Schedule “E” - Tree Conservation Report Guidelines

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of protecting vegetation cover on sites subject to development is outlined in the Official Plan (Section 4.7.2). The Tree Conservation Report (TCR) provides essential information that must be integrated with all plans for a site, including the grading, servicing and landscape plans, to ensure that trees are retained in development scenarios, where feasible, and that new trees will be accommodated and planted to contribute to the City’s forest cover target and to address a site’s tree loss.

The purpose of the Tree Conservation Report is to demonstrate how tree cover will be retained on the site, including mature trees, stands of trees, and hedgerows, using a design with nature approach to planning and engineering. A design with nature approach incorporates the natural features of a site into the design and engineering of a proposed development. This includes, but is not limited to, measures such as retention of vegetation, consideration of wildlife habitats, and respect for natural drainage patterns.

The report will consider natural features not only on the study site, but on the surrounding landscape as well. This will provide context for the site and show natural area representation surrounding the given site.

The report will identify and describe the vegetative cover on the site prior to development. It will provide a professional opinion on the priority of treed areas to be conserved. It will show how the priority features have been incorporated into the proposed development and how they will be adequately protected for the long-term.

The Tree Conservation Report Guidelines are meant to be applied in coordination with other City of Ottawa guidelines including the ‘Significant Woodlands Guidelines for Identification, Evaluation and Impact Assessment’ and the ‘Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines’.

2. PROCESS

- The Tree Conservation Report is required for all Plans of Subdivision, Site Plan Control Applications, Common Elements Condominium Applications, and Vacant Land Condominium Applications where there is a tree[1] of 10 centimeters in diameter or greater on the site and/or if there is a tree on an adjacent site that has a Critical Root Zone (CRZ) [2] extending onto the development site.

[1] “Tree” is defined as any species of woody perennial plant, including its root system, which has reached or can reach a minimum height of at least 450 cm at physiological maturity.
[2] The critical root zone (CRZ) is established as being 10 centimetres from the trunk of a tree for every centimetre of trunk DBH measured in a radius around the tree. The CRZ is calculated as DBH x 10 cm.

- The report will be prepared by an individual with proven expertise and/or professional qualifications in forestry, ecology, biology, arboriculture, or landscape architecture in accordance with the definition of “arborist” in Section 1 of the Tree Protection By-law.
- The TCR must be submitted prior to any activities occurring on-site that might impact the trees. It may be submitted at the time of pre-consultation, prior to an application being made, or with the application. In some cases, a preliminary Tree Conservation Report may be required to support on-site investigations (e.g., boreholes).
- Amendments to the TCR shall be submitted for approval if changes are required as a result of investigative site works, infrastructure and engineering approvals, or other plan changes. Tree removal, and any activities that could injure trees, must not occur until the amendment has been approved.
- At the discretion of the General Manager, the TCR may be combined with the Landscape Plan or the Environmental Impact Statement.
- The removal of trees on the site cannot occur until written approval of the Tree Conservation Report has been granted through a tree permit (as per the Tree Protection By-law). The approval of the TCR will come in the form of a letter (the tree permit) from the General Manager, or designate, with conditions specific to the site, tree retention and associated tree protection, and tree removal.
- The approved TCR is a requirement for the approval of the development applications listed above.
- A copy of the report must be available on-site during tree removal, grading, construction, or any other site alteration activities, and for the duration of construction on the site.
- The grading, servicing, and landscape plans as well as all other approved plans will be consistent with and follow the recommendations made and approved in the Tree Conservation Report.
- Elements outlined in the Tree Conservation Report will be incorporated into conditions of draft plan approval and shown on the other approved plans (i.e., Landscape Plan, Grading Plan and/or Site Plan) where relevant.
- The General Manager reserves the right to refuse or reject a submission and to ask for additional information by other qualified persons.
- The General Manager may require that the report be prepared and stamped by a Registered Professional Forester (RPF).

3. ELEMENTS

The Tree Conservation Report will include the following elements:

1. An inventory of the trees currently on site, including species composition (where applicable), diameter at breast height, age, and condition and health of the trees.

