Please accept the following letter with attachments in support of my delegation request for the April 30th Civic Works Committee Meeting. Please note the attachments will be sent in 2 emails.

Thank You

AnnaMaria Valastro

Dear Committee Members,

The Stormwater Management Dept. is planting 80 trees at Harris Park to complete the Harris Park Shoreline Restoration Project.

Of the 80 trees being planted, only four species: Black Maple x 15; Northern Hackberry x 17; American Sycamore x 17. and Tulip Tree x 19, dominate the landscape.

The approach is utilitarian - designed to be useful or practical rather than attractive.

The request to you is that staff be directed to diversity the tree selection to better reflect a diverse canopy that is attractive and useful to both people and wildlife.

I submitted a report to staff and asked to meet with them to explain the choices made in that report. I was denied a meeting, and it was never articulated as to why the tree selection was tossed out completely without a conversation.

The report does not suggest tree ratios. It only suggests tree species diversity with wildlife habitat in mind and attractiveness for residents and visitors.

In addition, but separate to the Harris Park Shoreline Project was a suggestion that the top north end of Harris Park be planted with additional trees to create a shade canopy to create an area that would reduce the overall temperature during periods of heatwaves.

This area already has trees planted, and is under utilized. It is being suggested that additional trees be planted to create better shade.

Thank You

AnnaMaria Valastro

Attached is:

Tree Report;

A city map showing the area being suggested for a shade canopy;

A hand drawn map showing the overall shoreline design concept such as paths, concrete outlook and areas to be seeded. The placement of trees (green circles) is my suggestion for where a shade canopy can exist without interfering with other park activities.

Dear Committee Members and Staff,

Please find a tree planting plan for Harris Park. This plan builds onto the Landscape Plan as released by the City of London.

The focus of this plan is:

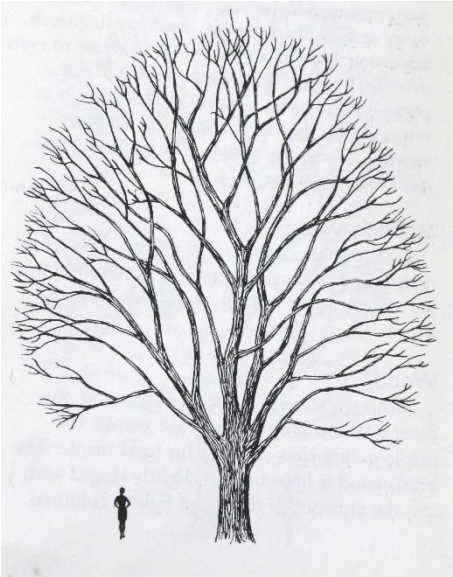
- **to suggest tree species that would better reflect a natural and diverse tree canopy;**
- **to provide visitors with areas of shade;**
- **to provide habitat for birds including species that prefer closed canopies;**
- **to include flowering and berry producing under storey trees, for pollinators, berry eating songbirds and a spring floral for residents;**
- **inclusion of tree species listed at risk;**

Private plantings of species at risk were once prohibited to reserve stock and seeds. However as natural landscapes continue to vanish, Ontario now allows for plantings of species at risk on private property in an effort to preserve the species and assist in seed dispersal.

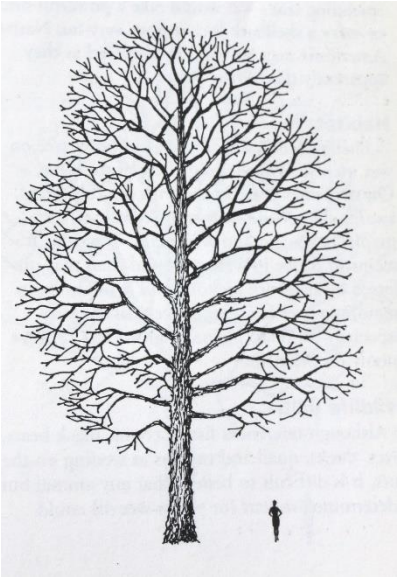
Harris Park provides a great opportunity to plant those tree species that are 'landscape' species: large and wide and not suitable for smaller private property.

