



POLICY: Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Section 270 (1) (7) of the *Municipal Act*, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25 requires a municipality to adopt a plan which describes how to protect and enhance the tree canopy and natural vegetation.

The purpose is to offer a summary understanding of local vegetation, conservation considerations and promote best practices for a sustainable tree canopy in the Township's settlement areas as well as on its shorelines and rural residential properties.

WHO IS IT FOR?

This policy applies to all properties and development, on public and private lands, in the Township of Machar. It is a resource which can be referred to and utilized as guiding principles for residential, commercial and Township purposes.

WHAT IS A TREE CANOPY?

"Tree canopy" or "tree cover" includes all areas of coverage by plant material exceeding 1.5 metres in height, and the extent of tree canopy in excess of 10 years maturity. The canopy includes the layer of leaves, branches and stems that cover the ground when viewed from above.

BENEFITS

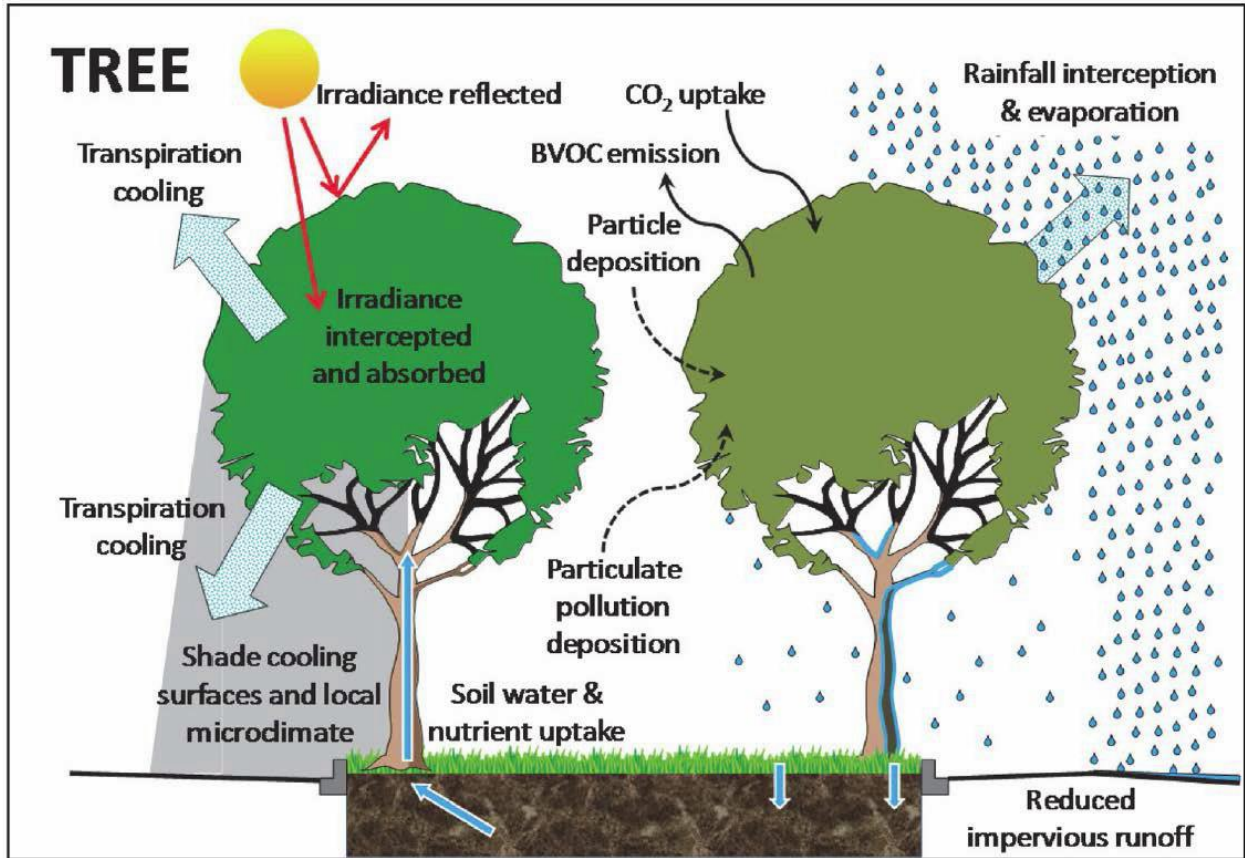
There are several benefits to an urban tree canopy, including:

- A mature urban tree canopy creates shade, which lowers energy consumption for a community.

