CITY OF HAMILTON

BY-LAW NO. 14-212

To Promote the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Woodlands on Private Property within the Urban Boundary of the City of Hamilton

WHEREAS Council desires to promote the conservation and sustainable use of woodlands on private property within the urban boundary of the City of Hamilton;

AND WHEREAS Sections 8, 9, and 10 of the Municipal Act, 2001 authorize the City of Hamilton to pass By-laws necessary or desirable for municipal purposes, and in particular, Paragraph 5 of Subsection 10(2) authorizes By-laws respecting the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the municipality;

AND WHEREAS Subsection 135(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001 provides that the City may prohibit or regulate the destruction or injuring of trees;

AND WHEREAS Subsection 135(7) of the Municipal Act, 2001 provides that the City may require that a Permit be obtained to injure or destroy trees and impose conditions to a Permit, including conditions relating to the manner in which destruction occurs and the qualifications of a person authorized to injure or destroy trees;

AND WHEREAS Section 425 of the Municipal Act, 2001 authorizes the City of Hamilton to pass By-laws providing that a person who contravenes a By-law of the City of Hamilton passed under that Act is guilty of an offence;

AND WHEREAS the Municipal Act, 2001 further authorizes the City of Hamilton, amongst other things, to delegate its authority, to impose fees or charges on persons for services or activities provided or done by or on behalf of it, to provide for inspections and inspection orders, and to make orders to discontinue activity or to do work.

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Hamilton enacts as follows:
Definitions:

1. In this By-law:

   "arborist" means a person who is a certified arborist under the International Society of Arboriculture;

   "basal area" means:

   (a) the area of the cross-section of a trunk of a tree, including the bark measured at the diameter breast height as square metres per hectare; and,

   (b) where there are multiple trunks, the total area of the cross-sections of the multiple trunks of a tree, including the bark, measured at the diameter breast height as square metres per hectare;

   "business day" means 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on any day on which the City of Hamilton’s administration buildings are open for business;

   "City" means the geographical area of the City of Hamilton or the municipal corporation as the context requires;

   "Council" means the Council of the City of Hamilton;

   "diameter breast height" (dbh) means:

   (a) the diameter of a trunk of a tree, including the bark measured at 1.37 metres above the highest point on the tree where the ground meets its trunk; and,

   (b) where there are multiple trunks, the total diameters of the multiple trunks of a tree, including the bark, measured at 1.37 metres above the highest point on the tree where the ground meets one of those trunks;

   "Director" means the Director, Municipal Law Enforcement, for the City of Hamilton, and any successor or his or her designate;

   "discontinuity" means a break in a woodland, which includes, but is not limited to, highways and roads, railway rights-of-way, lands, paths, golf course fairways, utility lines, or natural open spaces;

   "drip line" means an imaginary line running directly beneath the outermost branches of an individual tree or of the trees forming the perimeter of the woodland;
“farm” means the premises where a person who has a current and valid farming business registration number under the Farm Registration and Farm Organization Funding Act, 1993 operates that farming business;

“Forest Management Prescription” means a course of woodland management, prepared by a Registered Professional Forester, for a particular woodland after specific assessments and evaluations of the woodland have been made by him or her;

“good forestry practices” means the proper implementation of harvest, renewal and maintenance activities known to be appropriate for the forest and environmental conditions under which they are being applied and that minimize detriments to forest values, including significant ecosystems, important fish and wildlife habitat, soil and water quality and quantity, forest productivity and health and the aesthetics and recreational opportunities of the landscape;

“landscape architect” means a person who is a full member in good standing of the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects;

“local board” means a municipal service board, transportation commission, public library board, board of health, police services board, planning board, or any other board, commission, committee, body or local authority established or exercising any power under any Act with respect to the affairs or purposes of one or more municipalities, excluding a school board and a conservation authority;

“Municipal Law Enforcement Officer” means the Director or a person appointed by Council or by the Director for the enforcement or administration of this By-law, and includes a person employed by the City of Hamilton whose duties are to enforce or administer this By-law;