Suggested Tree List – no dominate species

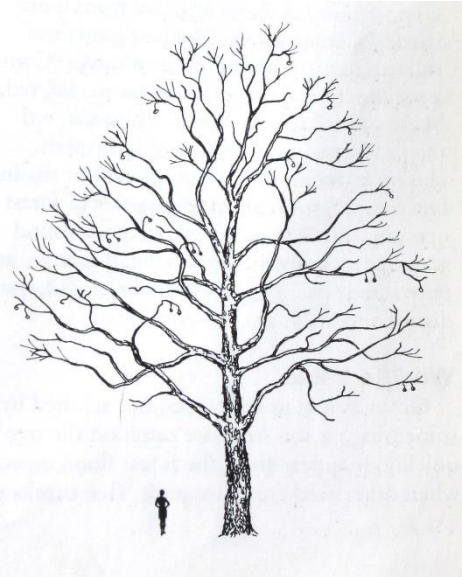
Canopy Trees: These are tall and wide trees.



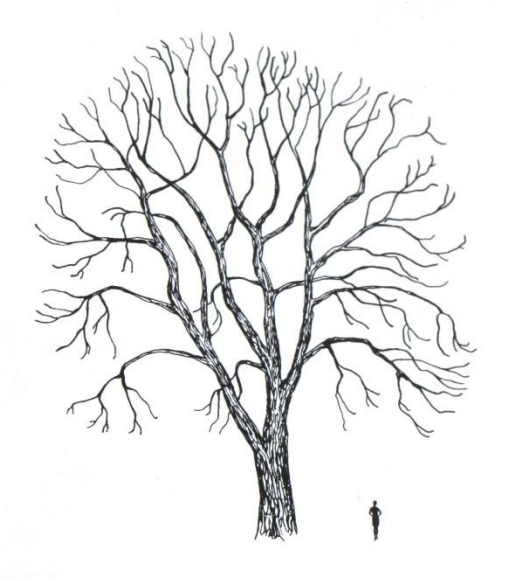
Black Maple



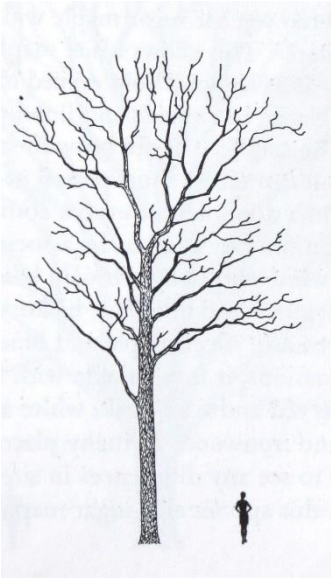
Shagbark Hickory



American Sycamore



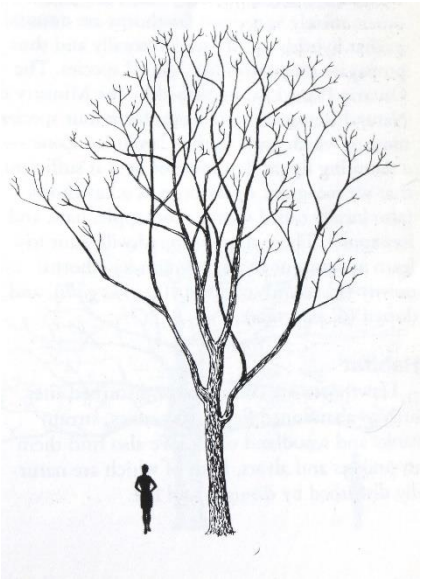
Eastern Cottonwood



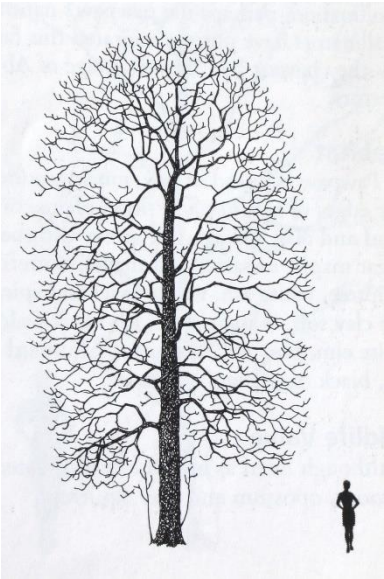
Kentucky Coffee Tree

Kentucky Coffee Tree is listed as threaten in its native southern Ontario range. It was added to Ontario's Species at Risk list in 2008.

Mid Level Canopy Trees: These trees are also substantial but lower in the canopy.



