

Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Policy			
Authority	Manager of Public Works		
Establishing By-law No.	2022-097	Effective Date:	October 4, 2022

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Section 270(1)(7) of the *Municipal Act*, 2001, SO 2001, c25 requires the Town of Gananoque to adopt and maintain a policy setting out the manner in which the Municipality will protect and enhance the tree canopy and natural vegetation within the Municipality.

2.0 APPLICATION

2.1 This policy applies to all properties and development, on public and private lands, within the Municipality. It is a resource which can be referred to and utilized as establishing guiding principles for residential, commercial and public purposes. This policy shall be an overarching document that will develop Standard Operating Procedures within Departments, Development Agreements, and The Town's Official Plan as developed. Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict normal farm practices as defined by the Normal Farm Practices Protection Act, including agroforestry if applicable.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 **Dead, Dying, or Diseased:** in reference to a tree, means a tree with no living tissue, a tree where seventy (70) percent or more of its crown is dead, or a tree infected by a lethal pathogen as certified by a Qualified Tree Expert.

3.2 **Hazard / Danger Tree:** includes dead or dying trees, dead parts of live trees, or unstable live trees (due to structural defects or other factors) that are within striking distance of people or property (a target).

3.3 **Maintenance:** includes all work or operations related to trimming, pruning, spraying, injecting, fertilizing, treating, cabling and bracing a tree in accordance with Good Arboricultural Practice.

3.4 **Natural Vegetation:** native plant life that grows naturally without human intervention.

3.5 **Tree Canopy:** the layer of tree leaves, branches, and stems that cover the ground when viewed from above

4.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE TREE CANOPY AND VEGETATION POLICY

4.1 Guidance for developing the Tree Canopy and Vegetation strategy:

- 4.1.1** Expand planting;
- 4.1.2** Protection;
- 4.1.3** Maintenance, and;
- 4.1.4** Community engagement and education.

5.0 PURPOSE

5.1 A healthy urban forest improves the quality of life of Town of Gananoque residents. Trees, plants and shrubs help clean the air, conserve energy, increase property values, and make Gananoque neighborhoods more beautiful and enjoyable.

5.2 Environmental

- 5.2.1** Improves air quality by removing particulates and other air pollution.
- 5.2.2** Moderation of storm water events by increasing soil permeability and intercepting rainfall in the canopy.
- 5.2.3** Provides habitat for animals.
- 5.2.4** Increases biodiversity.
- 5.2.5** Improvement to public health.
- 5.2.6** Temperature moderation.
- 5.2.7** Reduces energy expenditure and cost.
- 5.2.8** Improves riparian zones; preventing erosion.

5.3 Economic

- 5.3.1** Improves interest in retail businesses.
- 5.3.2** Improves marketability of the Town.
- 5.3.3** Increases property values.
- 5.3.4** Reduces infrastructure costs by reducing the strain on sewers and roadways.
- 5.3.5** Reduces liability and prevents damage through maintenance.
- 5.3.6** Reduces energy costs.
- 5.3.7** Reduces health care costs.

5.4 Community

- 5.4.1** Improves social connection within communities.
- 5.4.2** Improves walkability of communities.
- 5.4.3** Provides a sound barrier.
- 5.4.4** Reduces infrastructure costs by reducing the strain on storm sewers and roadway drainage.
- 5.4.5** Reduces energy costs.
- 5.4.6** Reduces health care costs.
- 5.4.7** Increases property value.
- 5.4.8** Promotes public education and engagement.

Figure 1: An illustration from the Journal of Environmental Quality showing the benefits of a healthy urban forest.