“owner” means a person having any right, title, interest, or equity in land including right, title, interest, or equity to the trees standing on the land;

“Permit” means the written authorization from the Director to injure or destroy any tree in a woodland;

“person” includes, but is not limited to, an individual, sole proprietorship, partnership, association, or corporation;

“Planning Committee” means the City of Hamilton’s Planning and Economic Development Committee or any successor Committee;

“Registered Professional Forester” means a person who is registered as a professional forester under the Professional Foresters Act, 2000;
“Sensitive Natural Areas” include, but are not restricted to:

(a) Environmentally Significant Areas, as identified by the City of Hamilton in its Official Plans;

(b) Provincial or Regional Life Science Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (“ANSI”), as identified by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources;

(c) Wetlands, as identified by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources or a Conservation Authority;

(d) Habitat of Threatened, Endangered, Special Concern, or Locally Rare Species, as identified by the City of Hamilton, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, or the Species at Risk Act (Canada), and available through the City’s Natural Heritage Planner;

(e) Significant Wildlife Habitat, as identified by the City of Hamilton, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, or a Conservation Authority, and available through the City’s Natural Heritage Planner;

(f) Significant Woodlands, as identified by the City of Hamilton in its Official Plans;

(g) Significant Valley Lands, as identified by the City of Hamilton, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, or a Conservation Authority, and available through the City’s Natural Heritage Planner; and,

(h) Core Areas within the Natural Heritage System, as identified in the City of Hamilton in its Official Plans.

“tree” means a self-supporting woody perennial plant which has reached or can reach a height of least 3 metres at physiological maturity;

“Tree Protection Plan” means a plan, reviewed and approved by a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer, prepared by an arborist, landscape architect, or Registered Professional Forester, in accordance with the City of Hamilton’s Tree Protection Guidelines, which protects and preserves trees on private property where development or disturbance of the natural forest cover for the purposes of building construction and/or land division will be occurring; and,
"woodland" means land measured to the drip line and including any discontinuity equal to or less than 30 metres in width with at least:

(a) 1,000 trees of any size, per hectare, calculated in proportion to the actual area of the woodland;

(b) 750 trees, with a diameter breast height of over 5 centimetres per hectare, calculated in proportion to the actual area of the woodland;

(c) 500 trees, with a diameter breast height of over 12 centimetres per hectare, calculated in proportion to the actual area of the woodland; or,

(d) 250 trees, with a diameter breast height of over 20 centimetres per hectare, calculated in proportion to the actual area of the woodland;

But does not include:

(e) a cultivated fruit or nut orchard;

(f) a tree nursery;

(g) a plantation established for the purposes of producing Christmas trees and which is being actively managed and harvested for this purpose;

(h) a narrow linear strip of trees that defines a laneway or a boundary between fields; or,

(i) a plantation established and continuously managed for the sole purpose of complete removal at rotation, in accordance with a Forest Management Prescription.

Application:

2. This By-law applies to trees in a woodland equal to or greater than 0.2 hectares located within the urban boundary of the City, as defined in the Official Plans for the City.

General Prohibitions:

3. Except as otherwise permitted under Sections 5, 6 or 7 of this By-law, no person through their own actions or through the actions of any other person shall injure or destroy any tree in a woodland, or permit the destruction or injury of any tree in a woodland.
4. No person through their own actions or through the actions of any other person shall:

(a) fail to comply with a notice, order, or Permit under this By-law; or,

(b) remove or deface any order posted under this By-law.

Exemptions - Not Requiring Permit:

5. Despite Section 2, this By-law does not apply to:

(a) activities or matters undertaken by the City, a local board, or a Conservation Authority;

(b) activities or matters undertaken, in accordance with a licence issued under the Crown Forestry Sustainability Act, 1994;

(c) the injuring or destruction of a tree in a woodland by a person licensed under the Surveyors Act to engage in the practice of cadastral surveying or his or her agent while making a survey;

(d) the injuring or destruction of a tree in a woodland, in accordance with an approved Tree Protection Plan, submitted with an application for a Site Plan, a Plan of Subdivision, or a Consent under Sections 41, 51, or 53 of the Planning Act, or as a requirement of a Site Plan Agreement or Subdivision Agreement entered into under those Sections;