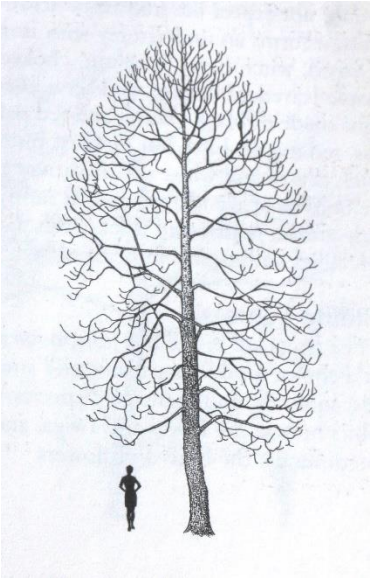
Northern Hackberry



Ohio Buckeye

Oak Chinquapin

Chinquapin Oak acorns are the sweetest tasting (lowest in tannins) of all our oak species. Relished by birds and mammals alike makes this oak high in wildlife value.



Cucumber Tree

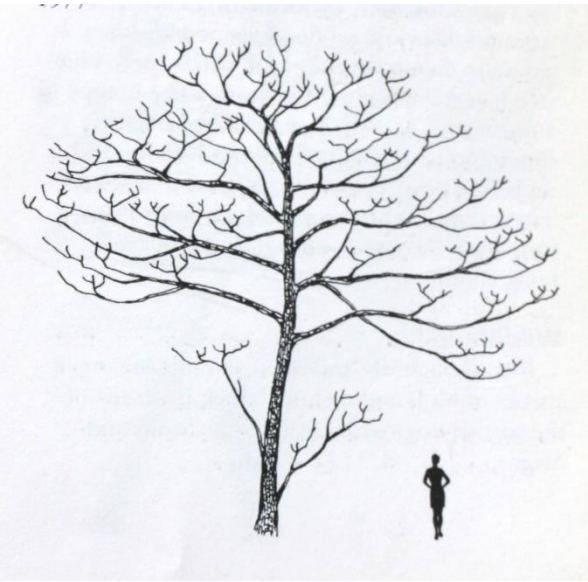
Cucumber Trees are listed as Endangered in Canada on Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act, and In Ontario as Endangered under Endangered Species Act, 2007.

This very rare Carolinian species is Canada's only native Magnolia tree. It has large white blooms in the spring that produce elongated red fruit hence the name 'cucumber' tree.

It is a showy landscaping specimen tree that prefers wet soil. It should be planted as a stand alone tree at the south end of Harris Park where flooding is reliable.

Cucumber Trees should replace the Tulip Tree, as the Tulip Tree is already planted across the river at the foot of Blackfriars Bridge, along Victoria Park and across the city.

Understory Trees: These small trees are flowering and berry producing trees.

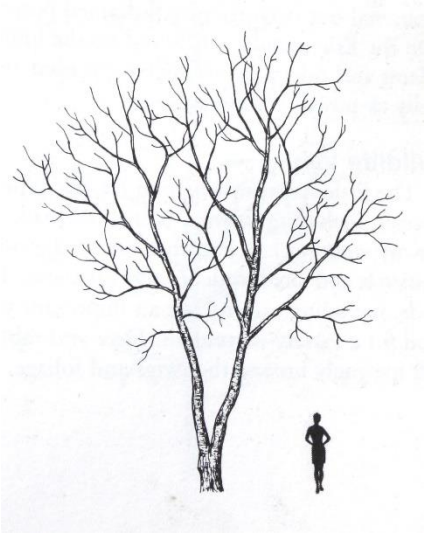


Flowering Dogwood. The Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO) assessed Eastern Flowering Dogwood as endangered. Following this assessment, it was added to the Species at Risk in Ontario List in 2009. **Larval host for the Spring Azure Butterfly**

Government funded projects for species at risk through Species at Risk Stewardship Program Partners

https://www.ontario.ca/page/species-at-risk-stewardship-program

Pagoda Dogwood - prefers shade in afternoon sun. Plant at edge of higher canopy. Fragrant



The Common Hoptree was already assessed as threatened when the *Endangered Species Act* took effect in 2008. It was reassessed as a species of special concern in December 2016.

The leaves feed the caterpillar of our largest butterfly, the rare giant swallowtail.

