

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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Harbord Village Canopy Enhancement Initiative

March 18, 2018.

Harbord Village is a significant contributor to the tree canopy in Downtown Toronto. Our contribution to the City's urban forest amounts to 4000 trees in an area of 1 square km. This is all the more remarkable as we represent a dense urban neighbourhood near the centre of the City, extremely underserved in terms of parkspace. But changes in built form, species selection and environmental stresses are reducing our canopy cover.

Harbord Village was once a place of gardens, trees and orchards.

We are proposing a Canopy Preservation and Restoration Project to expand tree coverage and promote tree health in a typical low-rise Downtown neighbourhood.

This project would mandate HVRA, University experts, the private sector and City departments to identify policies to promote and enhance the urban forest in a dense urban context. These policy changes could include

- incentives for soft surface landscaping;
- early plantings to establish young trees near those reaching the end of their lives;
- alterations to zoning and building approvals to protect the urban forest;
- increased sensitivity of Committee of Adjustment decisions on development applications negatively affecting mature trees;
- fast-track approvals for tree-preserving renovation;
- exploration of rooftop greening initiatives; and,
- local awareness programmes to foster conservation and restoration of the urban forest.

Harbord Village is uniquely placed to assist the City in meeting its canopy objectives. In the summer of 2018, Harbord Village will complete a ten year-review of our tree inventory. This update builds on work HVRA has done, with the assistance of the University of Toronto Forestry Department. Once complete, the inventory will have captured all trees, their condition, and location, and identify trends. This summer's data will put us in a position to assess what has been happening to this urban forest, including:

- Population,
- Species, native or non-native
- Health
- Cause of injury or mortality
- Effectiveness of replacement plantings in species mix and size
- Canopy estimates

The findings could be extrapolated to include

- Contribution to air quality
- Amelioration of heat island
- Stormwater abatement

The inventory sets a baseline for future programmes in our neighbourhood.

The Canopy Restoration Project would be a logical extension to the Harbord Village Green Master Plan, which was developed through a collaboration between HVRA and Councillor Joe Cressy's office. To date, the Plan serves the City's policies around stormwater abatement. Residents have been working with the City's Transportation Department to intercept stormwater by cutting and planting street bumpouts in the pavement at a number of Harbord Village intersections starting in 2018. Next phases include the greening of lanes and the paved City property flanking businesses on College and Harbord. (see link at appendix a).

Canopy enhancement is critical as we also see local development encroaching on soft landscaped space and the loss of mature trees to same-age plantings 75-100 years ago. The greenspace deficit in our community will worsen with the population increases that are forecast for the Downtown.

The private sector is a critical element in fulfilling the City's mandate to increase the canopy, since most of the city's trees are on private land. Collaborative planning between the private sector and the City will be vital to fulfilling the City's goals. With an active gardening community, we are in a position to implement programmes. While the Green Master Plan includes greening lanes and City flanks; the Canopy Preservation and Restoration Project would expand its mandate to improve performance in the private property between lane and street.

Best,

Sue Dexter,
for Board,
Harbord Village Residents' Association.

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a) <https://harbordvillage.com/projects/greening/treeing-the-village/>