



Policy: Protection and Enhancement of Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation

Policy Number: CP-08

Effective Date: February 9, 2026 (adopted by By-law 014-2026)

Revised Date:

Purpose:

Section 270 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, c25 requires that the municipality adopt and maintain policies with respect to the "manner in which the Municipality will protect and enhance the tree canopy and natural vegetation in the Municipality".

Scope

The Municipality of Thames Centre promotes the protection and enhancement of tree canopy and natural vegetation. This policy is an overarching document and applies to all properties and developments, on public and private lands, within the Municipality. Council and Municipal Staff recognize that trees and natural vegetation are critical to maintaining environmental health, community well-being, and resilience to climate change.

Policy:

Implementation

To enhance the tree canopy and vegetative cover in the Municipality, the planting of one (1) tree shall be required for any new residential lot created with a tree wholly contained on the said lot and planted in general conformity with the Municipality's Tree Planting Guidelines authorized by By-law No. 84-2002. Such requirement shall be included as a condition of development through an agreement between the owner and the Municipality under Section 51 or 53 of the *Planning Act*, or as a condition of consent under Section 53 of the *Planning Act*."

Responsibilities

The Council of the Municipality of Thames Centre is responsible for supporting the policy and providing the necessary financial and human resources to carry out the intent of the policy.

The Chief Administrative Officer and Senior Management Team for the Municipality are responsible for supporting the policy and recommending adequate budgetary resources to meet the obligations under this policy. Council and the Senior Management Team are

both responsible for considering this policy when considering various applications, projects, and initiatives.

When development is considered, the Municipality will apply the approach of reviewed design to protect and enhance its tree canopy and natural vegetation, such as the requirement to submit a Landscape Plan and/or a Tree Compensation plan by a certified arborist which will be reviewed by a municipal engineer or designate as part of development proposals or Municipal initiatives, which is intended to maintain, mitigate, and/or enhance the current tree canopy.

Guiding Principles

Protect Existing Vegetation: Safeguard significant trees, woodlands, wetlands, and natural vegetation from unnecessary removal or degradation through planning, development, and municipal operations.

Enhance and Restore: Promote tree planting, native vegetation restoration, and naturalization initiatives in both urban and rural areas.

Promote Biodiversity: Encourage the use of native species to maintain ecological balance and support habitat for wildlife, pollinators, and beneficial insects.

Climate Change Mitigation: Recognize that trees reduce atmospheric CO₂, lower ozone levels, and contribute to climate adaptation through cooling effects and stormwater management.

Community Health and Quality of Life: Support initiatives that highlight the role of trees in improving air quality, reducing erosion, and enhancing aesthetic and recreational values.

Public Education and Stewardship: Engage external stakeholders and agencies, conservation authorities, residents, landowners, and community organizations in tree planting, care, and environmental education programs.

Community Programs: The Municipality shall promote annual tree planting programs, adopt-a-tree initiatives, and educational workshops to engage the community.

Municipal Operations: Municipal departments shall consider tree protection and natural heritage preservation in road maintenance, park development, capital projects, and additional municipal policies and by-laws.

Monitoring: The Municipality will periodically monitor tree canopy coverage and report progress to Council to inform policy updates and budget allocations.

Legislative and Administrative Authorities

This policy does not take precedence over any by-laws, resolutions, plans or agreements of the Municipality or other Legislation. Other references which impact tree canopy and natural vegetation within Thames Centre may include (but not limited to):

- Ontario's Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)
- Municipality of Thames Centre Official Plan (OP)
- Thames Centre Strategic Plan
- Thames Centre Tree Planting By-law
- Ontario Building Code and Engineering Standards
- Decisions under the Planning Act, such as development agreements
- Decisions under the Drainage Act, such as new drains and improvements and maintenance to existing drains
- Middlesex County Official Plan (OP)
- Middlesex Natural Heritage Systems Study
- Middlesex County Woodlands Conservation By-law
- Indigenous Consultation
- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
- Kettle Creek Conservation Authority
- Thames Centre Council and Committee Decisions

Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years, or as required.