- No

29. How would you describe your level of awareness of the City's tree bylaws?

- Very aware
- Somewhat aware
- Not aware

## APPENDIX C: Respondent Postal Codes

3 digit postal code	COUNTA of 3 digit postal code	COUNTA of 3 digit postal code	NIAs	NIAs count	NIAs (%)
	0	0.00%			
	1489	25.08%			
M1	1	0.02%			
M1A	1	0.02%			
M1b	28	0.47%			
M1C	55	0.93%			
M1e	47	0.79%	Yes	47	0.78%
M1G	17	0.29%	Yes	17	0.28%
M1H	13	0.22%	Yes	13	0.22%
M1J	7	0.12%	Yes	7	0.12%
M1K	33	0.56%	Yes	33	0.55%
M1L	37	0.62%	Yes	37	0.61%
m1m	82	1.38%	Yes	82	1.36%
M1N	64	1.08%			
M1P	19	0.32%			
M1R	16	0.27%			
M1S	13	0.22%			
M1T	10	0.17%			
M1V	13	0.22%			
M1w	13	0.22%			
M1x	6	0.10%			
M2H	11	0.19%			

M2J	43	0.72%			
m2k	20	0.34%			
M2L	11	0.19%			
M2M	18	0.30%			
m2n	52	0.88%			
M2P	7	0.12%			
M2r	7	0.12%			
M3A	19	0.32%	Yes	19	0.32%
M3b	10	0.17%			
M3C	21	0.35%	Yes	21	0.35%
M3h	21	0.35%	Yes	21	0.35%
M3J	12	0.20%	Yes	12	0.20%
M3K	6	0.10%	Yes	6	0.10%
M3L	4	0.07%	Yes	4	0.07%
M3M	7	0.12%	Yes	7	0.12%
m3n	3	0.05%	Yes	3	0.05%
M3P	1	0.02%			
M3X	1	0.02%			
M3Y	1	0.02%			
M4	1	0.02%			
M4A	13	0.22%	Yes	13	0.22%
M4b	40	0.67%	Yes	40	0.66%
M4C	134	2.26%	Yes	134	2.23%
M4E	87	1.47%			
M4g	47	0.79%	Yes	47	0.78%
M4H	8	0.13%	Yes	8	0.13%

M4J	143	2.41%			
M4K	117	1.97%			
M4L	125	2.11%			
M4M	68	1.15%			
M4N	48	0.81%			
M4P	48	0.81%			
M4R	45	0.76%			
M4S	69	1.16%			
M4T	63	1.06%			
M4V	62	1.04%			
M4W	38	0.64%			
M4X	29	0.49%			
M4Y	85	1.43%			
M5	1	0.02%			
m5l	1	0.02%			
M5A	120	2.02%	Yes	120	1.99%
M5B	29	0.49%			
M5c	11	0.19%			
M5e	20	0.34%			
m5g	17	0.29%			
M5h	4	0.07%			
M5J	30	0.51%			
M5k	1	0.02%			
M5M	42	0.71%			
M5N	29	0.49%			
M5P	47	0.79%			

M5R	105	1.77%			
M5S	56	0.94%			
M5T	53	0.89%			
m5v	80	1.35%			
M5W	1	0.02%			
M6	1	0.02%			
M65	1	0.02%			
M6A	22	0.37%			
M6B	27	0.45%			
M6C	71	1.20%			
M6E	63	1.06%			
M6G	161	2.71%			
M6H	173	2.91%			
M6J	114	1.92%			
m6k	101	1.70%	Yes	101	1.68%
M6l	9	0.15%	Yes	9	0.15%
m6m	18	0.30%	Yes	18	0.30%
M6N	62	1.04%			
M6O	1	0.02%			
M6P	190	3.20%			
M6r	100	1.68%			
M6S	151	2.54%	Yes	151	2.51%
M8C	1	0.02%			
M8V	74	1.25%			
M8W	98	1.65%			
M8x	26	0.44%			

M8y	37	0.62%			
M8Z	30	0.51%			
M9	1	0.02%			
M9A	50	0.84%			
M9B	57	0.96%			
M9c	33	0.56%			
M9L	3	0.05%	Yes	3	0.05%
M9m	11	0.19%	Yes	11	0.18%
M9n	23	0.39%	Yes	23	0.38%
M9P	16	0.27%	Yes	16	0.27%
M9R	14	0.24%	Yes	14	0.23%
M9V	14	0.24%	Yes	14	0.23%
M9W	28	0.47%	Yes	28	0.47%
m9z	1	0.02%			
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5938</b>	<b>100.00%</b>		<b>1079</b>	<b>17.93%</b>