

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP SUMMARY

This report provides a high-level summary of participant feedback and is not intended to provide a verbatim transcript of the meeting. If you have any questions after reviewing this summary, please contact Catherine Plosz, Natural Heritage Planner, City of Hamilton, at Catherine.Plosz@hamilton.ca or 905-546-2424 ext. 1231.

Event Overview

On May 17, 2018, the City of Hamilton hosted an external working seminar for the Hamilton Urban Forest Strategy. The workshop was held at the David Braley Health Sciences Centre, 100 Main Street West, Room 2035-2036 from 6:00-8:30pm. The working seminar was attended by representatives from the Hamilton Conservation Authority, Hamilton Naturalist Club, Royal Botanical Gardens, Environment Hamilton, DeVos Tree Care, Keep Hamilton Clean and Green, Waterdown BIA, and Conservation Halton. The event structure was:

6:00-6:10pm – Welcome and Introductions

6:10-6:40pm – Presentation – An Urban Forest Strategy for Hamilton: Dillon staff presentation on the context and objectives for the Hamilton Urban Forest Strategy, including interactive mentimeter questions.

6:40-6:50pm – Break

6:50-8:05pm – Strengthening our Urban Forest: Participant engagement activity identifying ways to reach the City's target of 30-35% tree cover.

8:05-8:25pm – “Vision” Discussion: What does the future of urban forests in Hamilton look like to you?

8:25-8:30pm – Next Steps and Closing

Consultation materials are available online at www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/strategies-actions/urban-forest-strategy



Source: City of Hamilton

The purpose of the event was to increase awareness of what the City of Hamilton and other municipalities are doing related to urban forestry, discuss opportunities to strengthen the urban forest and to explore a vision for Hamilton's urban forest in the future.

A total of 14 people attended the external workshop and over 65 individual comments were written and consolidated into ten themes during the "vision" exercise. Approximately 80 additional comments were gathered as part of the World Café exercise.

The presentation, "**Urban Forest Strategy for Hamilton**", highlighted the following:

- **Defining the Urban Forest:** The urban forest includes all of the trees and woodlands growing on public and private lands, including parks and cemeteries, natural areas, streets, and in residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional areas.
- **Purpose of the Urban Forest Strategy:** The purpose of the Urban Forest Strategy is to develop a vision and prepare a plan that outlines the necessary steps that must be taken to protect, maintain, enhance, and monitor the trees and forests in the urban area of Hamilton over the next 20 years and beyond.
- **Urban Forest Canopy Target:** The City of Hamilton's current urban forest canopy cover is approximately 17%. While the City's Urban Official Plan has an urban forest canopy cover target of 30%, By-law 15-125 "To Regulate Trees on or Affecting Public Property" has a goal to increase the current forest canopy cover target in urban areas of the City and in parklands to 35% by 2030.
- **Overview of Hamilton's Urban Forest:** Hamilton has a diverse Natural heritage System, with a patchy forest cover, and a high portion of urban forest is located on private lands. The City has a high number of smaller trees (e.g., newer residential developments). Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) removals and an increasing percentage of invasive species (e.g., black locust) have had big impact on tree cover in recent years.
- **Current Structure of the Urban Forest Program:** The City's Forestry and Horticulture Section oversees public tree planting, maintenance and removal of street trees; occasional planting of trees in natural areas; and select outreach programs. The Planning and Development Department reviews applications involving private trees during the site plan development process. The Parks and Recreation Department and the Conservation Authority oversee the management of most natural areas in Hamilton.
- **Existing Policies, By-laws and Guidelines:** The following list represents the City's existing policies, By-laws and guidelines:
 - Reforestation Policy – Municipally Owned Lands
 - City of Hamilton Public Tree By-law (No. 15-125)
 - Public Tree Preservative and Sustainability Policy (August 10th, 2015)¹
 - Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth Woodlands Conservation By-law (R00-054)
 - Tree Protection Guidelines for Development Sites
 - Forestry and Horticulture Design and Preservation for Working in the Public Right-of-Way V1 (2017)¹

