



3 June 2020

Dear Mayor Tory,

On behalf of the Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association (CSVSWRA), we want to bring to your attention the latest egregious example of an infill developer destroying urban forests without permit or regard for the health of the city and its constituency.

Toronto's Official Plan states that protection "of the natural environment and urban forest should not be compromised by growth, insensitivity to the needs of the environment or neglect." (O.P.3.4). In addition, the Official Plan is clear:

d) New development will be located and organized to fit with its existing and/or planned context. It will frame and support adjacent streets, parks and open spaces to improve the safety, pedestrian interest and casual views to these spaces from the development by:

ii) Preserving existing mature trees wherever possible and incorporating them into landscaping designs (3.1.2 Policy 1)

The City of Toronto Tree Protection by-laws and policies are there to protect trees from destruction and injury and to ensure that the City of Toronto achieves its goal in urban forestry management and a sustainable urban forest.

Furthermore, having just last year accepted the Champion of Trees Award on behalf of the City of Toronto from the Arbor Day Foundation, we believe the incident we are writing to bring to your attention and the ongoing practices of a few developers out in Southwest Scarborough would be of great concern to you. Southwest Scarborough is an area that to this day possesses a healthy canopy of mature trees that the residents treasure, and that we know are of value to the City and to you as Mayor.

The City of Toronto was recognized for exemplary leadership in developing and implementing new policies and practices for tree planting and care, natural area stewardship and arboriculture and yet it appears there are evident gaps in the City's ability to enforce its tree protection by-laws and policies. The incident below is a moment to be seized as a point for action and we need your strong voice to stop this practice and hold accountable those who disregard our laws.



**Incident of Concern:** Over the course of May 7 and 8, 2021 the developer of a property at 32 Pine Ridge Drive excavated a large hole damaging the roots of boundary trees and then proceeded with the excavator to knock down five 50-plus year old trees without permit, breaking them up and burying them into the hole . This act was caught on video and reported to Toronto Urban Forestry and an inspector has filed a report. Councillor Crawford is aware of this report and has been involved in expediting the Forestry Team to come to the site.

- Three birch trees came down on May 7th and excavation took place into a protected zone of a Norway Maple.
- A Norway Spruce and Silver Maple were removed on May 8th.

<https://youtu.be/oPCmS7UJerg>

<https://share.icloud.com/photos/0TiuEI8uk6gcoLJ3sAbUCSOYQ>





Neighbours and residents are very concerned and are asking for action to bring this activity under control.

This developer practice is becoming commonplace and many once well-treed streets are being clear cut.



In conclusion, CSVSWRA asks you, Mayor, to urge Urban Forestry to:

1. Charge this developer and set an example by imposing a maximum fine reflecting the value of trees to our neighbourhood and to the City of Toronto, and to further discourage such egregious and unnecessary destruction of trees.
2. Refuse, wherever possible, applications to destroy any healthy trees in backyards as well as any healthy trees close to property boundaries that



contribute to our important Urban Forest. We need to change the development culture to comply with GREEN Standards design and build with our urban forests in mind.

3. Commit to transparency to the public about the removal of trees including lists by ward, of permits issued to destroy trees, incidences of tree destruction without a permit, and fines imposed and collected.
4. Have inspectors review treed lots at time of permit issue to catalogue and educate developers about the consequences of illegal tree removal.
5. Have inspectors on call on weekends and holidays to be able to stop illegal destruction when reported.
6. Increase the magnitude of fines to create an incentive for builders and designers to preserve mature trees.
7. In the event that a necessary permitted removal of trees occurs, follow up to ensure the mandated 3 to 1 replacement is enforced.

The indiscriminate clear cutting of our urban forests by developers must be penalized and stopped.

CSVSWRA is working on a “Character of the Neighbourhood Proposal” intended to protect these special neighbourhoods and add these controls at the planning phase.

CSVSWRA would also be happy to work with Urban Forestry to help educate property owners about the value of the urban forest in residential areas of Cliffcrest and Scarborough Village.

Sincerely,

Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association

Tom Kasanda, Director

Janet May, Director

Marina Tadenc, Director

Mike Poirier, Director

Alan Burt, Director

Yvonne DiTulio, Director

Cc. Councilor Crawford, Councilor Ainsley

Attachments:

Appendix 1 - The importance of trees to Toronto's health

Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association

<https://cliffcrestscarboroughvillagesw.ca/>

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## **Appendix 1 - The importance of trees to Toronto's health**

The 2018 City of Toronto Tree Canopy Study, impervious land cover has increased across the city by 1.4% since 2008. Most of the land, 349 hectares, that has been converted from pervious to impervious is on single family residential land, such as 142 Harewood Avenue. This worrying trend is obvious in Ward 20.

According to the City of Toronto 2018 Tree Canopy Study, the trees in Toronto provide an estimated \$55 million in annual ecosystem services:

- \$8.3 million per year in home energy savings
- \$4.0 million per year in carbon sequestration
- \$37.9 million per year in pollution removal, such as ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and particulate matter

In addition, a 2014 study by Royal Bank indicated that Toronto's tree cover catches about 25 million cubic metres of precipitation, which saves the city approximately \$53 million and protects the foundations of houses from flooding.

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*d) New development will be located and organized to fit with its existing and/or planned context. It will frame and support adjacent streets, parks and open spaces to improve the safety, pedestrian interest and casual views to these spaces from the development by:*

*ii) Preserving existing mature trees wherever possible and incorporating them into landscaping designs (3.1.2 Policy 1)*

Toronto's Strategic Forest Management Plan 2012-2022, includes expanding the forest canopy from 28%-30% to 40%. This plan indicates:

*"One of the fundamental aspects of increasing tree canopy coverage across the city is protection of the existing resource. Tree protection is currently accomplished through implementation of various tree and natural feature protection by-laws which provide opportunities to educate the public on the benefits of trees. Efforts to protect trees need to be improved."* (Executive Summary p. xi)