



Harmonized Private Tree Bylaw Review and Updates to Existing Woodland Bylaws and Tree Protection Guidelines

2026 Public Engagement



**PUBLIC WORKS
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

Housekeeping



Land Acknowledgement

The City of Hamilton is situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. We further acknowledge that this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Today, the City of Hamilton is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island (North America) and we recognize that we must do more to learn about the rich history of this land so that we can better understand our roles as residents, neighbours, partners and caretakers.

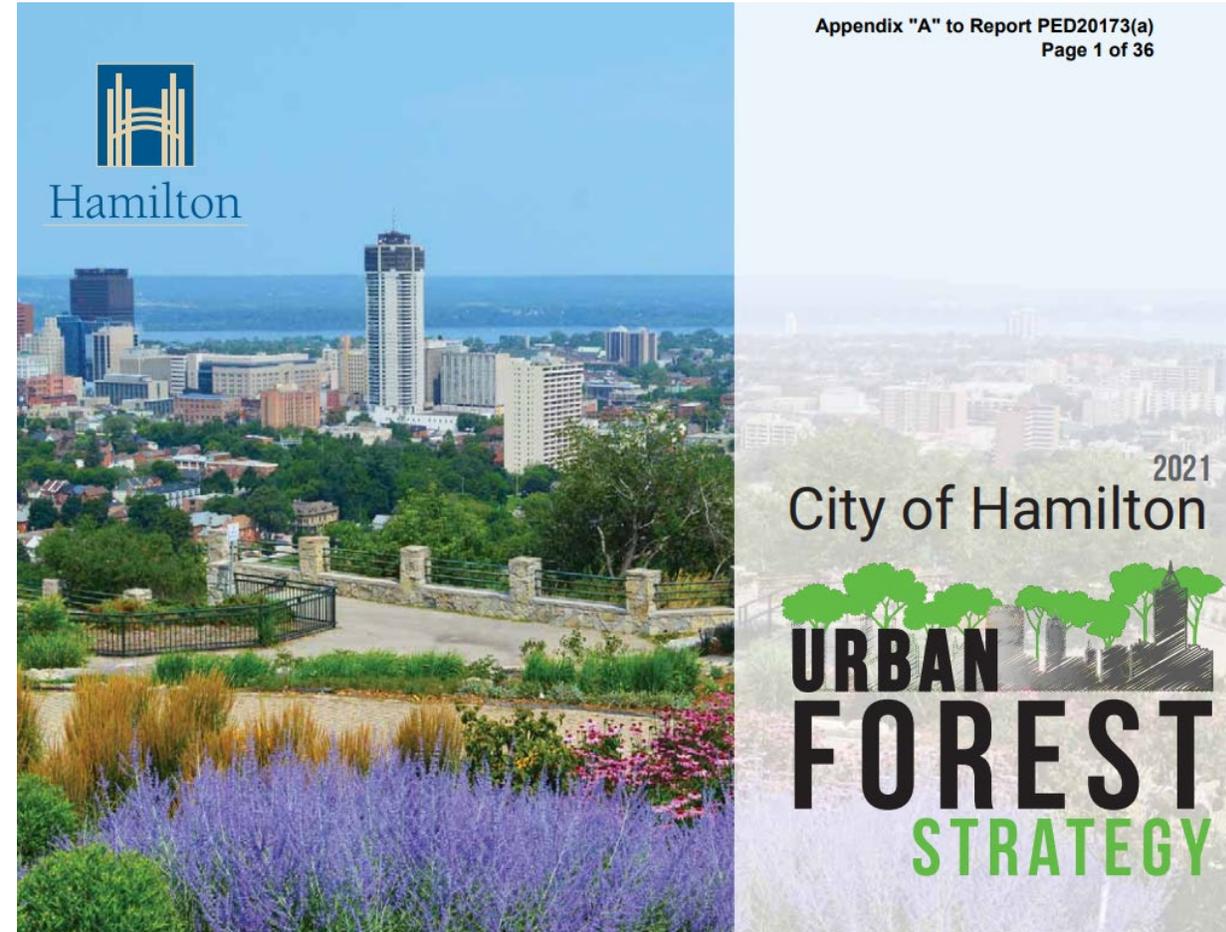
Background

Mandate received through the Urban Forest Strategy (PED20173(a)) City Wide Urban Area)

