

# SWANSEA AREA RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

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## SWANSEA AREA RATEPAYERS' GROUP

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21 January, 2026

To: The Chair and Members of  
The Planning & Housing Committee

e-mail: [phc@toronto.ca](mailto:phc@toronto.ca)

Re: 2026.PH27.1 Supplementary Report – Growing Space for Trees: Protecting and Enhancing the Tree Canopy While Supporting Infill Housing and Addressing Concerns with Iceberg Homes – Recommendation Report

This is a more detailed analysis than in the e-mail already sent on behalf of the Swansea Area Ratepayers Association (SARA) and the Swansea Area Ratepayers Group (SARG). We continue to support the Official Plan Amendments and the proposed By-law Amendments, as necessary to support expansion of the tree canopy for environmental reasons such as reducing the green house effect, the heat island effect and the absorption of carbon.

SARG views the request and the responding report as the tail wagging the dog.

Any supplementary report should have requested either an arborist's report on the comparison of permeable pavers versus soft landscaping.

It should be reviewing as well a comparison between the two in terms of drainage, flooding impacts, impacts on existing trees and planting additional trees (expansion of the tree canopy), effects on climate change and the "heat island effect".

Based on City policies developed since the 2000's the thrust has been on increasing soft landscaping, dealing with climate change and flooding.

I worked my way through university working for a landscaping firm, which involved laying pavers. Please find attached a quick review of guides dealing with preparation of soils for permeable pavers. I highlighted key points which confirm my prior experience.

Depending on the nature of the use depth of the soil that must be excavated ranges from 8 to 24 inches and the nature of the soils (sand or clay or a mixture) and freeze/thaw that may heave up driveways. It also requires compaction to 95% density, and the removal of tree roots.

It should be noted that often multiplexes also seek laneway suites or garden suites in addition to the additional units in the main building.

It has been in SARG's experience such additional suites are often located on top of garages and in many cases the single car garage is replaced by a two-car garage, with additional paving to access the second car resulting in the loss of existing soft landscaping.

Reviewing Committee of Adjustment Applications only shows the wants of builders not what is good planning, or compliance with the Official Plan.

It is SARG's position that permeable pavers are to driveways what vaping is to smoking. While it is beneficial in replacing an existing habit, it is not recommended to replace soft landscaping or by analogy for a nonsmoker for vaping.

In light of the effect that parking is no longer required, SARG wonders why the City is now encouraging the facilitation of the use of cars to the detriment of the environment.

I hope to speak but may not be able to attend, please put my name on the list of speakers.

SARA/SARG recommends:

1. Planning and Housing support the proposed Official Plan Amendments and the Zoning By-law Amendments that were before you in 2025.
2. Secondly we request that this report be received and no further action be taken on it.
3. Thirdly that the Committee wishes to look at this that environmental /arborist studies be done comparing soft landscaping versus permeable pavers in achieving the City's goals re Expansion and Preservation of the Tree Canopy, impacts on Climate change, and impacts on drainage and flooding.

It is my intention to make a virtual submission.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Yours truly,

*William H. Roberts*

William H. Roberts, LLB  
director

- **Fabric:** About 10% extra for overlapping pieces
- **Edge restraints:** Plastic, metal, or concrete borders
- **Joint fill:** Angular stone chips for between pavers

## The Installation Process

### Getting the Site Ready

This is where most projects succeed or fail. Good preparation is everything.

#### How Deep to Dig

##### Standard depths:

- **Walkways:** 8-12 inches total
- **Driveways:** 15-18 inches minimum
- **Commercial areas:** 20-24 inches for heavy loads

Your hole needs to fit:

- All the stone base layers
- The bedding layer
- The pavers themselves
- Getting the right finished height

### Preparing the Bottom

Once you've dug deep enough, the exposed soil needs work:

- **Pack it down:** Compact to 95% density (professionals have ways to measure this)
- **Grade it right:** Create a slight slope toward where water should go
- **Clean it up:** Remove all grass, roots, and big rocks

Poor soil prep causes most permeable paver failures. Taking time here prevents headaches later.

### Building the Base

This multi-layer stone system is the heart of how permeable pavers work. It provides both strength and water storage.