



The Corporation of the City of Cornwall
Regular Meeting of Council
Report

Department: Infrastructure and Municipal Works
Division: Environment
Report Number: 2020-376-Infrastructure and Municipal Works
Prepared By: Carl Goodwin, Division Manager
Meeting Date: October 26, 2020
Subject: Environment and Climate Change Committee Review of Draft Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Protection Policy

Purpose

To provide Council with recommendations regarding the proposed Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Protection policy.

Recommendation

- a. That Council approve the Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Protection Policy as presented.
- b. That Council direct Administration to prepare a report to address the actionable items / recommendations of the Environment and Climate Change Committee.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications at this time.

Strategic Priority Implications

Being leaders in Sustainability and climate change impact

1. Create Environment and Climate Change Committee
6. Identify what the City can take the lead on.

Background / Discussion

A Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Protection Policy is a requirement of *Municipal Act, 2001*, the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*. Bill 68 Section 270 and a draft version was presented to Council on Nov 25, 2019. At the time, Council made the following decision: Motion to receive the presentation and refer the presentation to the Environment and Climate Change Committee for recommendations.

The Environment and Climate Change Committee's mandate is to provide a local perspective on climate change initiatives with respect to greenhouse gas emissions targets as well as provide a framework to work towards climate change goals, strategic direction and priority actions, namely:

- Reduce our contributions to climate change while increasing our ability to adapt to climate change conditions.
- Establish a baseline of greenhouse gas emissions with a corresponding plan for achieving a set target in emission reductions.
- Reduce and offset greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced within our community.

Specifically, the Environment and Climate Change Committee will work towards the goals, based on the four areas of focus: Focus area 4:

4. Review, research, and provide feedback on community-related climate action items as directed by Council, including strategic planning, by-laws and policy development.

Context

The environment and our ecosystems surround us. Human interaction can improve the natural environment, can benefit from those living systems, and can harm the functioning of the urban ecosystem.