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Participants

OVER 65 Comments
Consolidate into

10 Themes

¹ Added at a later date after the workshop

- By-law to Promote the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Woodlands on Private Property with the Urban Boundary of the City of Hamilton (No. 14-212)
 - The Corporation of the Town of Ancaster Tree Protection By-Law (No. 2000-118)
 - Town of Dundas Tree Protection By-law (No. 4513-99)
 - City of Stoney Creek Tree By-law (No. 4401-96)
- **Urban Forestry Trends:** Based on the *State of the Infrastructure Report* (2016) the City of Hamilton has experienced a net gain of trees in urban streets and parks (urban areas) and natural areas (rural areas), and a net loss of trees on rural roadways. Overall, no positive trends in tree condition forecast have been documented based on the *State of the Infrastructure Report*.
 - **Urban Forestry Practices in other Municipalities:** Examples of Urban Forestry programs in other municipalities include:
 - City of London Urban Forestry Strategy – Enhancing the Forest City (2014)
 - City of Mississauga Urban Forest Management Plan (2014)
 - City of New Westminster Urban Forest Management Strategy (2016)
 - Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Urban Forest Master Plan (2013)
 - North Oakville Urban Forest Strategic Management Plan (2011)
 - **Current Trends in Urban Forestry Practices:** The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed 28 urban forest targets to promote sustainable urban forestry practices. Each target represents a key objective for developing a sustainable urban forest and includes performance indicators. Three broad target categories currently exist:
 - **Trees and Forest:** Targets related to the status of the vegetation resource;
 - **Community Framework:** Engagement and collaboration amongst stakeholders at all levels; and
 - **Resource Management Approach:** Plans, practices and policies to improve and/or sustain urban forests.

The City of Hamilton currently addresses 7 of the 28 urban forestry targets by the USDA to at least a low to moderate performance level. The City addresses another 6 additional targets partially, but comprehensive plans, policies, and programs do not exist. The most common targets adopted by reviewed municipalities relate to canopy cover, inventories, species diversity and native species, management and cooperation and collaboration. Additional targets adopted in Urban Forest Plans by municipalities include green infrastructure, stormwater management, standards, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Throughout the presentation the facilitation team asked questions using mentimeter, an interactive and real-time polling tool.

Following the presentation, participants engaged in a World Café exercise to explore the following:

- What can the City do to increase the number of trees in Hamilton?
- What opportunities do you see to increase cooperation between the city and individuals/groups?
- What opportunities do you see to encourage private landowners to plant more trees?

Attendees rotated through each of the questions in three groups and provided verbal and written comments. The World Café style exercise was followed by a “vision” discussion, which was guided by the

From your perspective, what is your perception of how the urban forest is currently managed?



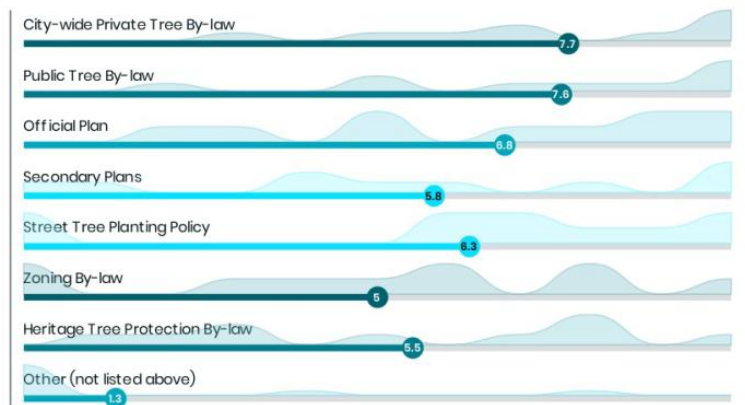
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A total of 28 responses were collected on attendees' perception on how the urban forest is currently being managed. The top response is *poorly*. Other responses include *lack of diversity, playing catch up, management and protection, underfunded, and inconsistency*, among others.

