



Ottawa, ON
August 24/22

Councillor Mathieu Fleury
Ward 12, Rideau-Vanier
110, Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa ON
K1P 1J1

Dear Councillor Fleury:

Need for Adjustments to the Trees in Trust Program

As President of Action Sandy Hill, I am writing to see if adjustments can be made to the City of Ottawa's Trees in Trust Program so that it can operate more equitably in neighbourhoods throughout Ottawa and more effectively increase the street tree canopy. Action Sandy Hill is also interested in learning more about how we can initiate Forestry Services' Streetscaping projects in Sandy Hill.

The need is highlighted by a recent CBC News data analysis which rates Sandy Hill and Lowertown as having less vegetation than 94 percent of the neighbourhoods in metropolitan Ottawa and being 88 percent hotter than other neighbourhoods (see <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/info/2022/07/ilots-chaleur-villes-inegalites-injustice-changements-climatiques/en>).

Under the Trees in Trust Program, currently, only the property owner can "pledge to assist with the proper care (watering) for the first three years of the tree's life." In downtown neighbourhoods such as Sandy Hill, many properties are not owner occupied and tracking the owner to get their approval can be a challenge.

Suggestion: Allowing a property manager to assist with the proper care would expand the impact of the program, especially in neighbourhoods where tree cover is limited.

The program is limited to "one tree per single fronting household or two trees per corner lot." Many trees along city streets are not looking vigorous and showing the effects of stress with bare branches and leaf loss. Should they need to be replaced in the next few years, it would be good to have younger trees growing to replace them. Some downtown community groups are trying to engage in "succession planning" to replace



aging trees. Waiting until a tree is removed before planting another creates gaps in the canopy.

Suggestion: Opening up the program to allow planting a second tree where there is an aging street tree on the property would help with “succession planning” and maintenance of the tree canopy.

When street trees have to be removed due to age, disease, or other factors it leaves a gap, a sudden loss of privacy, shade, and rainfall regulation. The onus is placed on the property owner to apply for a new tree, and this can take time. (We are aware of the increased penalties for trees lost due to new construction as a means of encouraging replacement of trees.)

Suggestion: Instead of the onus being on the property owner to apply for a replacement tree, the onus might be switched to the property owner (or property manager) needing to apply if they do not want a replacement tree, especially if the site can accommodate a new tree.

We hope that you might find these suggestions for program changes useful and worth pursuing with the program managers. We would be willing to discuss these suggestions with you and others. Marilyn Whitaker (marilynwonash@gmail.com) and Bryan Dewalt (bdewalt.ash@gmail.com) who are now ASH board members can be contacted about these suggestions as well.

Best regards.

Yours truly,

L Lapointe

Louise Lapointe
President
Action Sandy Hill