



February 2, 2015

To: Members of Planning and Environment Committee

Re: **Proposed Revisions to Boulevard Tree Protection Bylaw, per February 2, 2015 PEC Agenda**

ReForest London is very pleased to see the proposed revisions to the Boulevard Tree Bylaw. They represent important steps in strengthening the City's ability to protect the trees that will provide much needed canopy and ecological services in our lifetimes.

I was personally sitting on Trees and Forest Advisory Committee some five years ago when the Committee suggested the City adopt the value appraisal method proposed in this bylaw. It has taken this long for the issue to make it to the top of staff's list. This is a good example of how limited the capacity to undertake changes and improvements has been over the last several years. During the budget process, you approved an increase in staff capacity. Thank you for that.

There are many things groups like ReForest London, Scouts, Veteran's Memorial Parkway and Upper Thames Conservation Authority can do to help the City reach its canopy targets but these kind of bylaw changes and other required changes to standards and practices can only be done by City staff. So again, thank you for enhancing staff's ability to move us all forward.

Overall, ReForest London is very supportive of the proposed bylaw. The changes are indeed much needed improvements, including:

- Offering the same level of protection to all trees on city property as those along roadways already have;
- Creating a regime that recognizes that the City has a lot of time and money invested in its trees;
- Starting to treat trees more like other forms of infrastructure and assign a more realistic replacement value to them;
- Utilizing the widely accepted tree valuation procedure outlined in the bylaw;
- Making tree removal no longer the cheapest option in construction works; Constructed items like sidewalks, driveways, or bus shelters, can all be removed and replaced within a few weeks. It's a truer reflection of real value when reconstructing those items is cheaper than losing a mature tree forever.

ReForest London commends staff for the work required to bring these revisions to the table and Council for considering this important step forward in protecting and growing our urban forest.

Sincerely,

Dean Sheppard
ReForest London
Executive Director