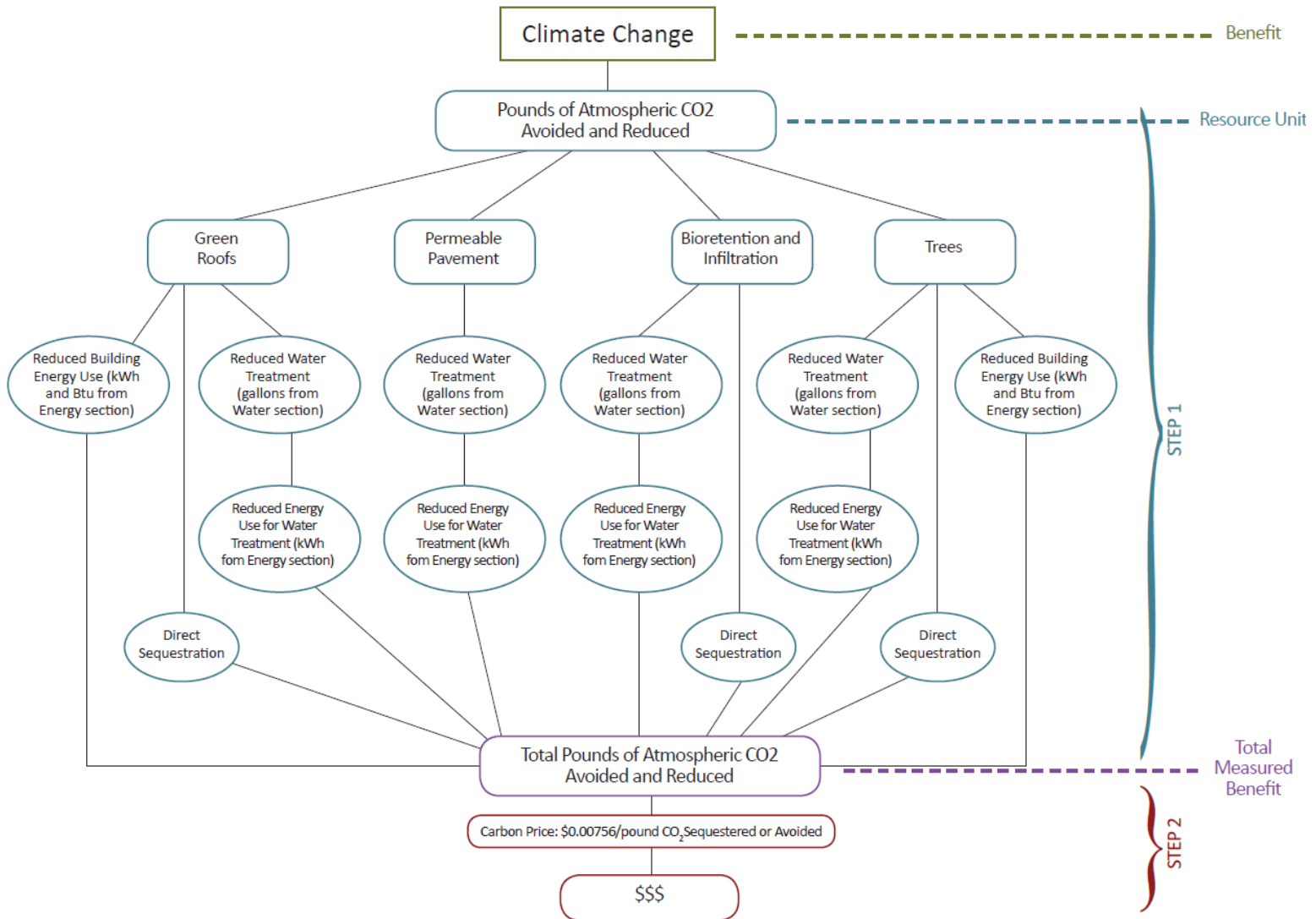


Figure 1. Benefits of Climate Change Mitigation.

The role of Trees and Vegetation in Climate Change Mitigation

The current knowledge level of our urban systems has developed to the point that cities can make important contributions to limiting and reversing climate change. Potentially more important - is the growing body of knowledge that municipalities can improve the health of the residents living in their municipality while improving the health of the natural environment.

As described in the Draft Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Protection Policy, trees and vegetation in our urban space provide important contributions as we venture outside our houses.

An understanding of the tree canopy and natural vegetation values can help communities decide where, when and to what extent green infrastructure practices should become part of future planning, development and redevelopment.

Policies like the Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Protection Policy can:

- Inform decision-makers and planners about the multiple benefits Tree Canopy and Natural vegetation incorporated into green infrastructure and Low Impact Development (LID) delivers to communities.
- Cultivate Public Education Opportunities through Community tree planting, community flower bed planting as elements in the policy are enacted.

The Environment and Climate Change Committee recognizes that the Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation policy will have significant positive effects in our efforts to reduce our contributions to climate change while increasing our ability to adapt to climate change conditions.

The following list of actionable items were designed to support the outcomes of the Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation policy into the activities of the City of Cornwall:

- a) The Committee recommends to Council the addition of a schedule of when Tree Canopy will be measured.
- b) The Committee recommends to Council that Administration prepare a report, as soon as possible, that assesses the environmental, climate change, social, cultural and economic value to a tree, derived from the tree canopy which can be used to inform policy development.
- c) The Committee recommends to Council that Administration investigate methods to create a Tree Inventory to support the growth and/or maintenance of the tree canopy.
- d) The Committee recommends that the City prepare a list of native tree species, and prioritize these, for maintaining and growing the urban forest tree canopy. Presently mainly non-native species are on the list in the Policy. Note: the species listed in Schedule “A” do not match the species in <https://www.cornwall.ca/en/live-here/forestry.aspx>.
- e) The Committee recommends to Council that the Tree Canopy Policy, section titled “City Initiated Tree Removals and Replacement Plantings” be amended by changing the ratio 1:1 with 3:1.

- f) The Committee recommends to Council that using the tree canopy data and the environmental, climate change, social, cultural and economical value report, establish a budget to grow and maintain the tree canopy which will include creating a tree asset management plan for public land.
- g) The Committee recommends to Council that a consultant be hired to write the Best Practices from the Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation policy into the appropriate City approved site plans, development and subdivision standards, engineering standards, street scape plans, by laws, etc. The adopted Best Practices (green development) should increase climate adaption and lower GHG emissions and contain a measurement element that tracks progress as a companion to the environmental, climate change, social, cultural and economic value report suggested in this list of actionable items.
- h) The Committee recommends to Council that the Administration develop a new GIS interactive map which could be placed on the City website that shows current and planned tree canopy.

Accessibility Impact

None at this time.

Document Title:	Draft Tree Canopy Protection and Enhancement Policy - 2020-376-IMW.docx
Attachments:	- Urban-Canopy-Assessment-Cornwall-Final.pdf - DRAFT Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Policy Climate Change draft edit Oct 15 2020.docx
Final Approval Date:	Nov 2, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Bill de Wit - Oct 21, 2020 - 9:29 AM

Tracey Bailey - Oct 21, 2020 - 9:53 AM

Maureen Adams - Nov 2, 2020 - 7:13 PM