

## Tree Replacement

I want to address the issue of the proposed by-law with regards to tree replacement.

I strongly believe that the rationale for the changes to the proposed by-law is that the percentage of tree canopy in Burlington has dropped from a healthy percentage to what environmentalists would call an unhealthy level.

I cannot agree or disagree on what percentage is healthy, but I do agree that Burlington has in the past been known as a city of trees and I support the philosophy that we should replace our canopy to previous levels.

Why has the canopy been significantly reduced over the last thirty years?

I can identify three significant reasons:

a. Property developers have clear cut significant numbers of trees, within the city, as they developed large tracts of land for housing, roadways, public buildings and sports fields.

b. Previous councils have not required sufficient replacement to maintain a healthy level of tree canopy. If they required compensation in a monetary form, was it appropriately utilized to replace the removed canopy?

c. Mother Nature has caused the removal of a significant number of mature trees, either through natural storms of increasing ferocity, or by disease. (Elm Tree Disease, or Emerald Ash Bore Infestation.)

Before I discuss my thoughts with the proposed by-law, I would like to quote “the **law of unintended consequences**, Often cited but rarely defined, is that actions of people—and especially of government—always have effects that are unanticipated or **unintended**. ... Most often, however, the **law of unintended consequences** illuminates the perverse unanticipated effects of legislation and regulation.”

I believe that the number of trees being requested to replace a single tree in the downtown core is a true example of the law of unintended consequences.

eg. Removal of one tree, from Burlington Lions Club, a community service club, privately owned property, to enable a building expansion for a not for profit mental health organization. The number of replacement trees to be planted is in the double digits. That would cost those organizations in excess of \$10,000.00. I suggest that money is better utilized in providing service to those in the community that require help.

I am even more concerned about a need to replace 16 ornamental trees, on the service club property, as those trees have reached the end of their healthy life cycle and an arborist has recommended their replacement. Even a 2 for 1 replacement, cost based on 2010 fees, will exceed \$28,000.00. Again it is in my opinion an excessive cost and not an appropriate use of those specific funds.

Suggestions for financing the rebuilding of the tree canopy:

a. Future development or redevelopment on a 2 for 1 basis. Developers to pay for and install one for every tree required to be planted by the city even if no trees were cut down. The second tree be in the form of a financial contribution to the city .

b. Those monies collected from “a” above being restricted to use in planting of trees on public property in the general area surrounding the development within 2 years.

c. For trees located on public property that have been removed due to disease or insect infestation, the cost should be covered by general taxation paid by all citizens of the city.

d. when a tree is removed on private property because it has reached the end of it's natural life cycle it should be replaced on a 1 for 1 basis, paid for by the property owner.

e. I would also like to suggest consideration of a Burlington City Incentive Program of providing trees at nominal cost for the planting on private property. This could be limited to 2 or 3 trees per property and the city could provide a list of tree varieties that they would provide.