




## COMMUNICATION UPDATE

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members City Council
<b>DATE:</b>	February 4, 2022
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Response to questions regarding Encampment Clean ups and Tree Canopy Cover (City Wide) (ES22002)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Cynthia Graham Acting Director, Environmental Services Public Works Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

This Communication Update is to report back to the Mayor and Members of Council regarding questions asked to Environmental Services Division staff during the Public Works Department's Budget presentation at the January 26, 2022 GIC meeting.

### Encampments – Request for Information

More information was requested from staff regarding the breakdown between the number of encampment clean-ups completed by staff, versus by the contractor.

In 2021, there were 262 encampment clean ups completed – this is an updated number based on data analysis and increase from the 258 clean ups reported in the Public Works budget presentation. Staff completed 176 clean ups, and the hired contractor completed 86 clean ups.

Information was also requested regarding the locations of the clean ups, to understand if the same sites were being cleaned up repeatedly, or if these clean ups were an original encampment at those sites.

Staff reviewed work orders and identified 60 unique sites that were the locations of the 262 encampment clean ups. It should be noted that each clean up event might not be a complete removal of the encampment, but often staff or the contractor attend the site to assist with garbage removal and other activities without a full site clean up as part of the enforcement strategy in addressing and managing specific encampment sites. The

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OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

**SUBJECT: Response to questions regarding Encampment Cleanups and Tree Canopy Cover ES22002 (City Wide) - Page 2 of 2**

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locations where multiple visits were made were generally spread across many weeks and months. For instance, at John Rebecca Park, clean up events were logged across 10 dates, spread between April 2021 and November 2021.

Public Works staff followed up with staff in Healthy and Safe Communities to try and understand if there were individuals who were involved in more than one encampment that was cleaned up. Staff can share that over the course of 2021, 35 individuals were known to have appeared in more than one different encampment that was cleaned up, and of those, 20 individuals appeared in three or more different encampments throughout the city.

**Urban Canopy Cover – Request for Information**

Staff was requested to send information that summarizes the % canopy cover for areas across the city. This data was collected as part of the Urban Forest Strategy and the draft study can be found on the city's website <https://www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/strategies-actions/urban-forest-strategy>.

The map showing canopy cover for the urban areas of Hamilton is attached to Communication Update ES 2202. This resource shows where there are areas in the City of low canopy cover and assists staff in determining where efforts should be focussed to find planting opportunities to increase the canopy in those areas.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

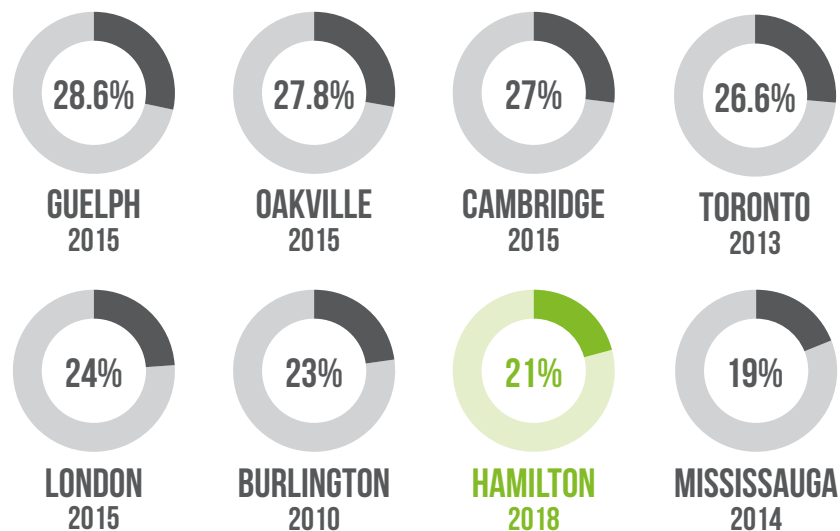
Appendix "A" to Communication Update ES22002 – Canopy Map from Draft Urban Forest Strategy

## THE BIG PICTURE

### HAMILTON'S URBAN FOREST

Hamilton's urban forest is part of the Carolinian forest region, one of the most biologically diverse areas in Canada. In the past, the Carolinian forest covered 80% of the region before settlers started clearing land and building cities.<sup>3</sup> Total canopy cover in Hamilton's urban area is currently estimated at approximately 21.2%.<sup>4</sup> The loss of natural canopy cover affects watershed health and native biodiversity. Compared to other Ontario municipalities, Hamilton's canopy cover is relatively low, at approximately two thirds of the City's 30% target.

### CANOPY COVER IN NEARBY CITIES



### DISTRIBUTION OF CANOPY COVER

The distribution of the urban forest is uneven across the city. Canopy distribution is affected by many things, including development history and land use. Areas with large parks or mature residential neighbourhoods generally have higher average levels of canopy than industrial or commercial areas, and generally have more room for planting new trees as well. This shows the effect that different land uses have on the amount of canopy cover, as well as potential canopy cover. It also means that access to the benefits of trees is not equal around the city. Identifying and prioritizing planting opportunities across all land uses can help improve the future distribution of the urban canopy.

#### WHAT IS CANOPY COVER?

Canopy cover represents the amount of land area covered by individual trees and woodlands as seen from above. It is one of many ways to describe the urban forest. The term includes all trees and shrubs that make up the urban forest.

Many cities are setting canopy cover targets, recognizing the many benefits of urban trees for people, for sustaining watershed function and for supporting biodiversity.

<sup>3</sup> According to LANDSAT TM satellite imagery (vintage 1987-1993).

<sup>4</sup> Land and tree cover were assessed using the USDA Forest Service i-Tree Canopy tool using 2017/2018 leaf-on imagery from Google Earth. This was the most recent and complete year available.

# 2017 CANOPY COVER ESTIMATES BY WARD