Serviceberry: Downy or Smooth

Hop Tree: part shade, plant at the edge of the canopy
Fragrant

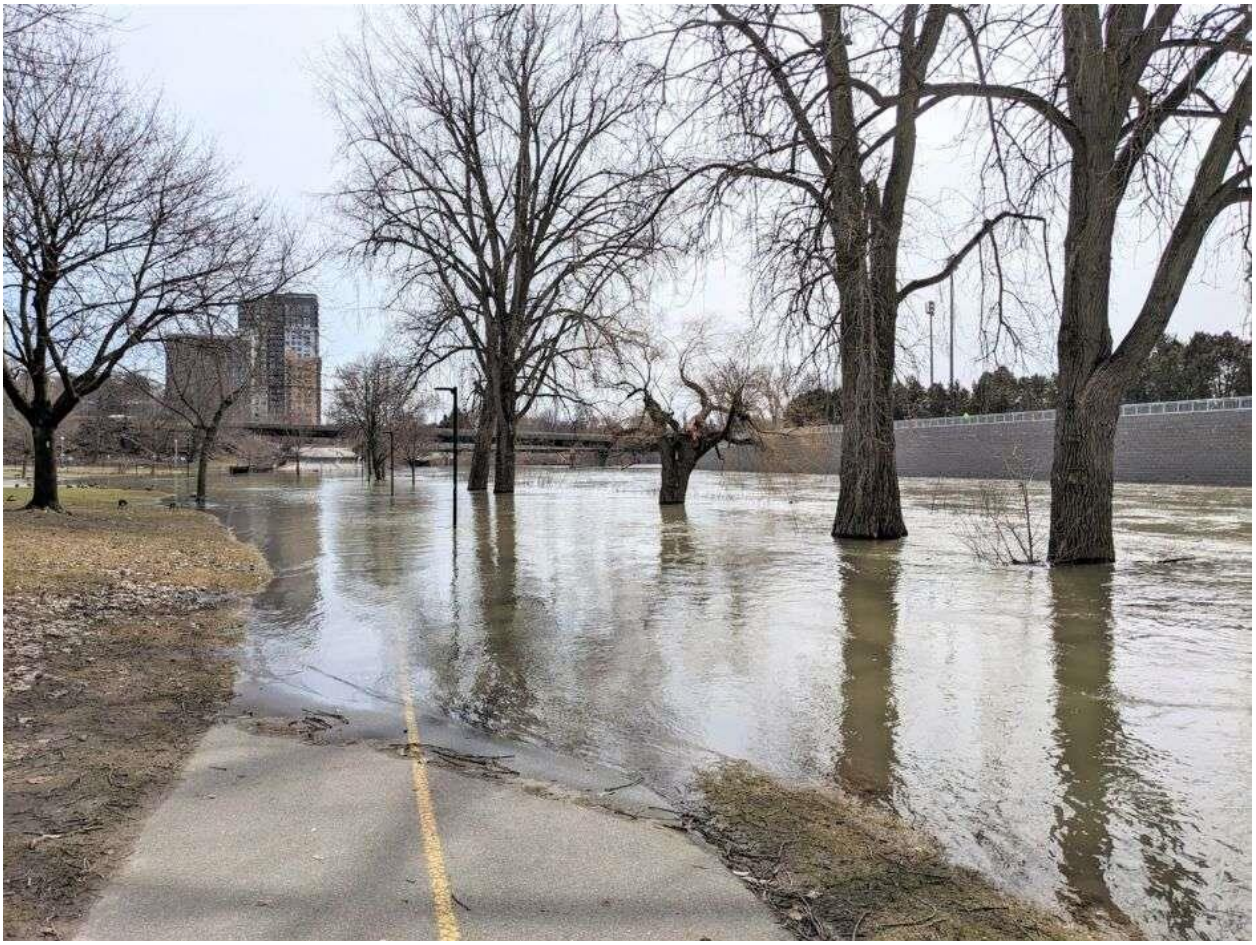
Flood Plain

Harris Park is identified as a flood plain, and therefore flood tolerant or high use water trees tend to be sourced as suitable park trees. However, areas that reliably flood annually have been removed and replaced with a river stone sloped shoreline, and no longer available for tree planting. The south end of Harris Park floods reliably during more intense weather events such as rapid snow melt or winter torrential rains, but Harris Park is also be very hot and dry in the summer months. It is not a reliable flood plain throughout, and therefore tree selection needs to consider these variable environmental conditions in choosing appropriate trees and where to plant them.

Annual flooding area removed and replaced with river stone shoreline. No longer suitable for trees.

Dec. 2023

South end of Harris Park floods reliably annually. In more extreme weather events, the majority of Harris Park can flood, but for the purpose of tree planting: high water use trees need to be planted where flooding is expected to occur annually.