Approved by Council in June 2023

- **Overall goal:**
 - increase canopy cover to 40% by 2050 within the city's urban boundary

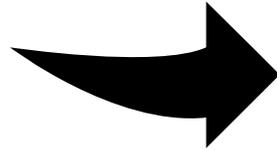
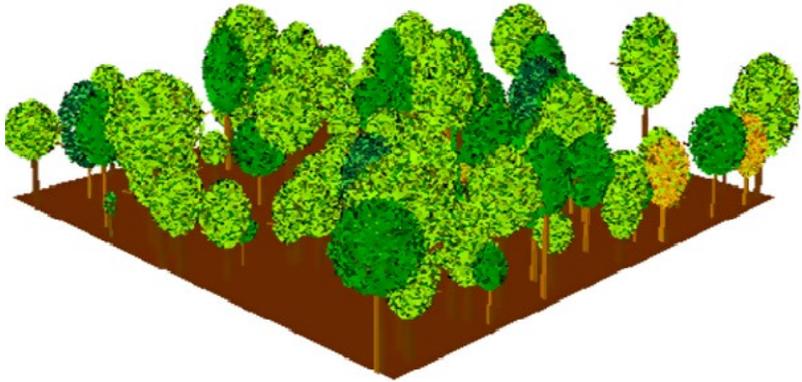
Themes: Inspire, Act, **Protect**, Grow, Adapt



Definitions 1 of 2

What is the Urban Forest?

- The Urban Forest includes all publicly and privately-owned trees and supporting vegetation in the urban boundary



What is Tree Canopy Cover?

- Canopy cover represents the amount of land area covered by individual trees and woodlands as seen from above

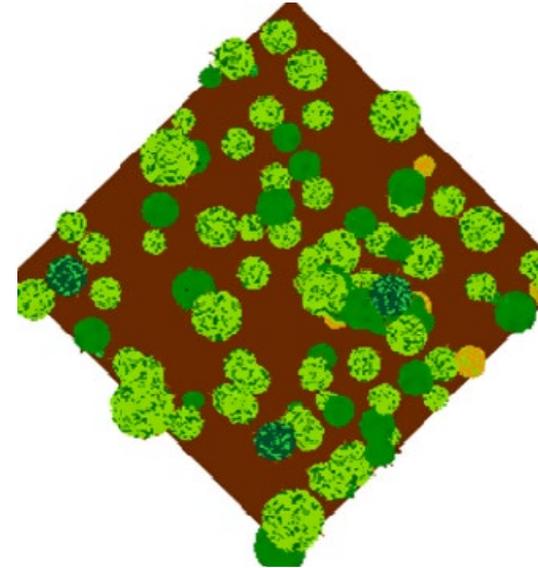


Image credit: Bio-forest The Forest Canopy: Structure, Roles & Measurement - CID Bio-Science

