



Planning and Housing Committee

May 30, 2022

RE: PH33.1 OurPlan Toronto: Final Environment and Climate Change Official Plan Policy Updates

Dear Chair and Members of the Planning and Housing Committee

The Long Branch Neighbourhood is bounded on 3 sides by Natural Heritage systems along the shoreline of Lake Ontario, Colonel Samuel Smith Park (also an Environmentally Significant Area) and the Etobicoke Creek (a Greenbelt Urban River Valley).

The Long Branch Neighbourhood Association (LBNA) has been working hard since its incorporation in 2018 with the City to grow the Urban Tree Canopy to achieve the goal of 40% through native tree planting programs on private property and a series of community education and tree stewardship initiatives, including the annual Long Branch TreeFest going into its 4<sup>th</sup> year. Over the last 4 years our volunteers have distributed approx. 4,500 native trees and shrubs for planting in Toronto on private property and will plant/distribute another 600 more in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2022.

In addition, the LBNA is inventorying and monitoring our trees using Neighbourwoods<sup>®</sup>, a protocol developed by two professors at the University of Toronto Faculty of Forestry. To date the LBNA has obtained detailed data on our trees (species, size, health status, location, etc.) from approximately 70% of private properties in Long Branch.

We ask this Committee to adopt the Official Plan Amendment 583 (OPA 583) which includes updated Official Plan policies related to the environment and climate change with the following suggested changes:

**Suggested Changes to further strengthen OPA 583:**

**1. Chapter 2: Policy 2.2 Structuring Growth in the City**

- We recommend adding a policy 2.2 9 e) to address the growing loss of permeable surfaces across the city and the decrease of available growing space for future tree canopy expansion. Suggested draft wording “e) maintain and enhance existing soft landscaping and green infrastructure on residential lands and minimize conversion of existing pervious to impervious land cover”
- According to the 2018 Tree Canopy Report, the most area converted from soft to hard, impervious land cover was in the Single-Family Residential lands. Approximately 349 hectares of land in these residential lands were converted to impervious surfaces over the 10-year period (2008 – 2018) - the equivalent of about 436 soccer fields. (ref: 2018 Tree Canopy Study)

***Note: This is changed from Policy 5 and is now Policy 9. Where are the new Policies 2.2, 4 – 8?***

**2. Chapter 3: Policy 3.4 The Natural Environment - Urban Forest**

- The LBNA agrees that the urban forest is essential to the City's character. However, the urban forest is much more than the five million trees in our ravines, on boulevards and in parks.
- The 2018 Tree Canopy Report documents that Toronto has 11.5 million trees which includes 614,227 Street Trees (5.4%). The preamble should reference all trees in the City.
- Although the number of street trees and street tree species has increased, and the LBNA supports policies to increase the number and support the health of street trees, most of Toronto's trees are located on private property (54.4%).
- Proportionally this represents at least \$3.8 Billion of the total structural value of Toronto's Urban Forest. (2018 Tree Canopy Study)
- **Private trees** still provide most of the environmental benefits and ecosystem services for Toronto and contribute significantly to making our communities livable.
- By far the majority of high quality planting sites are on private land in Toronto. The greatest amount of available pervious possible planting area for new trees to expand and increase Toronto's tree canopy is on Single Family Residential lands (5,292 hectares). Pervious possible planting areas are the most suitable for tree planting in Toronto.

Climate Change makes it critical that the City achieve its goal of 40% Tree Canopy as soon as possible. Therefore, the Policies in the Official Plan need to **support the preservation of healthy private trees and plantable space on private property** in addition to preserving, maintaining, and enhancing street trees and trees in our ravines and parks.

Sincerely,



Judy Gibson  
 Chair, Tree Canopy Preservation and Enhancement Committee  
 Long Branch Neighbourhood Association