



**MEDIA RELEASE  
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**Smiths Falls' tree canopy policy prioritizes greenspace and urban forest preservation**

**Smiths Falls** – The Town of Smiths Falls is pleased to announce the release of a Tree Canopy Preservation and Enhancement Policy that recognizes the importance and significance of the Town's forest and greenspaces as vital assets to the community.

The development of the Tree Canopy Policy meets the Town's strategic objectives to improve quality of life by expanding the urban forest. A healthy urban forest benefits the community by providing various economic, community, and environmental benefits.

"Council and staff in Smiths Falls recognize that the natural environment helps shape the character of the community," said Mayor Shawn Pankow. "Trees play a vital role in our fight against climate change by cleaning our air and sequestering carbon. This policy will help ensure the preservation and expansion of our tree canopy."

The policy was developed in 2020 by Karl Grenke, Senior Planner for the Town of Smiths Falls, and in consultation with the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority and various municipal departments.

"This is an important policy that will enhance the quality of life in Smiths Falls," said Grenke. "We're excited to be in a position to strategically approach tree canopy and greenspace preservation at the municipal level and look forward to seeing the positive impacts of decisions we make now, decades into the future."

As part of the policy development the Town initiated a public engagement process through a public survey. Of those who responded to the survey, 96 per cent indicated they support the need to preserve or enhance tree coverage for new development,

while 88 per cent indicated parks and streets were the most important areas to focus efforts to enhance tree canopy areas.

The downtown, Lower Reach Park, and the industrial/commercial areas were identified as areas where the Town should concentrate efforts on enhancing the tree canopy. An edible tree grove and a number of other tree-friendly initiative were also identified as having public interest.

Moving forward, the policy will support inter-departmental coordination for land use planning, public works, and community services, and will require the replacement of municipally owned trees that need to be removed for whatever reason.

For residents, the tree canopy policy will result in more trees being planted along streets and in parks to replace trees that need to be removed. It will also support the education and resource development for residents that will encourage tree planting and assist with tree selection and tree care. Developmental approvals will need to accommodate tree planning, planting, and retention as key site design considerations.

Current tree planting priority areas include the downtown core, gateway areas to Town, Lower Reach Park and Riverdale Park within 30-metres of the Rideau River, and uptown residential areas.

The Tree Canopy Preservation and Enhancement Policy can be reviewed on the municipal website at <https://www.smithsfalls.ca/media/2021/02/Tree-Canopy-and-Vegetation-Preservation-and-Enhancement-Policy-FINAL.pdf>

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