

January 30, 2016

Stephanie Paparella
Legislative Coordinator
71 Main Street, West
1st Floor
Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

Dear Ms. Paparella:

On behalf of the Crown Point Community Planning Team, we are writing to request that Council acts now to approve a capital budget expenditure to develop an Urban Forest Strategic Plan for Hamilton in 2016.

Over the past 2 years, members of the planning team have enthusiastically joined with over 15 urban forest stakeholders in identifying the challenges and opportunities of Hamilton's Urban Forest.

One of the opportunities was the "Trees Please" project – a partnership of the residents of the Crown Point Hub and the Hamilton Naturalist Club to promote planting of native trees and shrubs in areas not eligible for the Hamilton Street Tree program (i.e. in backyards and school grounds).

It was an excellent learning opportunity for our community. Some of our learning which may benefit Council's decision includes:

- There is emerging scientific consensus that a healthy environment requires a minimum of 30 – 40 % urban canopy cover
- Hamilton currently has 18%, including parks and the escarpment
- Core areas of the City have a lower percent - Crown Point neighbourhood has 16%
- Toronto's goal for urban canopy cover is 30 – 40%
- Benefits of urban trees include:
 - Air quality – removing particulate matter
 - Green House Gas reduction
 - Reduce flooding
 - Improve Psychological and physical health
 - Increase revenue in shopping districts
 - Heat reduction
 - Increase property value
 - Community benefits
 - Reduced noise pollution
 - Wildlife habitat
 - Trees add beauty

Our experience showed us that when people have a chance to participate and learn about trees and how to care for them, the response is terrific. Doing the education and outreach took a lot of effort. We had great fun and were grateful for the opportunity.

Last night Anne had a reminder of the crucial importance of trees and air quality. A 10 year old neighbour had to stop on the sidewalk in front of her house while he was walking with his friends. He was afraid he was going to have an asthma attack. Many of our young people live with this fear.

It is imperative that the community of Hamilton send a strong message to our young people that we are serious about combating climate change and improving air quality by working collaboratively to invest in the future. One very clear way to do this is by planting new trees and protecting our current trees.

To reach the minimal goal of 30% urban forest canopy cover we need a collaborative, comprehensive and coordinated plan involving citizens of all ages and backgrounds, businesses, government and other organizations. An Urban Forest Strategic Plan for Hamilton could develop the clarity and vision needed. It is a worthy investment for Hamilton and our future.

Sincerely,

Anne Vallentin
Crown Point resident
Trees Please committee member

Elizabeth Seidl
Crown Point resident
Trees Please committee member