(e) the injuring or destruction of a tree in a woodland, in accordance with an approved Tree Protection Plan, submitted with an application for a Condominium Plan under the Condominium Act, 1998;

(f) the injuring or destruction of a tree in a woodland by a transmitter or distributor, as those terms are defined in Section 2 of the Electricity Act, 1998, for the purpose of constructing and maintaining a transmission system or a distribution system, as those terms are defined in that Section;

(g) the injuring or destruction of a tree in a woodland by any provider of a public utility, as that term is defined in Subsection 1(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, for the purpose of constructing and maintaining the public utility;

(h) the injuring or destruction of a tree in a woodland undertaken on land described in a licence for a pit or quarry, or a permit for a
wayside pit or wayside quarry issued under the Aggregate Resources Act;

(i) the injuring or destruction of a tree in a woodland undertaken on land in order to lawfully establish and operate or enlarge a pit or quarry on land,

(i) that has not been designated under the Aggregate Resources Act or a predecessor of that Act; and,

(ii) on which a pit or quarry is a permitted land use under a By-law passed under Section 34 of the Planning Act;

(j) the injuring or destruction of a tree in a woodland which is a hazard to any person, building or structure;

(k) the injuring or destruction of a tree in a woodland in the interest of public safety;

(l) the pruning of a tree in a woodland, in accordance with good arboricultural practice to maintain the tree’s health;

(m) the injuring or destruction of a tree in a woodland with its trunk or trunks entirely located within 3 metres of the outer edge of an existing occupied building; or,

(n) the injuring or destruction of a tree in a woodland necessary for the erection of a building, structure, or thing in respect of which a Building Permit under the Building Code Act, 1992 has been issued.

Permit Process:

Applications:

6. An owner may injure or destroy their tree in a woodland, or permit the injuring or destruction of their tree in a woodland, provided that they comply with a Permit obtained from the Director to do so.

7. An owner shall apply for a Permit under Section 6 by submitting to the Director a completed Permit application form as prescribed by the Director, and any application fee.

8. Before issuing a Permit for the injuring or destruction of trees in a woodland, the Director may require that:

(a) the owner submit a Forest Management Prescription; and,
(b) the trees to be injured or destroyed are marked with paint, in accordance with the Forest Management Prescription.

9. No Permit shall be issued for the injuring or destruction of trees in a woodland unless:

(a) the Permit application form has been completed and submitted to the Director;

(b) any application fee has been submitted to the Director; and,

(c) no substantially similar Permit application has been previously refused, in whole or in part:

(i) by the Director, under Sections 11 or 12; or,

(ii) by Council, under Section 24.

10. The Director may issue a Permit for the injuring or destruction of trees in a woodland where he or she is satisfied that:

(a) the proposed injuring or destruction of the trees is in accordance with good forestry practices, and:

(i) the trees have been damaged by disease, insects, wind, ice, fire, lightning, or other natural causes, to the extent that the health of the trees is likely to further deteriorate;

(ii) the trees should be cut or removed to prevent disease or insects from spreading to other trees; or,

(iii) the trees have been marked to be cut back or removed as part of a Forest Management Prescription; or,

(b) The proposed injuring or destruction of the trees is necessary to protect the health or safety of the public.

11. The Director shall refuse to issue a Permit for the injuring or destruction of trees in a woodland where:

(a) a Sensitive Natural Area will not be adequately protected or preserved, as determined in consultation with the relevant Conservation Authority; or,
12. The Director may refuse to issue a Permit for the injuring or destruction of trees in a woodland where:

(a) the trees are healthy;

(b) a tree species which is nationally, provincially or locally rare, threatened, endangered, or special concern will be impacted;

(c) the total basal area of trees in the woodland will be reduced to below 20 square metres per hectare on trees greater than 10 centimetres dbh, calculated in proportion to the actual area of the woodland; or,

(d) the number of trees in the woodland will be reduced to below the minimum number of trees necessary to constitute a woodland.