Other responses to the above questions by attendees who provided written feedback include:

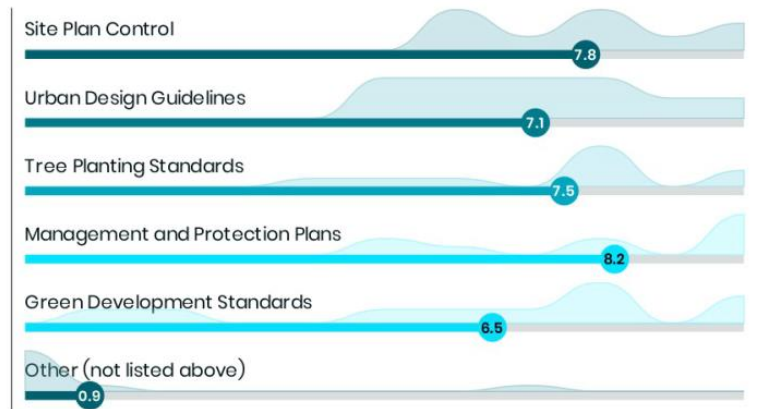
- Patchy
- Understaffed
- No teeth to tree protection by-law
- Developers rule in Hamilton and do what they want without need to pay attention to by law
- Council is reluctant to support tree/forest protection
- Need more education about the benefits of trees in the community
- Non-native trees promoted by city to plant

What type of City policies would have the most significant impact on sustaining and enhancing the urban forest?



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What type of City guidelines and standards would have the most significant impact on sustaining and enhancing the urban forest?



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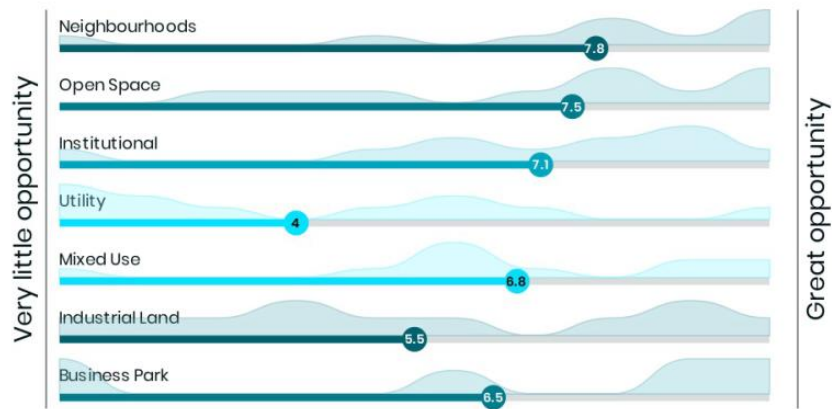
A total of 10 responses were collected on the impact of City *policies* and *guidelines and standards* on urban forestry practices. In regards to *policies*, based on a 10-point rating scale, with 10 being the highest impact and 1 being the lowest impact, the City-wide Private Tree By-law and the Public Tree By-law received an average rating of 7.7 and 7.6 points respectively, followed by the Official Plan with an average rating of 6.8 points and the Street Tree Planting Policy with an average rating of 6.3 points.

Overall, the City-wide Private Tree By-law and the Public Tree By-law were voted to have the most significant impact on sustaining and enhancing the urban forest.

In regards to *guidelines and standards*, based on a 10-point rating scale, Management and Protection Plans received an average rating of 8.2 points, followed by Site Plan Control with an average rating of 7.8 points and Tree Planting Standards with an average rating of 7.5 points.

Overall, Management and Protection Plans were voted to have the most significant impact on sustaining and enhancing the urban forest.

