

11.5 Municipal Tree Canopy Policy (CMS-FP-2020-003)

Resolution 2020-048

Moved by Councillor Peters

Seconded by Councillor Taylor

That report CMS-FP-2020-003, titled Municipal Tree Canopy Policy dated February 10, 2020 be received;

And that Council adopt the Municipal Tree Canopy Policy as attached to report CMS-FP-2020-003.

Carried Unanimously.




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**Subject:** Municipal Tree Canopy Policy

**Department:** Community Services and Infrastructure Services

**Division:** Facilities and Parks/ Public Works Divisions

**Report #:** CMS-FP-2020-003

**Meeting Date:** February 10, 2020

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**Orangeville Forward – Strategic Plan**

**Priority Area:** Community Stewardship

**Objective:** Champions of the Environment

**Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan**

**Theme:** Natural Resources and Environment

**Strategy:** Protect and enhance natural heritage and the urban forest

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### Recommendations

That report CMS-FP-2020-003, titled Municipal Tree Canopy Policy dated February 10, 2020 be received;

And that Council adopt the Municipal Tree Canopy Policy as attached to report CMS-FP-2020-003.

### Background and Analysis

In 2017, Bill 68, Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act was passed amending the *Municipal Act, 2001*. Bill 68 contained the following amendments which are aimed at addressing climate change:

- Subsection 10(2) and 11(2) of the Act is amended concerning the making of by-laws respecting climate change.

- Subsection 99(1) of the Act, which governs the provision of energy conservation programs by municipalities, is re-enacted to provide that municipalities may provide for or participate in long-term energy planning in the municipality.
- Subsection 270(1) of the Act is amended to require municipalities to adopt and maintain policies with respect to the protection and enhancement of the tree canopy and natural vegetation in the municipality.

In order to comply with the amended Act, municipalities are required to have a policy pertaining to the protection and enhancement of their tree canopy and natural vegetation. Bill 68 does not provide any specifics as to what is required to be included within the tree canopy and natural vegetation protection policy, only that every municipality is to adopt and maintain a policy.

Town staff estimate the current tree canopy in Orangeville to be approximately 30% which is inclusive of street and park trees. Staff are proposing within the policy to set a specific numeric canopy goal of 40% by 2040 (40 in 40). The policy is designed to formalize existing tree and vegetation maintenance, planting, education and public engagement on the importance of the public tree canopy but also encouraging residents, businesses and agencies to be a part of the tree canopy initiative by planting and protecting the environment within their own properties.

The Community Services Department, and the Infrastructure Services Department historically have administered protocols and practices (through subdivision development standards, site plan control standards, infrastructure renewal projects, emerald ash borer management plan, and sustainable Orangeville initiative etc.) that were aimed at the protection and enhancement of the Town's tree canopy, however these protocols and practices were not formalized in one comprehensive policy.

The Municipal Tree Canopy is based on the following key objectives:

- To protect and enhance the tree canopy and natural vegetation within the Town of Orangeville.
- To align with the goals and strategies of the Town's Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP) and Orangeville Forward Strategic Plan.
- To maintain and improve environmental quality in the community by conserving and adding to the tree canopy and natural vegetation cover in the Town of Orangeville.
- To re-affirm the importance to community of having an extensive tree canopy and natural vegetation cover.
- To provide guidance to decision-makers when dealing with issues which affect

- components of the Town's tree canopy and natural vegetation cover.
- To maintain and enhance the safety of the public and Town staff.
  - To minimize the potential for conflicts between trees and services, particularly overhead power lines.
  - To maximize the impact of maintenance and planting programs in a cost-effective manner.
  - To enhance the appearance of Orangeville's streetscape through the retention and increase, where possible, of street tree plantings.
  - To implement the provisions of the Official Plan regarding the planting of street trees to define the character of neighbourhoods.

There are well documented benefits to having an urban tree canopy and natural vegetation cover. The most significant benefits are listed below:

- Storm Water runoff interception;
- Improved water quality and erosion reduction;
- Energy conservation;
- Carbon sequestration and storage;
- Improved air quality;
- Increased property and aesthetic values;
- Lower summer temperatures;
- Habitat for local and migratory wildlife;
- Recreation opportunities;
- Reduction in noise pollution; and
- Stronger social connections.