13. Where the Director issues a Permit, he or she may impose conditions on the Permit, including, but not limited to, conditions:

(a) requiring that replacement trees be planted on the land where the injuring or destruction of the trees is to take place or, if that is not possible, on other land owned by the owner;

(b) requiring security be deposited with the City to ensure compliance with this By-law;

(c) as to the manner and timing in which injury or destruction is to occur;

(d) as to the species, size, number, and location of trees to be destroyed or injured; or,

(e) specifying that damage to residual stems and the site shall not exceed the acceptable minimum standards contained in the Silvicultural Guide for Managing Southern Ontario Forests (OMNR 2000), as amended from time-to-time.

14. Where the planting of replacement trees has been imposed as a condition under Section 13, the Director may impose further conditions on the Permit, including, but not limited to, conditions:
(a) as to the species, size, number, and location of the replacement trees;

(b) requiring the submission of a replanting plan, satisfactory to the Director;

(c) requiring the submission of a written undertaking signed by the owner stating the replacement planting will be carried out; or,

(d) requiring that the replacement trees be planted and maintained, to the satisfaction of the Director.

15. Where the planting of replacement trees is not possible on land owned by the owner, the Director may impose conditions on the Permit requiring that an amount be paid to the City, such amount not to exceed the cost of replanting and maintaining for a period of 2 years the trees to be injured or destroyed.

16. Where the Director refuses to issue a Permit, a notice shall:

(a) be sent to the owner who applied for the Permit;

(b) be delivered personally, or by sending it by prepaid registered mail to the last known address of the owner on file with the City;

(c) include the date of refusal; and,

(d) include the grounds for the Director’s refusal.

Service by registered mail shall be deemed to have taken place 5 business days after the date of mailing.

17. (a) A Permit issued under this By-law shall be in the name of the owner, and shall expire 1 year after its issuance;

(b) Despite subsection 17(a), where the owner gives the Director a written and signed request to extend the Permit before the expiration date, the Director may approve an extension of up to 1 additional year.

18. No Permit issued under this By-law is transferable without the prior written consent of the Director, and, where such consent has not been given, a Permit is deemed to be revoked upon the transfer of ownership of the land to which it applies.
Appeals:

19. An owner who does not agree with conditions imposed under Sections 13, 14, or 15, or who receives a notice of refusal under Section 16, may request an appeal to the Planning Committee.

20. An appeal request by an owner under Section 19 shall be made in writing, accompanied by the applicable fee, and delivered to the Legislative Coordinator of the Planning Committee within 20 days of the date the Permit is issued with conditions under Sections 13, 14, or 15, or of the date contained in the notice of refusal under Section 16. The owner shall also include the grounds for their appeal request.

21. Where an appeal request meeting the requirements of Section 20 has been delivered to the Legislative Coordinator of the Planning Committee, the appeal shall be scheduled before the Planning Committee, and notice of the appeal date shall be given to the owner. The notice of the appeal date shall include:

(a) a statement of the time, date, and purpose of the appeal; and,

(b) a statement that if the owner does not attend the appeal, the Planning Committee may proceed in the absence of the owner, and the owner shall not be entitled to further notice in the proceeding.

22. The notice of the appeal date may be given by delivering it personally or by sending it by prepaid registered mail to the last known address of the owner. Delivery by registered mail shall be deemed to have taken place five business days after the date of mailing.

23. The Planning Committee recommends to Council that a Permit be refused or issued, or that a condition be confirmed, rescinded, varied, or imposed on a Permit, and in doing so, shall consider:

(a) the Director's report with respect to the Permit application;

(b) special circumstances or conditions applying to the land where the trees are located;

(c) whether strict application of the provisions of this By-law in the context of the special circumstances applying to the trees would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary and unusual hardship for the owner, inconsistent with the general intent and purpose of this By-law; and,
(d) whether such special circumstances or conditions are pre-existing and not created by the owner.