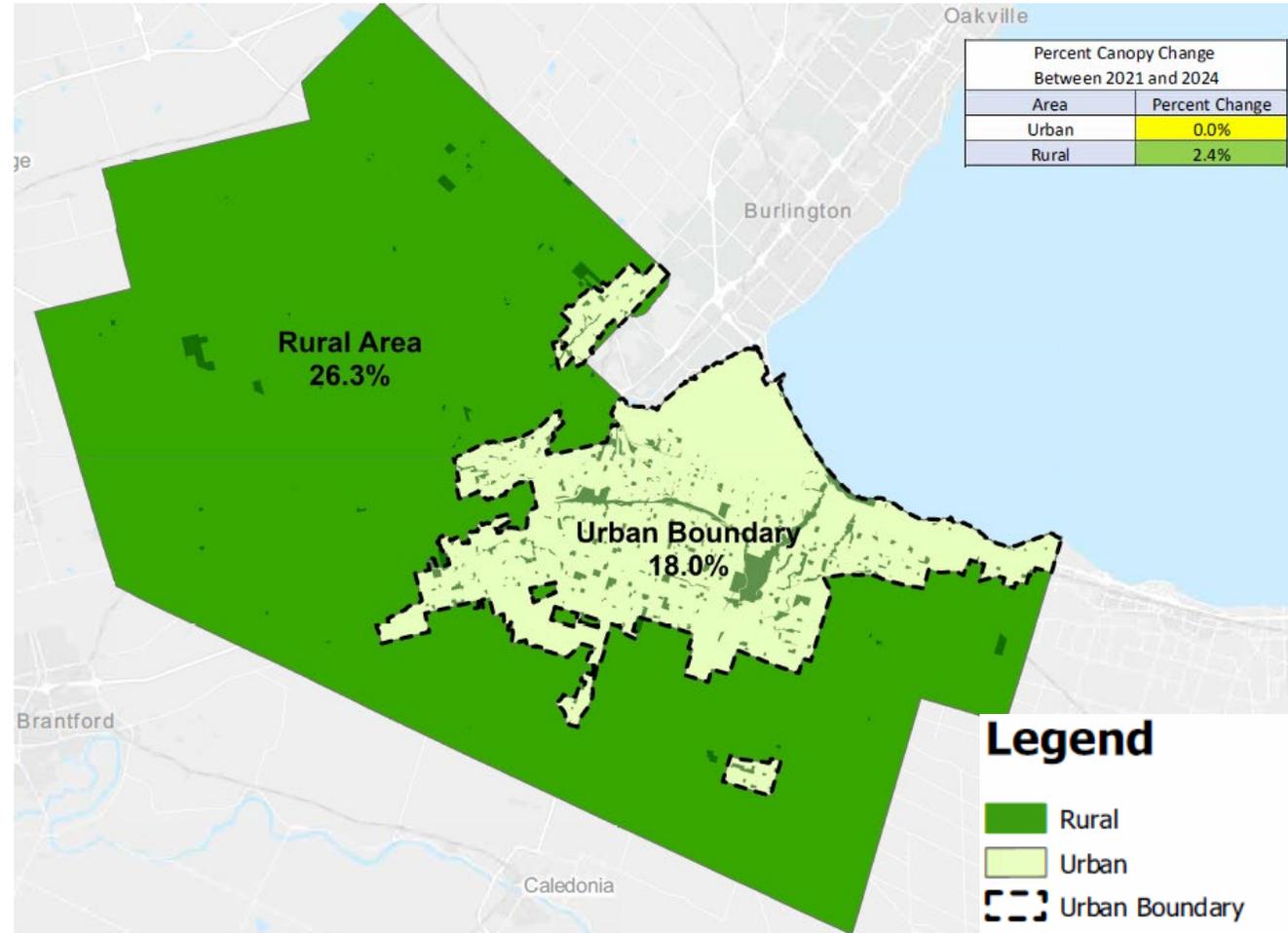
Definitions 2 of 2

What is the Urban Boundary?

