

## PROPOSED BYLAW FOR TREES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Last month, I attended a session on the proposed bylaw for trees on private property that was held at the RBG.

I wanted to provide feedback through the online survey. Unfortunately, I was not able to take the survey as I had a problem with the registration process. I am therefore providing my feedback through this note.

I wish to state at the outset that I am not against protecting trees.

However, I am concerned about a city-wide bylaw coming into effect in the near future. I believe the Roseland Pilot Study should continue at least until next spring so council will have a better picture of the situation. An important bylaw requires a very thorough review.

I am also troubled by the tone of the remarks councillors have made (as published in the Burlington Post this summer). Councillors must appear as people willing to take the time to listen to all sides of the issue and make compromises. Rulings that are harsh and biased rarely work well in the long run. Even people who are concerned about climate change may be uncomfortable with a far-reaching bylaw that threatens stiff penalties.

I believe most homeowners are prudent people who try to exercise good judgment in the matter of tree maintenance. When they do decide to remove a tree, they do so for a good reason.

### Examples

A very large tree (too large for its space on the property).  
A very messy tree (sheds more than just leaves). Clean up is time-consuming.

In most cases homeowners who remove a tree will do some research and replace the old tree with one that is more suitable. Years ago, my father replaced a weeping willow with a tree that he thought was not quite so messy.

As a resident of one of the older neighbourhoods, I have witnessed a number of tree accidents. These were all mature trees which to the eye appeared in good condition. But they were very mature trees, and sometimes it is wise to remove a tree before it becomes a problem.

Some citizens will say that we should see ourselves as custodians of the trees. But you must not forget that trees need constant maintenance. Mature trees require professional pruning every few years and eventually may reach a point when further pruning is not advisable. When a tree loses a major limb or two, it becomes vulnerable as the weight shifts. The tree is then prone to breakage in wind storms.

## MY PERSPECTIVE

Give the Roseland citizens a few more months to assess their situation and provide feedback to council.

Identify the wards where tree destruction is more evident.  
Target those wards for the bylaw first.

You might also consider applying the bylaw to front yards only (at least initially). For many homeowners (myself included), the back yard is an oasis. It is a private space that people use for relaxing and entertaining friends. Homeowners should be able to choose what they want in that private space.

I would agree to putting a clause in a future bylaw about replacing a tree that has been removed. Homeowners would choose either a new tree for their property or pay for a tree on public property.

I do not think neighbours should be consulted about tree removal. Involving another party makes for a very complicated and potentially unpleasant situation.

I suspect builders from out of town have destroyed more trees than the citizens of Burlington. Many a good home that was the "right size" for the property has been demolished (along with the trees and plants) so that a monster home could be constructed. Recognize new home builders as the real culprits of mature tree destruction and consider drafting a bylaw that pertains to homes changing hands.

I hope these remarks will be helpful as you go forward with the bylaw review.

Sincerely

Dr. Nancy Vivian

Homeowner (age 65)  
Fully Detached House on Shadeland Avenue

PS: I see no evidence of massive tree destruction in my part of Ward 1.