2. Where appropriate, groups of trees may be combined into stands for inventory purposes. Stand information must include; percent species composition, average diameter at breast height, general health, and a general stand description.
3. When present, the following natural elements must be identified:
    a. Surface water features, including vernal pools, wetlands and watercourses;
    b. Steep slopes, including valleys and escarpments;
    c. Valued woodlots designated as Urban Natural Features or Natural Environment Areas, areas evaluated in the Urban Natural Areas Environmental Evaluation Study (UNAEES), or other areas that meet the criteria used in the UNAEES;
    d. Significant woodlands;
    e. High quality, specimen trees;
    f. Hazardous trees;
    g. The presence of riparian woodlots, rare communities or other unique ecological features; and
    h. Species at Risk and their habitat.
4. *Map #1 Current Vegetation* - A current aerial photograph of the site (available through the City's geoOttawa tool) showing the current vegetation mapped as an overlay. This map must be at the same scale as the draft plan of subdivision or site plan. The following elements must be included:
    a. The property line;
    b. The vegetation communities;
    c. Single trees and small clumps of trees;
    d. Trees on adjacent sites with a CRZ extending onto the development site;
    e. Ownership of all trees – City, private, shared ownership (boundary trees), as well as trees on adjacent sites if they have a CRZ extending onto the development area.
    f. Existing buildings and impervious surfaces (e.g. driveways and parking lots);
    g. Locations of any natural elements listed under 3 above and/or other important features identified in EIS and other environmental studies;
    h. Names of surrounding roads; and
    i. Standard mapping elements such as a north arrow, scale, date, and legend.
5. *Map #2 Proposed Development and Conserved Vegetation* – The same aerial photograph of the site as in Map #1 showing the proposed development or the proposed plan of undertaking[3] as an overlay. This must be at the same scale as the draft plan of subdivision or site plan. The following elements must be included:
    a. Proposed development (including; roads, infrastructure, stormwater management, lot lines, etc. and the limits of the construction area) or the proposed plan of undertaking;

[3] A plan of undertaking could include a plan for investigative site works or a plan for sustainable forest management on the site.

   b. The property line;
   c. Any relevant setback lines, for example for; watercourses, zoning, geotechnical, or anything identified in an EIS for an environmental feature.
   d. Existing buildings and impervious surfaces (e.g. driveways and parking lots);
   e. Treed areas identified for protection and the associated tree protection measures;
   f. Trees and/or treed areas identified for removal;
   g. Identified natural elements and/or other important features as per Map#1;
   h. Names of surrounding roads; and
   i. Standard mapping elements such as a north arrow, scale, date, and legend.
6. Identify the vegetation that will be retained and why it has been chosen for retention. If there are several vegetated areas on site or a large area, it should be identified how the areas are prioritized for retention.
7. An indication of how park and school locations, road locations, infrastructure, stormwater management facilities, creative lot layouts, and design approaches can help to conserve vegetated areas, where feasible.
8. The impact of the development on the conserved portions of vegetation should be examined and outlined, including and not limited to the impacts of grade change, changes to drainage patterns, effects of impervious surfaces and new buildings, and changes in the water table.
9. Describe mitigation measures that will be used to promote the long-term survival of retained trees and woodlands (e.g. buffers for protection, fencing, single loaded roads along forest stands, edge preparation, or any other measures as required given the site conditions).
10. Describe the protection measures required to prevent impacts to retained trees and woodlands during construction. Include protection measures for any trees on adjacent property that may be impacted by the construction. The tree protection measures must be consistent with the City of Ottawa's Tree Protection Specification in Part VI of the Tree Protection By-law or as approved by the General Manager or designate.
11. Where there is substantial alteration of the tree cover on the site, consider the impact on fauna or rare species during and after construction and propose mitigation measures, using the City's Protocol for Wildlife Protection during Construction. Indicate how this adheres to existing legislation on species protection.
12. Include tree planting recommendations for the site which will help offset the vegetation loss on the site and will also be used to direct the development of the Landscape Plan, including the following:
   a. The species to be used for the given site conditions;
   b. The use of native, non-invasive tree species. In applicable areas, the most current Guidelines for Tree Planting in Sensitive Marine Clay Soils must be followed; and
   c. Where tree planting is required to provide protection for watercourses and steep slopes.

4. OTHER REQUIRED INFORMATION

Information to be included with Tree Conservation Report:

1. The name, address (municipal/email) and telephone number of the owner.
2. The name, address (municipal/email) and telephone number of the applicant, if different from the owner, and the owner's written consent to the application.
3. The name, address (municipal/email), telephone number and qualifications of the professional hired by the owner or applicant to complete the report.
4. The name, address and telephone number of the contractor implementing the TCR, if applicable.
5. The municipal address and legal description of the land upon which trees are proposed to be protected, injured or destroyed.
6. A schedule of the proposed works, including the start and end dates of construction.
7. Confirmation of any other applications affecting the land upon which trees are to be protected, injured or destroyed.