Which land uses offer the best opportunity to improve the urban forest?



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A total of 11 responses were collected on attendees' perception on which land uses offer the best opportunities to improve the urban forest. Based on a 10-point rating scale, Neighbourhoods received an average rating of 7.8 points, followed by Open Space with an average rating of 7.5 points and Institutional with an average rating of 7.1 points.

Overall, Neighbourhoods were believed to offer the best opportunities to improve the urban forest.

WORLD CAFÉ EXERCISE

Attendee input was also collected during a lively and collaborative World Café exercise. Attendees were placed into three groups and each group had the opportunity to engage in discussion and write down their thoughts on the questions below.

The following sections provide an overall summary of all feedback received. Priorities are shown as they were categorized by participants themselves into the themes described in the Event Overview (note that many of the priorities overlap themes).

WORLD CAFÉ EXERCISE QUESTION AND RESPONSE SUMMARY

What can the City do to increase the number of trees in Hamilton?

- Are there specific locations or type of location (e.g. boulevards, parks, school yards, etc.) that would be most suited for planting?
- Are trees in need of maintenance in particular locations (e.g. boulevards, parks, school yards, etc.)?
- Are you aware of the planting that already happens?

- Naturalization
- Tax incentive (e.g., storm water fee)
- City planting on private properties
- Identify where to plant

- City criteria are limiting for homeowners – open up subsidized trees
- Replacement ratio 3:1
- Opportunities to expand tree planting programs in schools and parks
- Partnership with NGOs to replant large trees
- Education (e.g., roots, pipes, ‘messy’ trees)
 - Communication to get private landowners to participate/ community involvement
- Guidelines for tree care for residents (incentives)
 - Right tree at right location (city staff guidance – e.g., white pine)
- City partner with NGOs to plant
- Buy parking lots and depave (e.g., parking lot design to include trees)

What opportunities do you see to increase cooperation between the individual, City and stakeholders?

- *Has your group/organization worked with the City?*
- *Is there any way to improve the working relationship?*

Education

- Communicate available programs/opportunities
- Provide information/resources to homeowners on:
 - Tree program
 - More information and education around native species and benefits that trees provide
 - Tree protection/by-laws, tree protection/preservation
 - Provide tips and tricks as response to complaints (e.g., mow leaves into lawn, rake into garden, etc.)
 - Benefits of trees to property and ecosystem function
 - Provide list of trusted arborist companies
 - Education/tips – avoid overly punitive/onerous costs to properly manage
- More backyard information on tree benefits (e.g., How trees can help make houses more efficient, best location to plant trees for shade, etc.)
- Increased communication

Partnerships

- BIA/homeowner led tree program
- Corporate groups function equals free planting and labour
- Involve schools
- Work to reduce barriers

Celebrate Trees

- Better use of community news – neighbourhoods
- Arborist Day
 - Forest Festival
 - City celebrate and take leadership, set tone for excitement of trees
 - City leading by example replacing trees brought down each year – hazard trees etc.
 - Neighbourhood and community newspaper
 - Communicate and message everywhere
 - Show list of arborists and native plant nurseries
 - Educate council and get their support – they can help reach out to residents
 - Share a photo of your favourite tree

Municipal Staff and Councillors

- City needs to be more proactive to defend trees. When residents raise issue of tree roots in pipes – tell residents about “subsidies” for plumbing related insurance

- Promote urban forest strategy
- The city can communicate their vision
- When doing great work they city should highlight
- Council to promote that trees are wanted – planting day
- Lead by example: council needs to be on board!

Financial Incentives

- Urban forest tax incentive
 - Tax breaks for portion of property that has forest

What opportunities do you see to encourage private landowners to plant more trees?