April 2023

City of London Tree List – tree list has little diversity; resemblance to tree plantations

Black Maple x 15: It can withstand standing water and is drought tolerant but does not typically grow is pure stands. Reduce the number of plantings.

Sweet Gum x 4 remove Carolinian species but not native to SW Ontario

Blue Beech x 4 remove or plant as an understory tree. Also known as Ironwood, is over planted.

River Birch x 4 remove: Carolinian species but not native to SW Ontario

Northern Hackberry x 17: reduce the number of plantings

Tulip Tree x 19: remove – over represented through excessive plantings. Replace with Cucumber Magnolia Tree

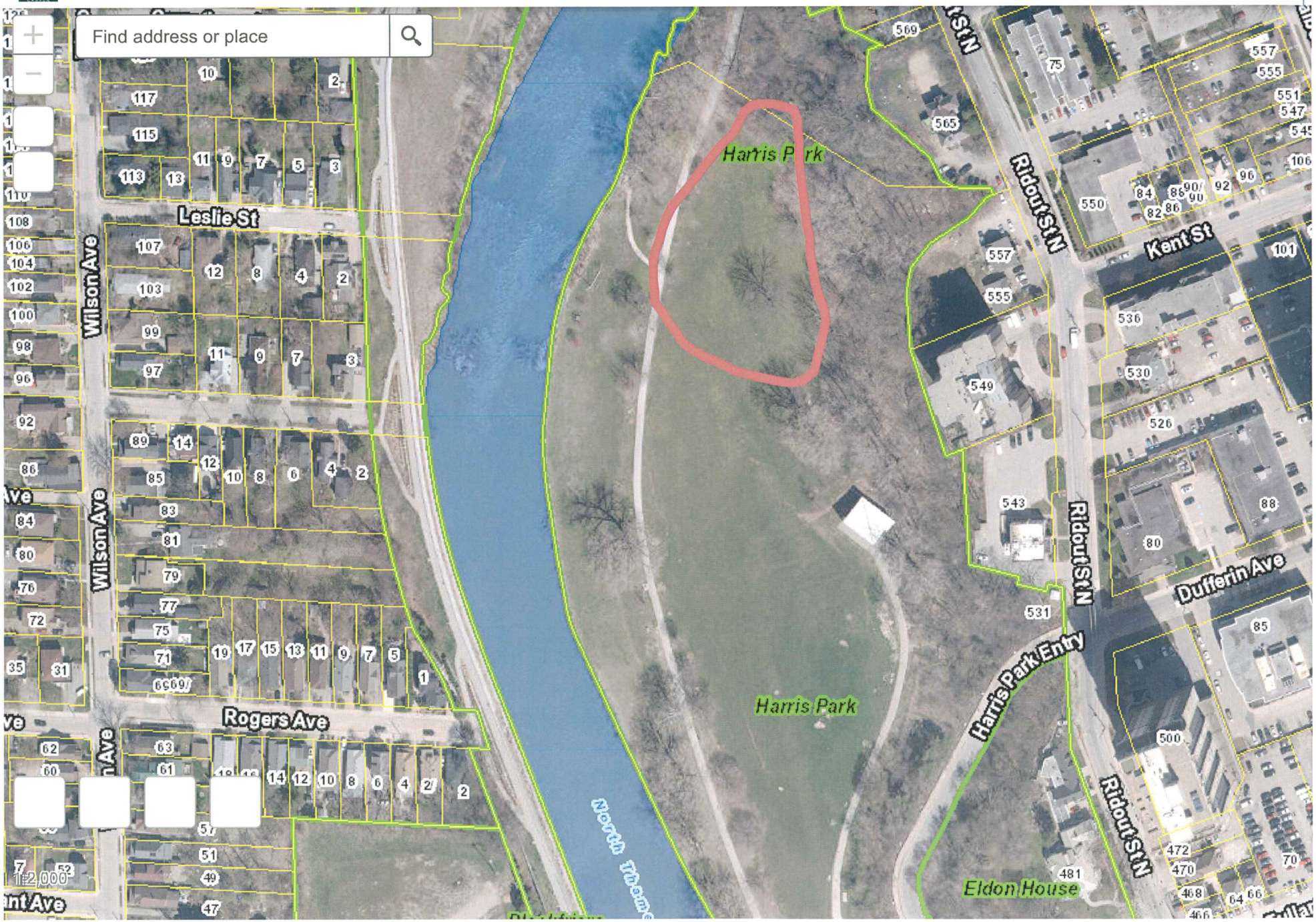
American Sycamore x 17: reduce the number of plantings