- The urban boundary defines the area where all urban development occurs
- Some areas within the urban boundary are not currently urbanized

Percent Canopy Change Between 2021 and 2024

Area	Percent Change
Urban	0.0%
Rural	2.4%

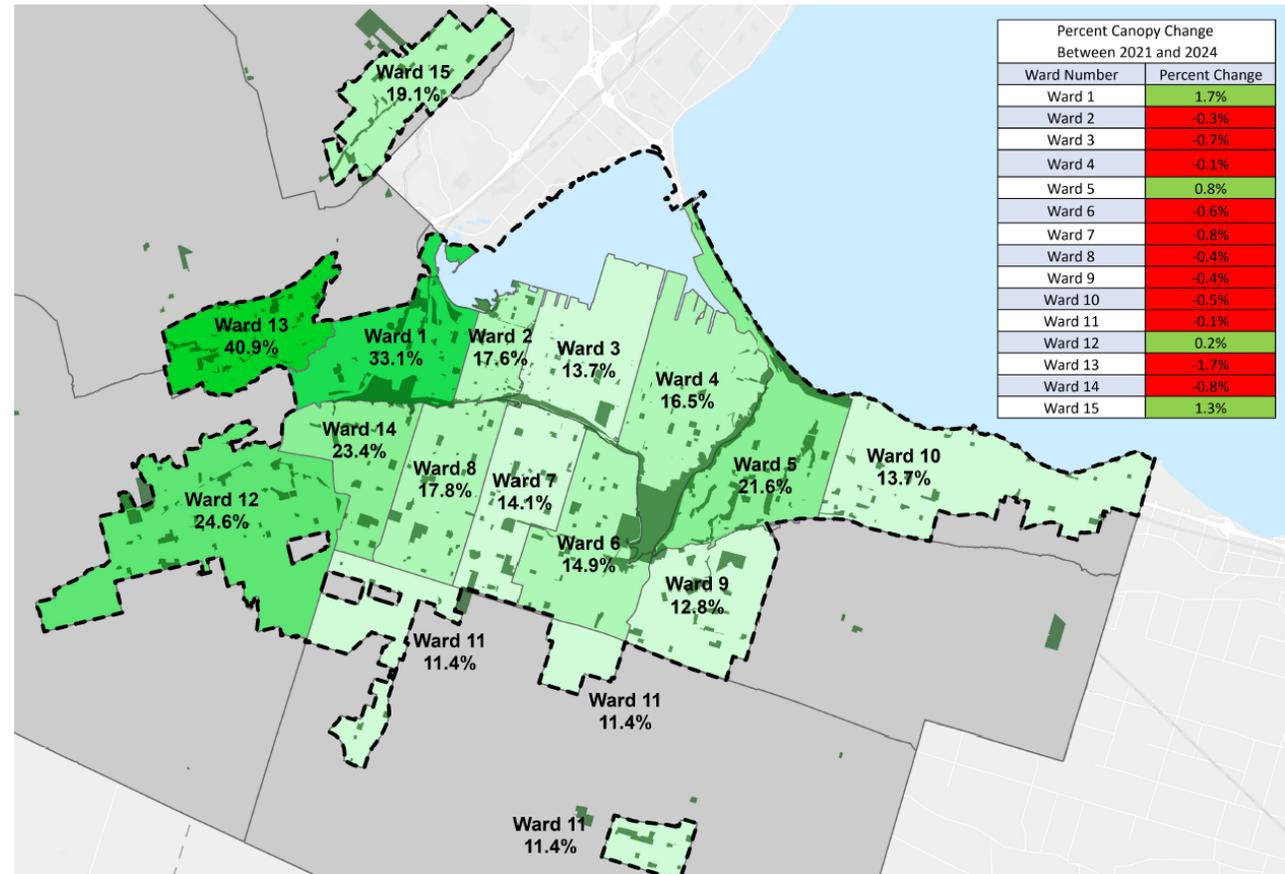


Tree Canopy Cover By Ward

Ward Number	Percent Change
Ward 2	- 0.3%
Ward 3	- 0.7%
Ward 4	- 0.1%
Ward 6	- 0.6%
Ward 7	- 0.8%
Ward 8	- 0.4%
Ward 9	- 0.4%
Ward 10	- 0.5%
Ward 11	- 0.1%
Ward 13	- 1.7%
Ward 14	- 0.8%