- *What do you think about by-laws?*
- *Is more information/education needed?*
- *Are there financial incentives that would work?*

By-laws

- Enforcing tree planting through By-laws does not make sense for everyone – e.g., different demographics have different needs (e.g., elderly person planting and maintaining tree)
- By-law may be useful on the maintenance side
- Provide property tax incentives for private landowners who meet a certain target of trees on their property

Education

- Cultural sensitivity
- Not everyone has access to the internet necessarily
- Door-to-door still the best method of reaching people
- Most people don't know that they get a free tree (2 year wait list for a free tree)
- Does the City have the resources to do outreach? How are outreach activities supported?
- Online Tools: An online program or app where people can design their backyard
- Tree planting and maintenance brochure sent with recycling program
- Big tree planting events – e.g., "Leave no Tree Unmulched"
- Schools (e.g., arbor program, tree contest, school tree planting program)
- A qualified person, such as an arborist should be in charge of cutting down trees. Trees should only be cut down if a qualified person identifies the need for a tree to be cut down
- List of native tree/shrub growers that homeowners (schools) can access in one place
 - With sizes of mature trees
- Host an annual tree planting day at a community park(s)
- Neighbourhood contests for greenest area

Financial Incentives

- Tree incentives
 - Incentive to maintain tree – maintenance incentive – "tree insurance"
 - Provide education by an approved vendor/supplier
 - City to provide recommended supplier list (discrepancies between how much suppliers charge)
- Cost share program
- Subsidized arborist coming to provide guidance on tree planting (the right tree in the right spot)
- Tree 'snow angel' program
- What are the benefits of planting/maintaining a tree for the owner? (e.g., financial, tax benefit, local paper, provide trees to organizations)

Once every group had a chance to discuss each of the three questions, everyone came together to report back on what was discussed at each table.

“VISION” DISCUSSION

The workshop concluded with a “vision” discussion which was guided by the question “What does the future of urban forests in Hamilton look like to you?” Attendees had the opportunity to write down three words or phrases in response to the above question on sticky notes. Attendees collaboratively clustered the sticky notes into themes with assistance from the facilitation team.

The following table provides themes and overall summary of all feedback received. Attendee’s input is shown as they were clustered by participants themselves (note that many of the priorities overlap themes).

RESPONSE SUMMARY: WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF THE URBAN FOREST IN HAMILTON LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

APPRECIATED

- Public responsibility
- Wanted
- Public and private involvement
- Residents are aware of tree benefits
- Appreciation (of what trees provide) from general public

STRENGTHENED

- 40% tree canopy
- Ambitious
- Plant more trees
- At least 35% canopy (*comment received 2 times*)
- Functioning and healthy, providing ecosystem benefits - reach 35%

CONNECTED

- Interconnected, natural corridors (*comment received 2 times*)
- Connected
- City encourages trees on every street
- Well integrated/ distributed
- More uniform across the city
- Natural corridors
- Rich, diverse green canopy across all communities
- Underground lines (more trees, less trouble and maintenance)

ROBUST

- Native dominated
- Evenly distributed
- Vancouver (green roofs, terraces, etc.)
- Depaved
- Tree lined streets Green vs. gray

HEALTHY

- Healthy (*comment received 6 times*)

UNEVENLY AGED

- Older
- Uneven aged
- Lots of native trees being planted (ongoing)

RESILIENT

- Climate change resilient
- Resilient (*comment received 2 times*)

DIVERSE & SUCCESSIONAL

- Diverse (*comment received 7 times*)
- Better definition of natural forest and urban forest
- Native (*comment received 4 times*)
- Seed collection program to procreate native trees from original old growth trees
- Habitat for wildlife
- Naturalize areas to allow trees to seed in naturally

INTENTIONAL

- Right tree in the right place
- Enticing faunal biodiversity – providing habitat
- Shrubs offered through the city
- Abundant

MAINTAINED

- Maintained, managed, and monitored
- Properly maintained and pruned (*comment received 3 times*)
- Active invasive species control program for urban forests
- Good stewardship

