



News Release

Residents demand changes to save Kitchissippi's Big Trees

OTTAWA, September 23, 2015 – Community associations and groups, plus Broadview and Nepean High School students, have banded together to help save Kitchissippi Ward's big and distinctive trees. "The mandate of BIG TREES of Kitchissippi is to protect large, established trees in backyards and on city streets," says Debra Huron, who is also a founding member of The Champlain Oaks Project. "We are calling on Mayor Watson to act now to ensure protection of mature trees in the urban core of this city, not just to conservation areas like the Marlborough Forest or rural zones."

Why are Kitchissippi residents organizing? While many are saddened by the loss of their tree-lined streets to the emerald ash borer, it's the infill development practice of excavating an entire lot and denuding properties of their big trees that is raising hackles. When residents call 311 to report a big tree on private property that needs protection—one that meets the criteria set out in the Urban Tree Conservation Bylaw—Forestry Services most often cites planning reasons to approve the destruction. Why is City Council allowing an administrative branch like Forestry Services to NOT enforce a by-law passed by council in 2009?

The City has had to remove 450 ash trees in Kitchissippi. Forestry Services has planted 571 saplings, many of which are non-native and decorative species that will never achieve the stature of the trees they are replacing. Meanwhile, how many distinctive trees have been damaged or destroyed by infill development in the last six years? Earlier this year, Kitchissippi's councillor, Jeff Leiper, asked Forestry Services to provide a report on enforcement related to tree conservation. It will do so by end of 2015. Still, one can wonder: why has there been no public reporting on tree conservation activities since 2011?

For Lynn Cascagnette of Westboro, the loss of big trees on her street has meant a cost to her health. "As a person who suffers from asthma, I can tell you that my condition has been much worse over the past two years due to the loss of so much tree canopy. Trees are also hugely beneficial from a greenhouse gas perspective. In the face of climate change, is the infill development that's removing healthy trees really worth these 'collateral' costs? I think not."

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Big Trees of Kitchissippi is a citizens' group composed of representatives from: The Champlain Oaks Project, Volunteer Gardeners of Clare Gardens Park, Wellington Village Community Association, Westboro Community Association, Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association, Westboro Beach Community Association, Champlain Park Community Association, and McKellar Park Community Association.

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