The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Policy Manual

Policy Number:	**141**
Effective Date:	**June 1, 2026**
Approval:	
Subject:	**Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Policy**

1. Policy Description

This Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Policy is meant to advance the Town of Tecumseh's commitment to environmental sustainability and community health while also ensuring compliance with Section 270 of the *Municipal Act*, 2001, which mandates that municipalities in the Province of Ontario adopt and maintain a policy detailing the way in which the municipality will protect and enhance tree canopy and natural vegetation.

1.1 Policy Statement and Purpose

1.1.1 The Town of Tecumseh recognizes the environmental, aesthetic, economic and community health benefits of trees, natural vegetation, naturalized areas and biologically diverse ecosystems, including their ability to help communities mitigate and adapt to climate change. As such, the Town is committed to preserving, maintaining, and enhancing tree canopy, natural vegetation and natural areas on Town-owned property.

1.1.2 The Purpose of this Policy is to acknowledge and establish, at a high level, the ways in which the Town of Tecumseh undertake and support activities to help ensure the protection, maintenance, enhancement and stewardship of the tree canopy and natural vegetation on Town-owned property.

2. Definitions

This section provides the specific definitions of the terminology used in this Policy.

2.1 "**Green Infrastructure**" means natural and human-made elements that provide ecological and hydrological functions and processes. Green infrastructure can include components such as natural heritage features and systems, parklands, storm water management systems, street trees, urban forests, natural channels, Low Impact Development designs including but not limited to permeable surfaces and green roofs.

2.2 "**Municipal Property**" means any land owned by, or leased by, or leased to, or controlled by, or vested The Town of Tecumseh recognizes the environmental, aesthetic, economic and community health benefits of trees, natural vegetation, naturalized areas and biologically diverse ecosystems, including their ability to help communities mitigate and adapt to climate change. As such, the Town is committed to preserving, maintaining, and enhancing tree canopy, natural vegetation and natural areas on Town-owned property.

2.3 "**Town Tree**" means all trees on Town-owned property

2.4 "**Tree Canopy Cover**" means the layers of tree leaves, branches and stems that cover the ground when viewed from above.

3. Specific Policy Guidance

This section provides specific guidance and is organized into four categories: Protect; Maintain; Establish and Enhance; and Engage and Collaborate. These are intended to be considered in an integrated manner to provide overarching guidance for all activities related to trees and natural vegetation on municipal property. Ongoing efforts and activities across all categories are required to effectively sustain a healthy urban forest and natural vegetation over the long term.

3.1 **Protect**

3.1.1 The Town shall support the preservation of trees by:

(a) generally refusing requests for removal of healthy Town Trees (as per Policy 108)

(b) requiring that opportunities to preserve trees are considered through the development process for public and private projects

(c) for trees that are to be preserved, requiring the implementation of tree protection measures consistent with the Town's standards and specifications, and

(d) ensuring the Town's tree protection standards and specifications are aligned with applicable best practices.

3.1.2 The Town shall support the preservation of natural vegetation by:

(a) Protecting natural features on municipal property, and

(b) Supporting the securement of natural features and areas (e.g. through donations, dedications, land trusts or acquisition) as opportunities arise and resources permit.

3.1.3 The Town shall protect the urban forest and natural vegetation by tracking its status and condition to support informed decision-making grounded in strong data and flexible approaches that respond to changing environmental conditions.

3.2 **Maintain**

3.2.1 The Town recognizes the urban forest as a valued green infrastructure and commits to the following for trees and natural vegetation on municipal lands:

(a) striving to undertake maintenance in accordance with applicable best practices

(b) integrating Town trees and natural areas into the Town's Asset Management program to inform maintenance practices

(c) maintaining an inventory of park, boulevard and right of way trees

(d) controlling invasive plants, where appropriate, to promote ecological restoration

(e) enhancing site inspections and monitoring following tree establishment and naturalization, and

(f) adopting an adaptive management approach to be able to revisit approaches and respond to changing conditions and/or events as needed.

3.2.2 The Town shall work towards more proactive maintenance practices (including risk and pest management as needed) on municipal lands to keep its urban forest and natural assets in good condition, thereby building the assets' resilience to stressors, including climate change.

3.3 Establish and Enhance

3.3.1 The Town shall support proper tree establishment by:

(a) planting and maintaining Town trees and natural areas in accordance with the Town's standards and specifications

(b) ensuring the Town's tree establishment standards and practices are aligned with the best applicable practices

(c) requiring the planting and initial maintenance of trees on land to be assumed by the Town through the planning process to align with the Town's standards and specifications, and

(d) supporting tree planting initiatives with volunteers, local community groups and other partners as opportunities arise and resources permit.

3.3.2 The Town shall work to ensure that the urban forest and natural vegetation are sustained and enhanced by:

(a) actively pursuing opportunities to naturalize passive turf areas owned and maintained by the Town with native species to enhance local biodiversity and ecological connectivity

(b) requiring tree replacement wherever healthy trees are approved for removal in accordance with approved Town standards and the Public Tree By-Law, and

(c) requiring natural areas compensation for the rare cases where Town-owned natural features must be removed (e.g. to accommodate essential infrastructure) and in accordance with the County's Natural Heritage Compensation Guidelines.

3.3.3 The Town shall work to enhance the structural, functional and genetic diversity of the urban forest and natural vegetation to build resilience to climate change and other stressors by:

(a) Working to advance species diversification at different geographic scales

(b) Including exclusively native, including Carolian species, in naturalization projects

(c) Considering tree species for future climate conditions, and

(d) Excluding invasive species in all Town plantings.

3.4 **Engage and Collaborate**

3.4.1 The Town shall build a “tree friendly” culture through:

(a) internal coordination and consideration of opportunities and constraints related to trees and natural vegetation, and

(b) consultation and education with community members for urban forestry and naturalization

4. Responsibilities

The implementation of this Policy is primarily the responsibility of the Town’s Director of Community Services and Recreation Department under the joint direction of the Town’s Director of Public Works and Engineering Services.

5. Interpretations

5.1 Any reference in this Policy to any regulation, municipal policy or guidance document shall be deemed to be a reference to the most recent passed version

5.2 Nothing in this Policy is intended to restrict normal farm practices as defined by the Normal Farm Practices Protection Act

5.3 This Policy does not take precedence over any by-laws, resolutions or agreement of the Town of Tecumseh or other applicable legislation. community health benefits of trees, natural vegetation,

6. Related Documents

6.1 The implementation of this Policy is to be supported by the information and guidance provided in the Town’s Urban Forestry and Naturalization Master Plan (2026) and by the more technical guidance outlined in the Town’s:

6.1.1 Tree Maintenance and Removal Policy (Policy 108)

6.1.2 Public Tree By-Law

6.1.3 Tree Protection and Preservation Guidelines

6.1.4 Strategic Master Plan for Parks and Recreation Services

6.1.5 The implementation of this Policy is also supported by the tree-related policies in the County's Official Plan, and the Tecumseh Official Plan and the related:

6.1.6 Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines (2025)

6.1.7 Natural Heritage Compensation Guidelines (2025)