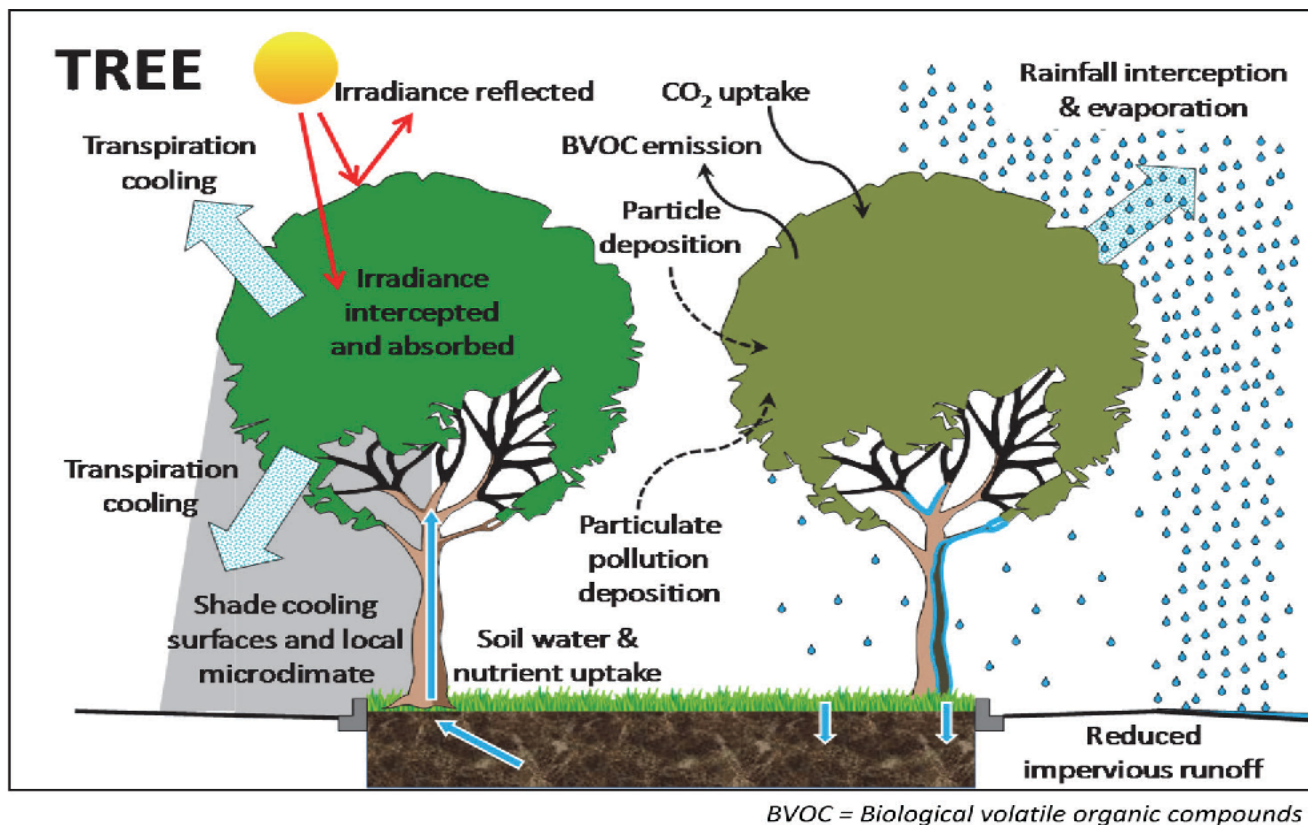
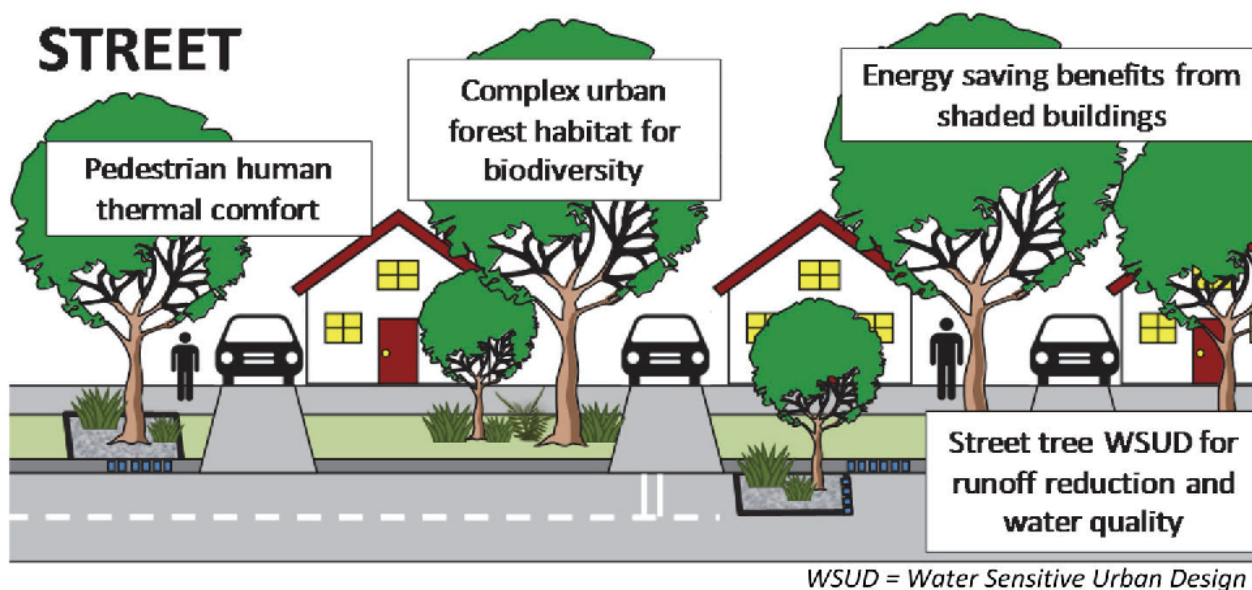


Figure 2: An illustration from the Journal of Environmental Quality showing how a healthy urban forest can benefit our community.