The Departments of Infrastructure Services and Community Services will continue with normal annual tree maintenance, planting and replacements where required. The Departments where applicable and as opportunities arise will submit application for various tree grants from other levels of government and through various agencies such as TD bank etc. The policy also speaks to standards that the developers, business, residents and others will follow when planting trees and vegetation.

While there are 13 goals that provide direction within the policy, one of the main goals is to create a digital community education centre to assist with protecting and preserving the tree canopy on public and private lands and promote tree conservation. This would help to further increase community awareness of the benefits of trees, the Town will be encouraging the community's involvement, collaborating with groups like Credit Valley Conservation Authority to create a shared sense of responsibility for the stewardship of the urban tree canopy.

Town departments will collaborate on the tree and vegetation policy and related initiatives which would involve existing human, departmental and financial resources.

The attached Municipal Tree Canopy Policy is provided for Council's review and approval.

**Financial Impact**

None

Respectfully submitted

Ray Osmond  
General Manager  
Community Services

Doug Jones  
General Manager  
Infrastructure Services

Attachment 1. Municipal Tree Canopy Policy



## Corporate Policy

### Municipal Tree Canopy Policy

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Policy Category:</b>                             | <b>Municipal Services</b>   |
| <b>Policy Number:</b>                               | <b>"[Click here &amp; type policy #]"</b>   |
| <b>Department:</b>                                  | <b>Community Services, Infrastructure Services</b>                                    |
| <b>Attachments:</b>                                 | <b>None</b>   |
| <b>Key Word(s):</b>                                 | <b>Tree, Tree Canopy, Natural Vegetation, Environmental Protection or Enhancement</b> |
| <b>Related Documents/Legislation:</b>               | <b>None</b>   |
| <b>Approved by [Council or CAO]:<br/>By-Law No.</b> | <b>Click here to enter a date.<br/>, Click here to enter a date.</b>                  |
| <b>Revises/Replaces:</b>                            | <b>N/A</b>  |

#### 1. Policy Statement

This policy outlines the approach that the Town of Orangeville will adopt and maintain to address the protection and enhancement of the tree canopy and natural vegetation within the Town, in compliance with Section 270 (1) (7) of the *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25* (the Act).

#### 2. Purpose

The Municipal Tree Canopy will provide the strategic framework used by the Town of Orangeville to protect and enhance our trees and natural vegetation so that they are here for future generations to enjoy, while ensuring compliance with the Act.

#### 3. Definitions

**Tree** refers to any species of woody perennial plant which has reached or can reach an average height of at least 5 metres at the physiological maturity and is, or will become, larger than 50 mm diameter outside the bark of the tree at breast height (DBH).

**Tree Canopy** refers to the layer of leaves, branches and stems that cover the ground when viewed from above.

**Natural Vegetation** refers to plant community that is not considered a cultivated species (i.e., excludes agricultural crops and grass). To be interpreted as shrubs, or non-tree species.

**Protection** is to be interpreted as the practice or action of preserving, limiting harm or destruction to the tree canopy and/or natural vegetation.

**Enhancement** is to be interpreted as an increase or improvement in quality, value or extent of the tree canopy and/or natural vegetation.

#### **4. Scope**

This policy applies to all members of the Town's organization including members of Council, full-time, part-time and contract staff, members of Advisory Boards and Committees and volunteers.

#### **5. Policy Objectives**

- To protect and enhance the tree canopy and natural vegetation within the Town of Orangeville.
- To align with the goals and strategies of the Town's Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP) and Orangeville Forward Strategic Plan.
- To maintain and improve environmental quality in the community by conserving and adding to the tree canopy and natural vegetation cover in the Town of Orangeville.
- To re-affirm the importance to community of having an extensive tree canopy and natural vegetation cover.
- To provide guidance to decision-makers when dealing with issues which affect components of the Town's tree canopy and natural vegetation cover.
- To maintain and enhance the safety of the public and Town staff.
- To minimize the potential for conflicts between trees and services, particularly overhead power lines.
- To maximize the impact of maintenance and planting programs in a cost-effective manner.
- To enhance the appearance of Orangeville's streetscape through the retention and increase, where possible, of street tree plantings.
- To implement the provisions of the Official Plan regarding the planting of street trees to define the character of neighbourhoods.