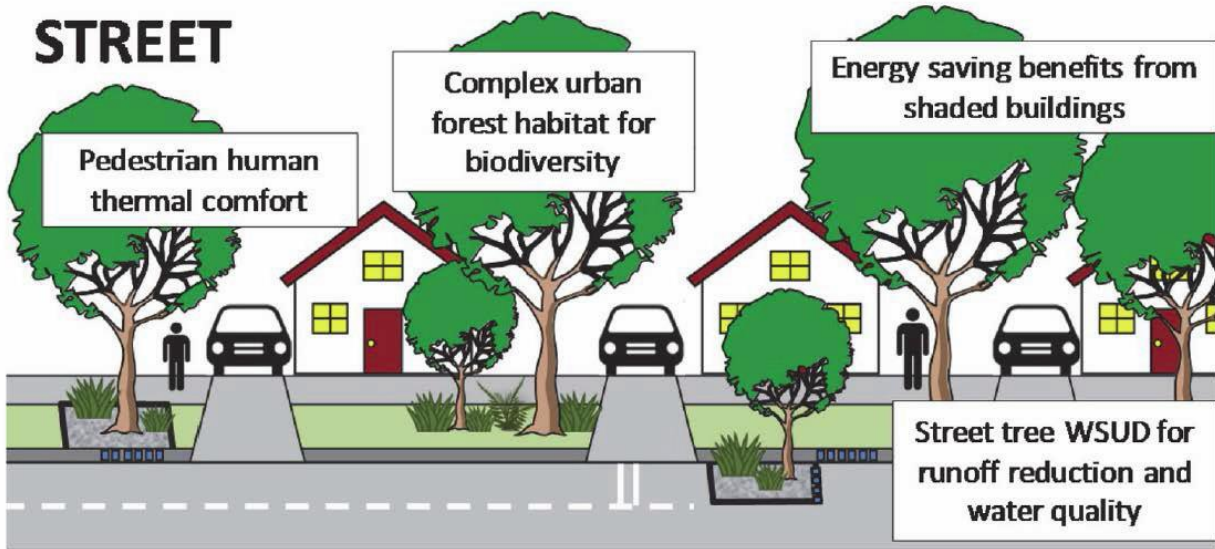
This is accomplished via the direct link of shading properties and the buildings therein;

- Reduces air pollution;
- Increases property value;
- Provides shelter for wildlife;
- Improves the usability of public parks;
- Improves the aesthetics of properties;
- Assists in stormwater management; and
- Prevents erosion, especially along slopes.

The following from Water the Journal of Environmental Quality illustrates the above:



BVOC = Biological volatile organic compounds



WSUD = Water Sensitive Urban Design

NATIVE PLANTINGS

When planting any vegetation, local species/native vegetation should be utilized. Some examples of local species/native vegetation are included in Schedule “A”.

WHERE TO PLANT

Consideration should be given to where trees and vegetation are planted. Prior to planting a tree, property lines, utilities (power lines, buried water/sewer laterals or other ‘hard’ infrastructure) should be considered. The location of a tree should take into context its future size as it relates to a building’s foundation and roof.