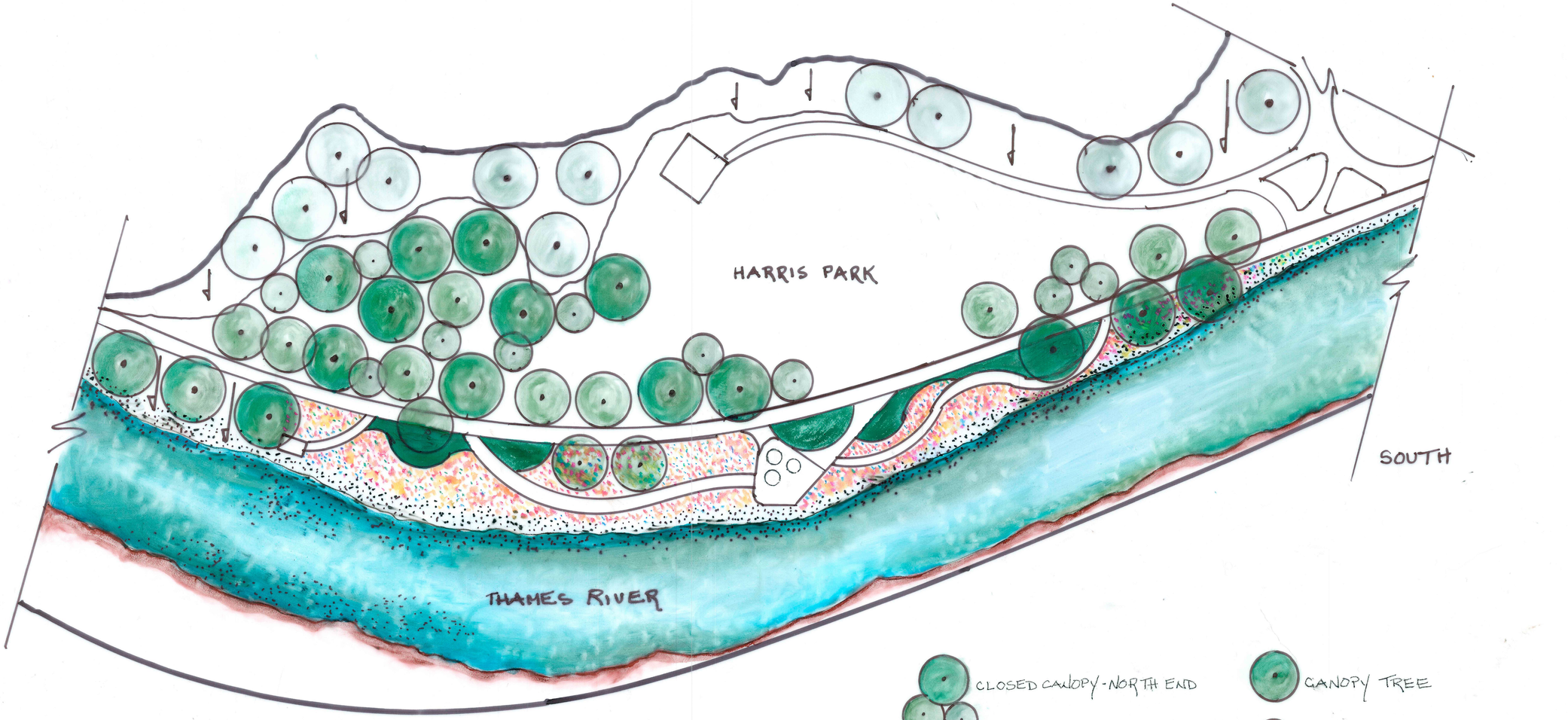
Single-stemmed Redbud: remove - Over planted in SW Ontario as a decorative understory tree. It is beyond its natural range and invasive.

Primary Resources: Trees of the Carolinian Forest 2003; Ontario.ca; wildflower.org; arboteyum.uoguelph.ca

London City Map

City of London, Ontario, Canada





CONCEPTUAL TREE PLAN - HARRIS PARK

CLOSED CANOPY - NORTH END

RIVERSTONE SHORELINE

SEED MIX / PLUGS

EXISTING TREES ON SLOPE

CANOPY TREE

MID CANOPY TREE

FLOWERING UNDERSTOREY TREE

SLOPE