Ward Number	Percent Change
Ward 1	1.7%
Ward 5	0.8%
Ward 12	0.2%
Ward 15	1.3%

Percent Canopy Change Between 2021 and 2024



Tree Canopy Cover By Land Use

Land Use	2024 Percent Canopy Cover	Percent Change in Canopy Cover Between 2021 and 2024
Commercial	5.5%	0.1%
Industrial	4.5%	-0.1%
Low Density Residential	21.1%	-0.2%
Medium / High Density Residential	16.6%	-0.5%
Parks / Open Space	46%	1.1%
Institutional	16.9%	0.1%

Municipal Comparison of Tree Canopy Cover

Land Use	Hamilton (2024 LiDAR data)	London (2012 UFSMP)	Mississauga (2011 Technical Report)	Newmarket (2016 Study)	Toronto (2018 Study)
Commercial	5.5%	10%	6%	11%	8%
Industrial	4.5%	12%	5%	11%	8.7%
Low Density Residential	21.1%	27%	20%	27%	33.2%
Medium / High Density Residential	16.6%	19%	19%	27%	23.8%
Parks / Open Space	46%	55%	44%	53%	58.3%
Institutional	16.9%	18%	14%	n/a	22%

This Project

Goals:

- Harmonize and consolidate existing private tree bylaws
- Update existing Tree Protection Guidelines and existing woodland bylaws
- Protect trees on private land with intent to grow canopy to reach Hamilton's target of 40%
- Opportunity for shared responsibility for the protection of private trees for present and future generations



Where We Are now

Phase 1

- Background and municipal review, and initial engagement
- Prepare draft bylaws and revised Tree Protection Guidelines and present to Council for information

Phase 2

- **Public consultation**
- Draft final report
- Submit final bylaws and Tree Protection Guidelines to Council for deliberation

Consultation To-Date

Consultation occurred in early 2025 prior to creation of draft bylaws and draft Tree Protection Guidelines

- Local Landscape Architects and local Arborist
- Local Landscape Contractors
- Local Environmental Consultants
- City Builders Committee
- Agriculture and Rural Affairs Sub-Committee
- Climate Change Advisory Committee
- Environmentally Significant Areas Impact Evaluation Group
- Neighbourhood Associations (e.g. Kirkendall, etc.)
- Community Groups (e.g. Green Venture, Hamilton Naturalists Club, Trees for Hamilton, etc.)
- Indigenous Community Representatives
- Councillors