**6. Benefits**

There are well documented benefits to having an urban tree canopy and natural vegetation cover. The most significant benefits are listed below:

- Storm Water runoff interception;
- Improved water quality and erosion reduction;
- Energy conservation;
- Carbon sequestration and storage;
- Improved air quality;
- Increased property and aesthetic values;
- Lower summer temperatures;
- Habitat for local and migratory wildlife;
- Recreation opportunities;
- Reduction in noise pollution; and
- Stronger social connections.

**7. Format:**

The Municipal Tree Canopy Policy is divided into seven key areas:

- Inventory
- Plantings
- Types of Plantings
- Maintenance
- Open Space – Conservation Areas
- Planning and Development
- Education

**8. Inventory**

The Town of Orangeville recognizes that trees benefit the community and an awareness of the existing tree canopy and natural vegetation cover is important in making decisions which could affect it. The effectiveness of maintenance programs that improve public and employee safety relies on an awareness of the current condition of Orangeville’s tree canopy.

| Strategy   | Responsibility  |
|--|---|
| <p>Establish the current tree canopy as a percentage benchmark. Maintain an inventory/database of existing street trees and park trees identifying location, species, size and condition. Priority should be given to the identification of trees which due to species, age, location and general condition could reasonably be expected to pose a significant hazard, now or in the future.</p> | <p>Public Works Division<br/>Facilities and Parks Division<br/>Information Technology</p> |

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|---|---|
| Identify sites for new tree plantings.  | Public Works Division<br>Facilities and Parks<br>Division |
| Update database annually to reflect trees or natural vegetation requiring removal (health and safety hazard, death of species etc.) and new plantings undertaken in the current year. |   |

## 9. Plantings

The Town of Orangeville will evaluate all available opportunities to plant trees and will promote biodiversity by increasing the number of species used for all tree planting and adopt a 20-year target of 40 percent tree cover by 2040.

| Strategy  | Responsibility   |
|---|--|
| Grant permission for private initiatives to plant trees on town property, having regard for site specific constraints, e.g. traffic safety, potential conflicts with overhead power lines and other utilities.  | Public Works Division<br>Facilities and Parks Division                   |
| Pursue partnerships and funding from outside organizations.   | Funding specific, to be assigned.  |
| Promote and provide education surrounding public planting programs (if available).  | Communications Division<br>Sustainable Orangeville Advisory<br>Committee |
| Incorporate tree planting in the design of new roads and road reconstruction projects, recognizing site specific constraints.   | Planning Division<br>Public Works Division                               |
| Maintain a database of locations where boulevard trees have been removed in order to plant new trees at these locations as soon as possible following removal, within the limits of approved budgets.   | Public Works Division  |
| Provide appropriate maintenance during the establishment period of new trees.   |  |
| Investigate alternative planting locations that will aid in increasing canopy cover. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planting trees in watercourses and ravines that will support large stature trees to protect streams and increase infiltration of storm water.</li> </ul> | Facilities and Parks Division,<br>Public Works Division                  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create tree canopied areas in parks;</li> <li>• Plant trees in community centres, right of ways, naturalized areas, sand pits, etc.;</li> <li>• Actions so to be site ready to plan trees; soil test done, selection of trees for the location.</li> </ul> |  |
|---|--|

## 10. Types of Plantings

The Town of Orangeville will make every effort to choose those species of trees that will thrive in the applicable growing conditions. The appropriateness of species for designated locations as well as diversity shall be carefully considered.

| Strategy  | Responsibility   |
|---|--|
| <p>Species selection: Goal is to choose native trees when possible, which are zone tolerant, generally not susceptible to disease or pests, tolerant of urban conditions and are suitable for the specific growing conditions.</p> <p>Where planting does take place near overhead power-lines, compatible species shall be selected.</p>   | <p>Public Works Division<br/>Planning Division<br/>Facilities and Parks Division</p> |
| <p>A diversity of species and ages, whenever possible, in the urban tree population to reduce the chances of Insect epidemics, to guard against the spread of disease as trees are trimmed in efficient block treatments, to prevent widespread neighborhood complaints and to eliminate extensive tree removal programs when single species plantings die and to provide a greater variety of habitats for wildlife and a more interesting environment for humans.</p> | <p>Public Works Division<br/>Planning Division<br/>Facilities and Parks Division</p> |