6.0 TOWN OF GANANOQUE TREE CANOPY

- 6.1** Gananoque is located along a beautiful stretch of the St. Lawrence River. It is located 32 kilometers east of Kingston and 254 kilometers west of Montreal. The Town has a population of 5,383 (2021 census), and is internationally known as “Canada’s Gateway to the 1000 Islands”. The population of the Town has been steadily increasing at a rate typically higher than that of other eastern Ontario communities.

The Town of Gananoque is looking to improve the tree canopy and begin collecting quantitative and qualitative data for measurement purposes. Moving forward, a proactive approach shall be used to maintain current tree canopy levels and working towards improvement.

7.0 TREE MAINTENANCE

- 7.1** Protecting a tree through proper pruning and maintenance shall be the first consideration versus tree removal on properties and development within the Municipality. Tree maintenance shall be conducted in accordance with standards normally accepted in the nursery, landscape and arborist trades.

The Town shall give reasonable consideration to the allocation of sufficient funds to adequately maintain existing municipal trees and trees relative to new stock from new developments, reconstruction and other planting projects.

- 7.2** Tree removal on Town owned land will only occur when:

- 7.2.1** the tree is dead, dying or diseased, or;
- 7.2.2** it is a hazard / danger tree (as noted by Town Staff completing a Hazardous Tree Assessment), or;
- 7.2.3** it is required as a result of emergency work, or;
- 7.2.4** it is required under an order pursuant to the Town’s Property Standards By-law, or;
- 7.2.5** the tree requires removal, pruning or maintenance where the branches or limbs interfere with existing utility conductors, buildings or structures, or development projects being undertaken by the Town, and it is determined that removal is necessary.

- 7.3** When considering tree removal - In all instances, alternatives to tree removal shall be the first consideration.

- 7.4** All tree removals on Town property and Town Projects - The Town shall contain a tree replacement component; requiring the planting of one (1) tree for each tree removed, in a suitable location on Municipal property within one (1) year of the tree removal.

- 7.5** Tree Protection Zones and Potential Rooting Areas are to be established by Town staff and contractors when working on Town Projects on Town Property - save and except road construction projects within the road allowance. The purpose of Tree Protection Zones (TPZs) and Potential Rooting Areas is to prevent physical damage and mechanical injury to trees, soil compaction and soil contamination. Workers and machinery must not disturb tree protection zones in any way. Design specifications for tree protection signage and hoarding, locations of all TPZs, and other tree protection measures should be clearly identified on grading plans, and/or tree removal/preservation plans.

8.0 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 8.1** When development is considered, the Municipality will apply creative planning approaches designed to protect and enhance its tree canopy and natural vegetation; ensuring the Municipality's amenity value and identity is enhanced as the canopy and vegetation matures. Landscape plans are to be submitted as part of development proposals, which should maintain and/or enhance the current tree canopy rather than reduce it. The Town of Gananoque's Planning & Development Department alongside the Public Works Department, will make every effort to ensure development proposals coincide with this policy regarding tree canopy and natural vegetation.

Ideally, one tree planted for every new building lot or house built as part of a subdivision/development agreement is a goal that is desired. Street trees provide numerous benefits to residents, and is a major contributing factor in building resilient communities.

The Town of Gananoque's Tree Canopy and Vegetation Policy is applicable to all new single detached homes and smaller residential developments. This policy can also be used as a guidance tool for commercial/multiple residential developments. Increased natural vegetation buffers help beautify commercial properties and enhance the natural beauty of the Town of Gananoque.

- 8.2** Other benefits can include:
- 8.2.1** green infrastructure to reduce storm water flows and the costs of storm water maintenance.
 - 8.2.2** vegetated aisles and parking islands to increase shaded areas.
 - 8.2.3** improved surface and groundwater quality and levels.
 - 8.2.4** green roofs to reduce total storm water runoff and enhance the urban canopy.

9.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

- 9.1** Public education that communicates the value of a healthy, growing tree canopy and provides information to residents on proper tree care are key components to increasing our tree canopy. Through community engagement and education, the Municipality will celebrate program successes and build upon them. As part of this outreach, the Municipality will communicate the details of this policy and how its implementation will impact various stakeholders.

9.2 The Municipality will endeavor to provide this information to the public in a variety of accessible formats. This will be done in a cost-effective manner with digital outreach, pamphlets and via environmental events such as Earth Day celebrations and tree seedling giveaways. Private land planting programs managed by Conservation Authorities may also be used as educational opportunities. The Municipality will look for opportunities to partner with organizations to conduct outreach and do community planting events as done in the past.

9.3 The Municipality has seen improvements and success through programs such as the Boulevard Tree Planting program over the last few years, as well as the Residential Tree Planting program in 2022. Continuing these programs will greatly benefit the tree canopy in Gananoque.

10.0 DISCLAIMER

10.1 This policy does not take precedence over any by-laws, resolutions, plans or agreements of the Municipality or other Legislation.