24. Council, after considering the recommendation of the Planning Committee, may refuse or issue a Permit, or confirm, rescind, vary, or impose a condition on a Permit, all without an appeal hearing, having regard to the matters considered by the Planning Committee, this By-law, and other applicable law.

25. After Council has made a decision in respect of the recommendation of the Planning Committee, notice of that decision shall be sent to the owner by personal delivery or by registered mail to the last known address of the owner on file with the City.

26. Where the decision of Council is to issue a Permit, the Director shall issue the Permit on the terms directed by Council.

Administration and Enforcement:

General:

27. The Director is authorized to administer and enforce this By-law including but not limited to:

(a) arranging for:

   (i) the assistance or work of City staff, City agents, or the assistance of police officers;

   (ii) the making of orders or other requirements and the imposition of conditions, as authorized under this By-law;

   (iii) the obtaining of court orders or warrants, as may be required;

   (iv) the commencement of such actions on behalf of the City to recover costs or restrain contravention of this By-law, as deemed necessary; and,

(b) prescribing the format and content of any forms or other documents required under this By-law.

28. The Director may assign Municipal Law Enforcement Officers to enforce this By-law, and Municipal Law Enforcement Officers so assigned or appointed by Council to enforce this By-law shall have the authority to:

(a) carry out inspections;
29. The Director may assign duties or delegate tasks under this By-law to be carried out in the Director's absence or otherwise.

**Fees:**

30. All fees referred to in this By-law shall be as set out in the City's User Fees and Charges By-law, or as otherwise set and approved by Council from time-to-time.

**Entry and Inspections:**

31. A Municipal Law Enforcement Officer may enter on land at any reasonable time, and in accordance with the conditions set out in Sections 435 and 437 of the Municipal Act, 2001, for the purpose of carrying out an inspection to determine whether or not the following are being complied with:

(a) this By-law;

(b) a direction or order made under this By-law;

(c) a condition of a Permit issued under this By-law; or,

(d) an order made under s. 431 of the Municipal Act, 2001.

32. A Municipal Law Enforcement Officer may, for the purposes of the inspection under Section 31 and in accordance with the conditions set out in Section 436 of the Municipal Act, 2001:

(a) require the production for inspection of documents or things relevant to the inspection;

(b) inspect and remove documents or things relevant to the inspection for the purpose of making copies or extracts;

(c) require information, in writing, or otherwise, as required by the Municipal Law Enforcement Officer, from any person concerning a matter related to the inspection; or,
(d) alone or in conjunction with a person possessing special or expert knowledge, make examinations or take tests, samples, or photographs necessary for the purposes of the inspection.

33. A Municipal Law Enforcement Officer may undertake an inspection pursuant to an order issued by a Provincial Judge or Justice of the Peace under Section 438 of the Municipal Act, 2001, in accordance with the conditions set out in that Section, where he or she has been prevented or is likely to be prevented from carrying out an inspection under Sections 31 and 32.

**Orders:**

34. If a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer is satisfied that a contravention of this By-law has occurred, he or she may make an order requiring the person who contravened the By-law or who caused or permitted the contravention or the owner or occupier of the property on which the contravention occurred, to discontinue the contravening activity.

35. An order under Section 34 shall set out:

   (a) reasonable particulars of the contravention adequate to identify the contravention and the location of the property on which the contravention occurred; and,

   (b) the date or dates by which there must be compliance with the order, which may be of immediate effect should the Municipal Law Enforcement Officer determine that the circumstances warrant.

36. If a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer is satisfied that a contravention of this By-law has occurred, he or she may make an order requiring the person who contravened the By-law or who caused or permitted the contravention or the owner or occupier of the property on which the contravention occurred, to do work to correct the contravention.

37. An order under Section 36 shall set out:

   (a) reasonable particulars of the contravention adequate to identify the contravention and the location of property on which the contravention occurred;

   (b) the work to be completed;

   (c) the date or dates by which the work must be completed; and,

   (d) notice that if the order is not complied with, then the work may be done at the expense of the owner.
38. Delivery of an order to discontinue a contravening activity made under Section 34, or an order to do work made under Section 36, may be given personally or by registered mail to the last known address of:

(a) the owner;

(b) such other persons affected by the order as a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer determines.