General Themes We Heard

Compensation

Scalable

Education

Support Programs and Incentives

Transparency

Encourage Retention

Keep it Simple

Encourage Native Tree Planting

Current Regulatory Framework

Existing Private Tree Bylaws

- Stoney Creek Tree Bylaw
- Dundas Tree Bylaw
- Ancaster Heritage Tree Bylaw

Existing Woodland Bylaws

- Regional Woodland Bylaw
- Urban Woodland Bylaw

Existing Tree Protection Guidelines

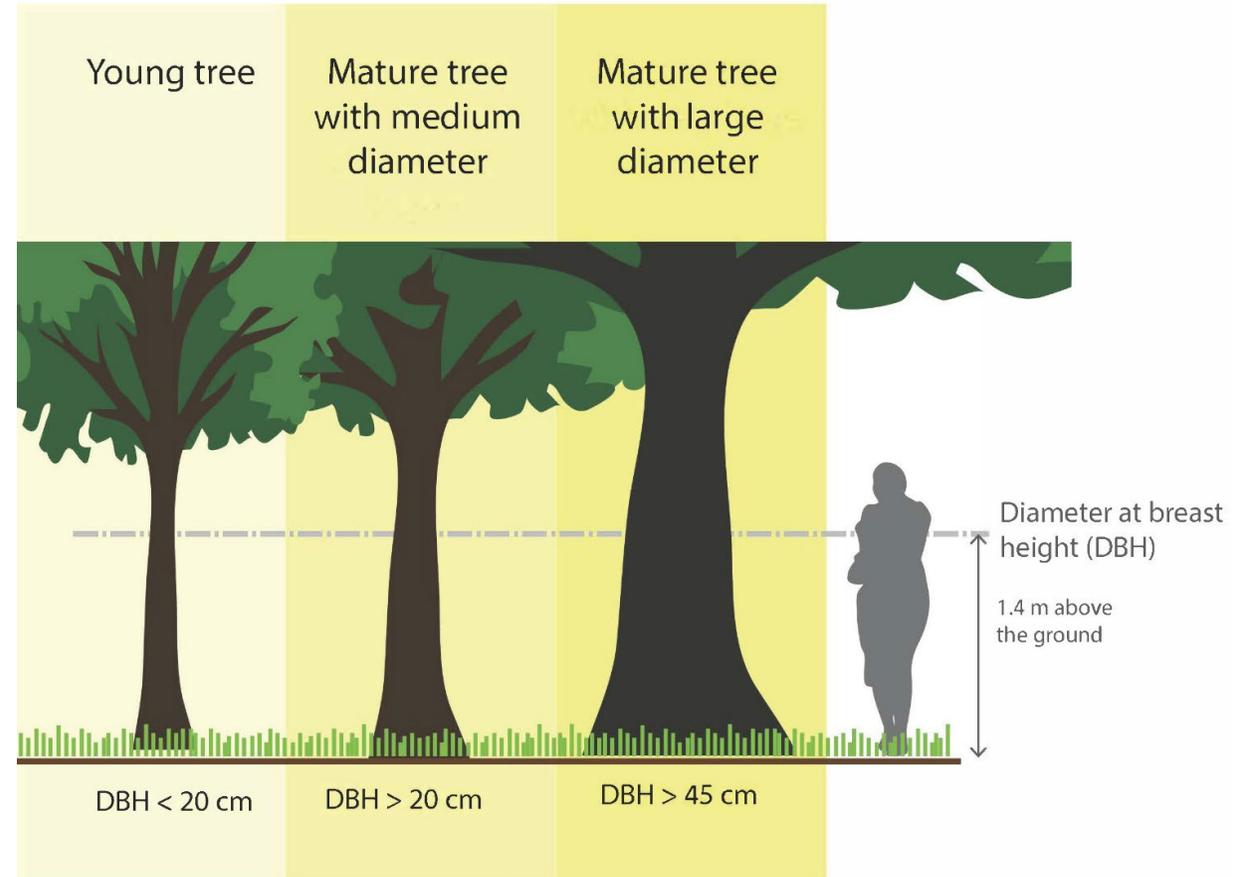


Proposed Changes – Harmonized Private Tree Bylaw

- Repeal former bylaws
- Proposed harmonized Private Tree Bylaw would apply to:
 - Urban Boundary only
 - Private trees measuring 45cm DBH or greater
 - 10 units or less
- Scalable and straight forward permitting process