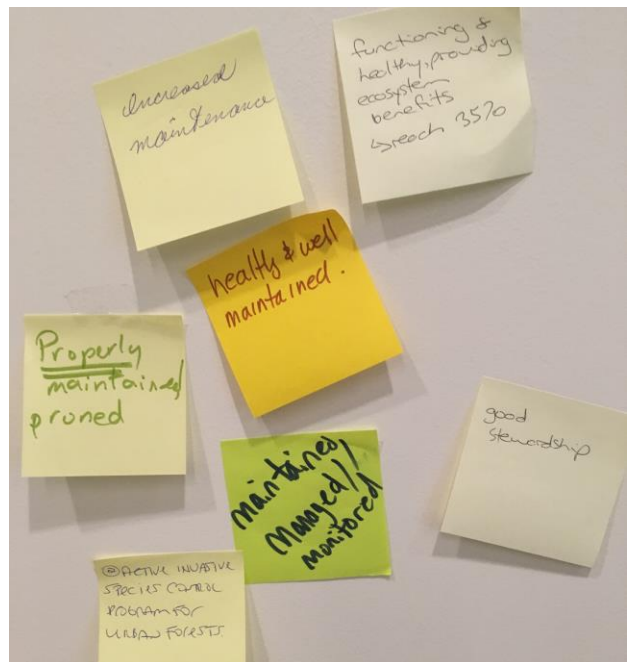
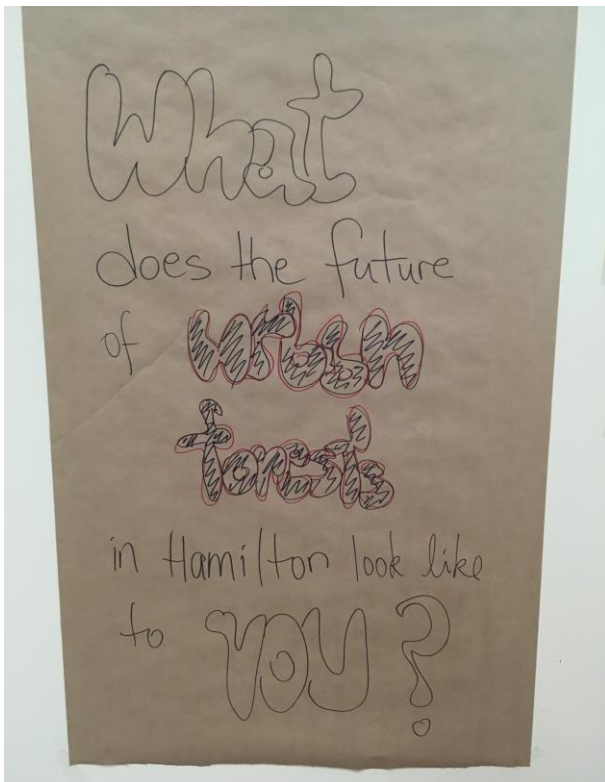
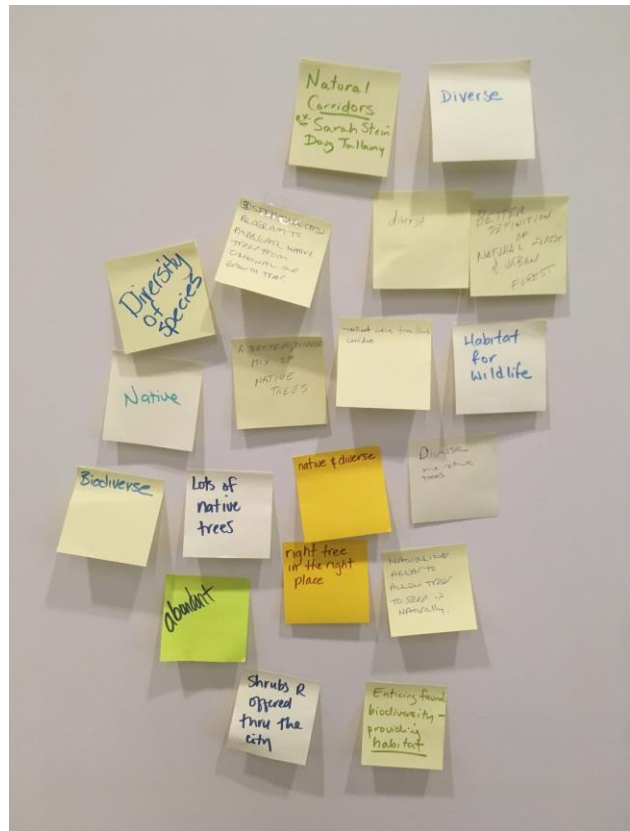
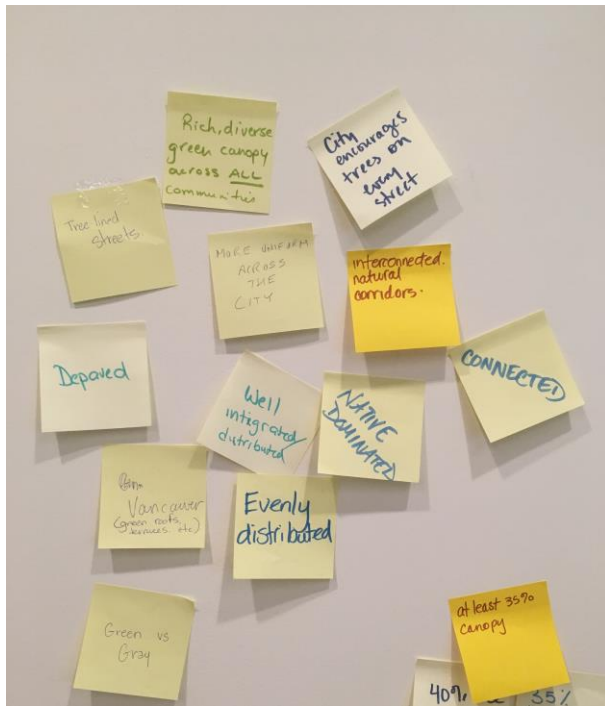


