



Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital
Alliance pour les espaces verts de la capitale du Canada

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To: Martha Copestake,
Forester - Planning
Policy Development and Urban Design
City of Ottawa

Dear Martha,

The Greenspace Alliance participated actively and was a major contributor to Tree Ottawa's "**Protecting & Growing an Ottawa Urban Tree Canopy for Generations to Come**", which was prepared as our collective input to the Phase 1 Consultations for the Urban Forest Management Plan. We strongly support all of the elements outlined in this document, which is attached.

In addition, we would like to add the following points:

- The City's response to the Emerald Ash Borer's extensive damage to the city's tree canopy is a catastrophic, one-time event that warrants its own emergency action plan as an integral part of the Urban Forest Management Plan.
- In any sale of vacant City-owned land, the preservation of trees or the opportunity to plant new trees should be taken into account and given considerable weight in assessing the cost-benefit of such divestitures. This would follow from the treatment and valuation of trees as green assets.
- While the intensification guidelines and policies have been improved as regards the recognition of the value of trees and their preservation, in practice intensification has resulted in the destruction of many large trees in the urban core. Further attention should be given to these guidelines and policies and, in particular, their implementation, especially regarding information and training for developers and the contractors they hire.
- We would like to emphasize the call in the Trees Ottawa document to taking advantage of the highly experienced, knowledgeable and motivated tree advocacy community in Ottawa in the ongoing rolling out and implementation of the Urban Forest Management Plan.

As regards the final point of the Our Policy Proposals section of the Trees Ottawa document, entitled **Immediate Action**, we would propose the following points as good candidates for "quick hits", which would build momentum for action on the protection and preservation of the urban forest (numbering from "**Protecting & Growing an Ottawa Urban Tree Canopy for Generations to Come**"):

- 1.d Undertake a critical assessment of current urban development policies and practices driving the loss of the urban forest canopy
- 5.c Divide the existing tree tender to promote the use of local tree seed sources and indigenous forest genetic diversity
- 5.d Plan for the long-term availability of a diversity of local supply for public and private buyers, using procurement tools and incentives such as longer term contracts and public-private partnerships as appropriate.
- 6.b Modify the Trees in Trust Program so that replacement of city trees is done automatically, and not only upon residents request, and replacing trees with trees of equal or greater stature in order to grow the canopy, and implementing this administrative change retroactively i.e. replacing the trees that have been lost and not replaced over the past decade.
- 7.a Identify all the areas where management of the urban forest overlaps existing plans, policies, guidelines and strategies. Examples include the “Design with Nature” component of the Official Plan, the recognition of the urban forest as a key component of urban community character during the Infill I and II consultations, the measures adopted by Council on May 9, 2012, which if implemented, would aid in protecting, preserving and enhancing the urban forest, and the references to tree protection, preservation and enhancement in *Design Guidelines*.
- 8.a Require that tree information be disclosed on building permits so that Forestry Services can consider trees before, not after, the approval of building permits.
- 8.c Require that every new subdivision have a care and nurturing plan for the trees to replace those removed during building, and that every homeowner be given a copy of the plan

Finally, we have concerns regarding the lack of clarity on the scope of the project regarding two large overriding points:

1. The NCC question is a major gap in the current project initiation documents. Saying that the plan covers all the trees within the urban boundary, but then not having the means to do anything about trees on federally managed lands is a problem. If this is a City plan, then should it not only cover what the City can actually act upon? This would exclude the Greenbelt and other NCC managed properties. Can we expect the NCC to develop a similar plan in any coordinated fashion within the same timeframes as the City, as suggested at the public meeting on November 24? By what mechanism would these parallel projects be steered? The coordination difficulties in the planning and execution of a joint project are significant and would need to be addressed in a joint project charter: objectives, roles and responsibilities, timeframes and reporting mechanisms. There are even greater difficulties regarding the ongoing management and evaluation of the UFMP. Should all the greenspace on NCC property be considered as part of the outcomes of the City's urban forest management? Would they contribute to

meeting city wide targets? The City should be held to account for targets, and what it does about them, on the land they manage. Holding the NCC accountable for what they do is a whole other regime.

2. The other scope consideration that is lacking in clarity is what the deliverables of the consultants' work on the project actually are. Is their task to come up with a design for the processes that would be required to be put in place to effectively manage the urban forest, or is it to develop an actual urban forest management plan, complete with an assessment of the current situation, targets, actions and performance measures, or is it both? This would need to be clearly articulated in a project initiation document. It currently sounds like a bit of a mishmash of both.

We believe this last point to be crucial for the successful conduct and conclusion of this project, and this is the spirit in which we offer these observations and input.

Regards,

Erwin Dreessen

Co-chair