## 11. Maintenance

Public and employee safety must always be a primary consideration. Maintenance programs shall be designed and implemented so as to enhance long-term impact and cost-effectiveness. The Town of Orangeville recognizes that trees are assets within the community and their management is imperative.

| <b>Strategy</b>  | <b>Responsibility</b>                                  |
|--|--|
| Monitor high risk trees through regular pruning and inspection programs.   | Public Works Division<br>Facilities and Parks Division |
| Maintain young trees through the training pruning program to prevent formation of structural defects that may shorten a tree's lifespan.                                 | Planning Division<br>Public Works Division             |
| Implement an integrated Maintenance Program/Contract for existing trees on public lands.   | Future goals to be considered.                         |
| Modify maintenance or removal programs as emerging threats impact Orangeville's trees such as oak wilt and increased occurrences of ice storms and damaging wind events. | Public Works Division<br>Facilities and Parks Division |
| Prioritize maintenance work based on tree inventory analysis' recommendations as they relate to removals, pruning and replacements                                       | Public Works Division<br>Facilities and Parks Division |

## 12. Open Space – Conservation Areas

Open Space – Conservation forested areas shall be managed to best preserve the environmental, recreational and educational resources of the sites.

| <b>Strategy</b>  | <b>Responsibility</b>         |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Remove or trim trees and natural vegetation only when needed to address a safety hazard to users of property adjacent to the open space.                 | Facilities and Parks Division |
| Trail routing and maintenance is to be done so as to minimize the impact of the tree and natural vegetation cover, subject to potential safety concerns. |                               |

### 13. Planning and Development

The Town of Orangeville will review and make the necessary changes in the planning and development guidelines to provide for the care and development of the urban tree canopy.

| Strategy  | Responsibility  |
|---|---|
| <p>Preserve or plant enough trees to make a difference in the larger view of sustaining the life supporting systems that we depend upon. That life support system requires that enough trees be planted to create a tree canopy, even in highly urbanized areas. This philosophy is supported in the Town of Orangeville Official plan and SNAP.</p>  | <p>Facilities and Parks Division, Public Works Division</p> |
| <p>Integrative planning to achieve consistency and ensure that the overall canopy vision is achieved. The Town needs participation from a number of municipal departments and many varied public groups. Long range planning, that anticipates threats and can predict with reasonable accuracy potential weaknesses in the aging canopy is critical if the tree canopy is to be sustainable.</p>   |   |
| <p>In the process of this re-evaluation, we must introduce requirements for preserving and planting healthy trees. Trees, and the soil to support them, must become as much a part of the infrastructure requirements of sound community building as water, roads, and energy. We must build our new communities to be 'tree ready' as noted above.</p>   |   |
| <p>Changing the way land is developed and redeveloped affects individual land parcels at the time of development but does not address larger stewardship issues. Successful long-term stewardship of the urban tree canopy must include good principles of tree protection and planting to the way space is allocated and trees are planted and protected on all land parcels in the community.</p> |   |

## 14. Education

The Town of Orangeville will create a digital community education centre to assist with protecting and preserving the tree canopy on public and private lands and promote tree conservation.

| Strategy  | Responsibility   |
|---|--|
| <p>Develop an educational component that will include the distribution of materials on tree maintenance, invasive species detection and other materials to help promote trees as green infrastructure in the town.</p>  | <p>Facilities and Parks Division,<br/>Public Works Division,<br/>Communications Division</p> |
| <p>To increase community awareness of the benefits of trees, the Town must encourage the community's involvement, collaboration with groups like Credit Valley Conservation Authority to create a shared sense of responsibility for the stewardship of the urban tree canopy.</p>  |  |
| <p>Partner with community stakeholders to provide suitable resources about the urban tree canopy for Town Council and staff, construction companies, homeowners, developers, woodlot owners, the business community, children and youth, to become more knowledgeable about the urban tree canopy. Plus, provide support services to encourage stewardship of the urban tree canopy.</p>  |  |
| <p>Create a Tree Canopy digital information Centre through the Town website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• benefits of trees;</li> <li>• planting requests and species availability for public rights-of- way;</li> <li>• species selection, planting, aftercare and long-term maintenance on private property;</li> <li>• emphasizing the planting of climate resilient tree species;</li> <li>• dealing with invasive species;</li> <li>• pruning and removal requests, process and response time;</li> <li>• Town and community programs;</li> <li>• links to other organizations.</li> </ul> |  |