Delivery by registered mail shall be deemed to have taken place five business days after the date of mailing.

39. In addition to delivery, in accordance with Section 38, an order to discontinue contravening activity made under Section 34, or an order to do work made under Section 36, may be delivered by a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer by placing a placard containing the order in a conspicuous place on the property where the contravention occurred.

40. Where delivery cannot be given in accordance with Section 38, sufficient delivery is deemed to have taken place when given in accordance with Section 39.

41. Where a time frame is set out in an order for carrying out any action, a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer may extend the time for compliance beyond the established time frame, provided such extension is required and is acceptable to the Municipal Law Enforcement Officer.

**City Carrying Out Work:**

42. Where a person does not comply with a direction or a requirement, including an order, under this By-law to do a matter or thing, the Director, with such assistance by others as may be required, may carry out such direction or requirement at the person’s expense.

43. Where the costs of doing a matter or thing under Section 42 are estimated to be:

(a) less than $10,000, the Director may proceed without further approval, and in accordance with the City’s Procurement Policy; or,

(b) $10,000 or more, the Director may proceed with approval of an authorized person or of Council, and in accordance with the City’s Procurement Policy.

44. The City may recover the costs of doing a matter or thing under Section 42 by action or by adding the costs to the tax roll and collecting them in
the same manner as property taxes, and such costs shall include an interest rate of 15 per cent commencing on the day the City incurs the costs and ending on the day the costs, including the interest, are paid in full. The amount of the City’s costs, including interest to the date payment is made in full, constitutes a lien upon the land, upon the registration of a notice of lien upon the land.

**Penalties:**

45. Every person who contravenes any provision of this By-law or fails to comply with any order made under this By-law, and every Director or Officer of a corporation who knowingly concurs in the corporation’s contravention of the provision or failure to comply with the order is, upon conviction, guilty of an offence and is liable:

(a) on a first conviction, to a fine of not more $10,000 or a fine of $1,000 per tree injured or destroyed, whichever is greater; and,

(b) on any subsequent conviction, to a fine of not more than $25,000 or a fine of $2,500 per tree injured or destroyed, whichever is greater.

46. Despite Section 45, where the person convicted is a corporation,

(a) the maximum fines in Subsection 45(a) are $50,000 or $5,000 per tree injured or destroyed; and,

(b) the maximum fines in Subsection 45(b) are $100,000 or $10,000 per tree injured or destroyed.

47. Every person who is convicted of an offence under this By-law may be liable, in addition to the fines established under Sections 45 and 46, to a special fine, which may exceed $100,000, designed to eliminate or reduce any economic advantage or gain from contravening this By-law or failing to comply with an order made under this By-law.

48. Where a person has been convicted of an offence, the court in which the conviction has been entered and any court of competent jurisdiction thereafter may, in addition to any other remedy and to any penalty imposed by this By-law, make an order:

(a) prohibiting the continuation or repetition of the offence by the person convicted;

(b) requiring the person convicted to correct the contravention in the manner and within the period that the court considers appropriate.
To Promote the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Woodlands on Private Property within the Urban Boundary of the City of Hamilton

General Provisions:

49. This By-law may be referred to as the Urban Woodland Conservation By-law or the Hamilton Urban Woodland Conservation By-law.

50. If a court of competent jurisdiction declares any Subsection, Section, or part of this By-law invalid, it is the intention of Council that the remainder of the By-law shall continue to be in force.

51. (a) The provisions of this By-law apply in addition to the provisions contained in any other applicable By-laws of the City or applicable provincial or federal statutes or regulations.

(b) In the event of a conflict between this By-law and any other applicable By-law of the City:

(i) where one or more conflicting provisions provides for public health or safety, then the provision which is most protective of public health or safety prevails; or,

(ii) where none of the conflicting provisions provides for public health or safety, then the provision which is most protective of trees prevails.

52. This By-law comes into force on the date of its passing.

PASSED this 15th day of August, 2014.

R. Bratina
Mayor

M. Gallagher
City Clerk