Diameter of trees at breast height (DBH) or 1.4 m above the ground

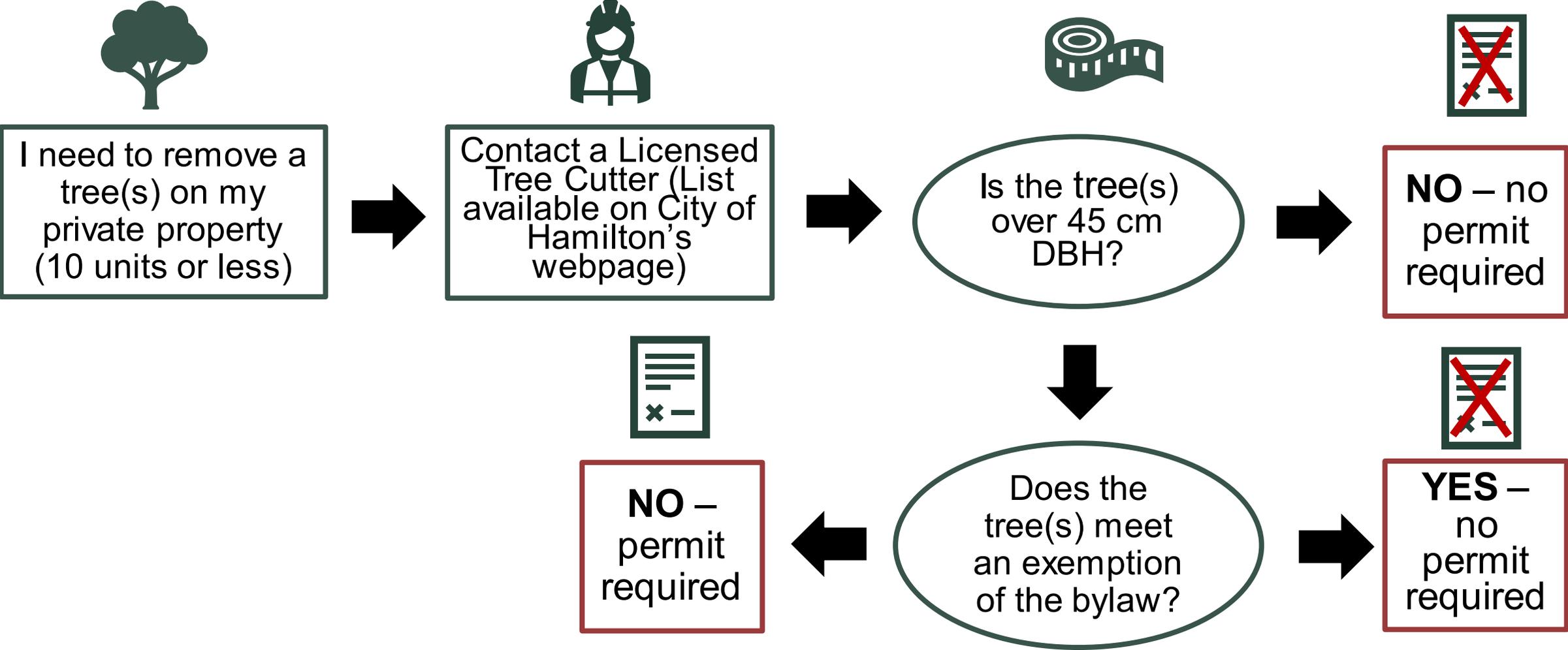
- Young Tree (DBH < 20 cm)
- Mature Tree with medium diameter (DBH > 20 cm)
- Mature Tree with large diameter (DBH > 45 cm)



Example of a 45-centimetre Diameter Tree Measured at Breast Height



Process Flow 1 of 2



Process Flow 2 of 2

How many trees over 45 cm DBH are you removing?

2 or less trees

1. Submit permit application, fee payment and sketch of trees being removed and that will remain
2. Compensation 1:1 or 3:1 where adjacent to a natural heritage system

3 or more trees

1. Submit permit application, fee payment, Arborist Report, Tree Protection Plan
2. Compensation 1:1 or 3:1 where adjacent to a natural heritage system

5 or more trees

1. Submit permit application, fee payment, Arborist Report, Tree Protection Plan and Landscape Plan
2. Compensation 3:1

Note: boundary trees require permission of co-owner

Proposed Changes – Urban Woodland Bylaw

- Changes are minimal, did not change the application of the bylaw or general intent
- Added new definitions for clarity, e.g., “Hazard”, “Licensed Tree Cutter”, etc.
- Expanded permit application to allow for submission of a Silvicultural Prescription or a Forest Management Plan (**Original bylaw only allowed for submission of a Forest Management Plan**)
- Added automatic conditions for all permits, e.g., requirement to abide by Good Forestry Practices and that work be performed by a Licensed Tree Cutter, etc. (**Original bylaw only had “may” conditions, which are still included**)