Photo: "Vision" Discussion

Other verbal and written comments and questions collected as part of the workshop presentation and exercise not captured above include:

- What would be the current tree coverage percentage if natural areas were not included in the 17%? Percentage can be determined through GIS exercise.
- Guidelines need to consider how feasible it is to plant a tree in certain areas and for that tree to reach maturity.
- Biggest problem is space – e.g., what trees are handed out at community events/how suitable are they for people’s backyard.
- What species to grow? Most people don’t know.
- Who is looking for trees? Make information accessible.
- Defining urban/rural forest - need to classify clearly elements of urban forest, urban natural lands, urban trees, and parks.

Additional written comments were received from the Hamilton Naturalist Club on June 3rd after the event. The key points raised include the following:

- When defining the Urban Forest it is important to be considered of the various elements that exist within the definition, such as trees on natural lands and trees in the core of the City;
- The Hamilton Naturalist Club recommends that the definition of urban Forest is broken down into the following elements: Natural lands, urban woodlots; urban parks and golf courses; commercial and industrial lands; and residential, commercial and institutional properties, and street right of ways.
- There seems to be a disconnect between the concept of Urban Forest and the value of open native meadow lands. Since not every neighbourhood may want to grow large trees an alternative option is the planting of native shrubs and the use of meadow land. Education is one way to communicate alternative planting opportunities.

The complete response by the Hamilton Naturalist Club will be included as part of the consultation record of the final report.

Next Steps

Further community consultations related to the Urban Forest Strategy are being organized, including a second workshop in spring 2019. Until then, you can continue to learn more about the Project here: www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/strategies-actions/urban-forest-strategy

Project timeline

