

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, Council, City Staff and Fellow Concerned Citizens

My name is Daintry Klein and I represent the not-for-profit organization Millcroft Greenspace Alliance.

We appreciate the opportunity to present today where consideration is being given to the City's Corporate Policy on Tree Protection and Canopy Enhancement. We are a long way from achieving the target of 35% tree canopy in this City, and we have but 19 years until 2041. Recognizing that it takes decades to grow a mature tree, the only way to achieve this goal is to preserve our existing canopy without exception. And if it isn't in the ground, plant it now. It is urgent.

Statistics Canada has released a new report as of January 25, 2022 titled *Accounting for Ecosystem Change*, which shows that cities are becoming greyer not greener. It seems obvious that Burlington will fit in this category given the substantial development and intensification that has and is taking place. Yet City Council and the planning staff continue to allow developers to snub our City's Official Plan and Zoning By-laws which provide the "adequate space and suitable conditions above and below grade for planting and growth of trees on public and private property," to quote the report on page 4.

Under the category "Engage and Collaborate", the policy recommends "The City shall build knowledge and a tree friendly culture internally through inter-departmental coordination and consideration of opportunities and constraints related to trees, in consultation with Forestry staff." After reviewing the report written by Rebecca Lau for the proposed development at 4375 Millcroft Park Drive, all planning documents from the Provincial Policy Statement through the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Region of Halton Official Plan and The City's Official Plan have provisions for healthy, liveable environments and green infrastructure. The planning process begins in the City and it seem obvious that our City's ability to defend its position at OLT starts with an aligned public position of the Staff planning report and Council's Decision. The residents are looking for accountability. Developer appeals to the OLT without these two components are not consistent with the City's stated goal of transparency. Blaming OLT for our woes when the City has not upheld it's responsibility is unacceptable.

The City has declared a Climate Emergency. The impact of climate change is rearing its ugly head in many ways impacting lives and livelihoods here in our country and around the world. We had our own experience in 2014 and the weather is only becoming more violent. Heat waves, flooding and forest fires are having devastating humanitarian and economic impact. When we read of the economic impact of flooding in the Mackenzie River Valley one can't help but consider the similarities to the City of Burlington – a major transportation corridor wedged between the Niagara Escarpment and Lake Ontario – a significant elevation drop in only 12 km. The City has been very proud to state it's accomplishment of removing the transportation hub designation from the downtown. We are asking our City to negotiate with the Province to reduce the requirement for development which is eliminating greenspace including trees at a record pace and subjecting our residents to flooding and flood risk. It is a potentially significant liability to our municipality.

We need to continue to focus on the benefits of trees as a mitigation for climate change. Cooling, Stormwater Management, CO2 mitigation, noise abatement. This proposed Corporate Policy points out that trees are vulnerable to environmental stressors such as extreme weather. Our inability to grow the tree canopy or worse, the trend of greying, could result in an irreversible situation similar to the tipping

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point of the Amazon Rainforest. As we lose trees, we lose the cooling that sustains the existing or growing trees, and evapotranspiration from the existing trees produces the moisture required to sustain the canopy during dry spells.

Green rooves are not the answer. These rooves require very environmentally unfriendly sealants that require ongoing maintenance to protect the underlying infrastructure from water damage. And just as trees mature, they must be removed due to the weight (add the potential for excessive rain and snow). If you would like a first-hand account, just ask the condo owners at 2170 and 2180 Marine Drive in Bronte how they enjoyed the additional assessments and inconvenience of having their landscape removed from their parking garage. Let's keep the green on the ground, additionally to convey stormwater safely through our City, and put the solar panels on the rooves.

Millcroft Greenspace Alliance was formed to advocate for responsible development. The Millcroft Golf Course is under threat and the appeal of the New Official Plan by Millcroft Greens provides a clear picture of their future intentions. The current development proposal is just the beginning. The Golf Course is a documented stormwater storage green infrastructure which not only protects the neighbouring homeowners, but also properties in south Burlington. It is also a greenspace which has a significant, mature, parkland tree canopy. Preserving this greenspace will protect mature trees which cannot otherwise be replaced for decades. The concept of purchasing carbon tax credits to offset greenhouse gas emissions is receiving substantial attention. The most effective offsets are in close proximity to the source of the GHGs. Given that the Millcroft Golf course is under threat of development, saving it could qualify as a carbon offset. **And let's add some more trees to the property.** The Millcroft Neighbourhood is surrounded by a rail line, two higher order transit corridors and the proposed Uptown Urban Centre. The preservation of this greenspace is imperative for the City to reach its tree canopy goal. The Millcroft Golf Course is zoned as Major Parks and Open Space in both the Old and New Official Plans. Why is the City not enforcing its own Official Plans and preserving this greenspace for the current and future residents? Why is our planning department negotiating with the developer? Mayor and Councillor Sharman, you are on record that you will protect our greenspace.

We note that the City owns only 15% of the land in the municipality which highlights the importance of the existing tree canopy on private lands. It is inconceivable to us that the City not only allows development on private lands without respect for our trees, but even allows developers to cut trees on the City's property. How does this make sense?

We implore this Council to consider the importance of preserving the existing mature tree canopy and reversing the current trend of cutting here and cutting there to facilitate more grey. If we are genuine in establishing a tree canopy target then we need to have a plan and we need to have contingencies as a margin of error for impacts of pests such as the Emerald Ash Bore. We cannot continue to allow developers to clear the land. To quote page 2 of the subject report, "Trees and by association, urban forests have tremendous capacity to provide increasing benefits and services to the community **as they mature.**"

Thank you for listening and we look forward to the required action and implementation of this Corporate Policy as proposed.