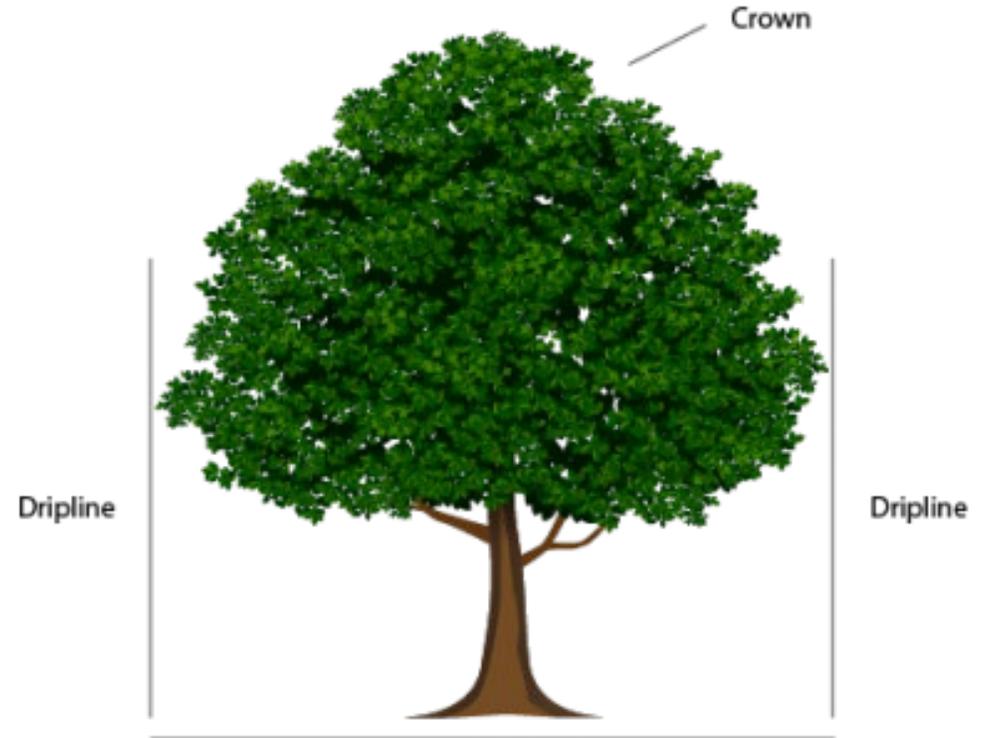
Proposed Changes – Regional Woodland Bylaw

- Did not change the application of the bylaw or general intent of the bylaw
- Added new definitions for clarity, e.g., “Agricultural Operation”, “Silvicultural Prescription”, etc.
- Expanded personal use exception through definition and cut limits (**Original bylaw: only referred to years of land ownership**)
- Clarified permitting requirements (**Original bylaw: notice of intent to destroy trees and minor exception**)
- Kept minor exception and prescribed species list
- Clarity on permit issuance and conditions, including tree replacements (**Original bylaw: silent, except for minor exception process**)



Proposed Changes – Tree Protection Guidelines

- General intent is kept, along with application to trees 10cm DBH or greater where application is subject to *Planning Act*
- Provides more flexibility for retention of trees based on industry standard (**Original: protection requirement tree dripline plus 1 metre**)
- Increasing compensation required (**Original: 1:1 compensation**)
- Potential requirement for arborist report, in addition to original requirements (**Original: no requirement for arborist report, only tree protection plan and landscape plan**)



Your Feedback

Feedback we want to hear

- Feedback on the draft bylaws and guidelines
- How best to communicate with you about this project
- What tools can be provided to help you navigate the bylaws and guidelines
- General feedback on private tree protection

How will feedback be used

- Input will guide updates to draft bylaws and guidelines and programs proposed to Council
- Input will be summarized and presented to Council as part of final report
- All feedback will be anonymous

Other ways to provide feedback

- Online survey
- Directly to staff via email



Thank you