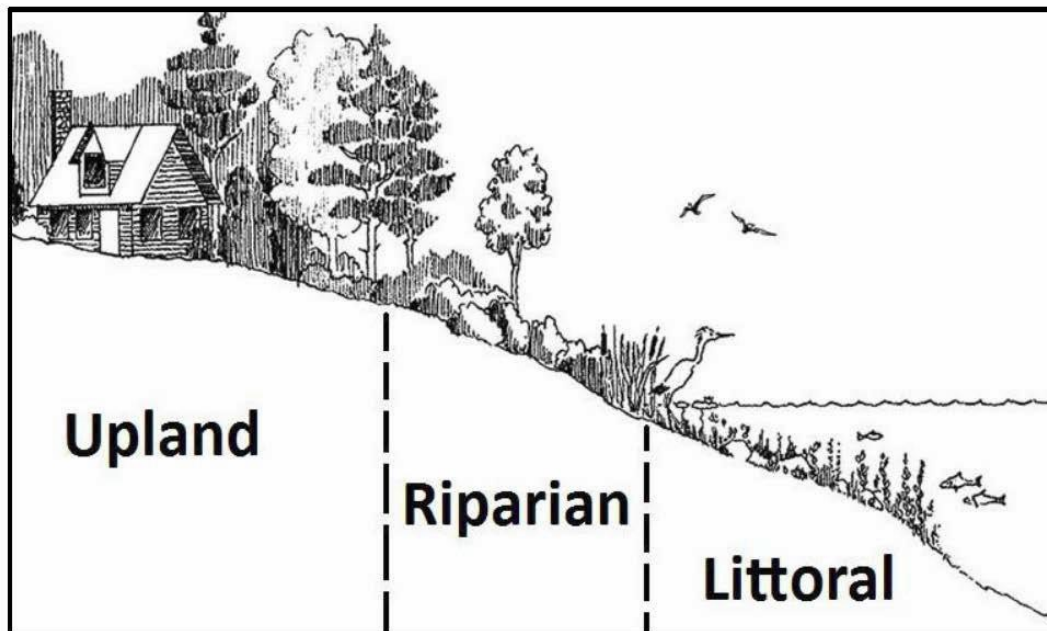
SHORELINE VEGETATION

Vegetated areas adjacent to watercourses, lakes, rivers and wetlands are known as shoreline buffers. Shoreline buffers protect water from pollutants by filtering contaminants, providing habitat for native species and preventing shoreline erosion.

Shoreline buffers should be:

- At least 20 metres upland from the shore or greater as recommended by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.
- Be composed of natural vegetation with a broad corridor of undisturbed vegetation.
- Not be grassed.
- Avoid shoreline hardening.

The types of vegetation by zone are illustrated below.



Courtesy of the Muskoka Watershed Council 2013

MAINTENANCE AND PRESERVATION

Trees and vegetation require special care and treatment. If it appears the vegetation is struggling, it is recommended you speak to a professional.

COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL USES

In addition to this policy applying to single detached homes and smaller residential uses, it can also provide guidance to commercial/multiple residential developments.

In addition to the benefits listed previously, increased vegetative buffers help beautify commercial properties and match the natural beauty of the Township of Machar.

Other benefits that can be considered:

- Green parking lots to reduce stormwater flows and the costs of stormwater maintenance.
- Vegetated aisles and parking islands to increase shaded areas and reduce micro climates.
- Green roofs to reduce total stormwater runoff and enhance the urban canopy.

The Corporation of the Township of Machar

Schedule "A"

Trees	Shrubs	Partial Shade	Full Sun	Shoreline
<p>Riparian Zone Balsam Fir Red Maple Tamarack Black Spruce Eastern Hemlock</p> <p>Medium Sized Chokecherry Pin Cherry Serviceberry Striped Maple Ironwood Eastern White Cedar</p> <p>Large Sized Bur Oak Red Oak Silver Maple Trembling Aspen White Birch Red Spruce Eastern White Pine Butternut Sugar Maple</p>	Black Chokeberry Nannyberry Northern Bush Honeysuckle Pagoda Dogwood Red Osier Dogwood Smooth Wild Rose Swamp Rose Sweet Gale Winterberry Holly Common Elderberry Highbush Cranberry Lowbush Blueberry Meadowsweet Serviceberry Steeplebush	Bearberry Bloodroot Bunchberry False Solomons Seal Jack-in-the-pulpit Wild Columbine Foamflower Ostrich Fern	Black-eyed Susan Big Bluestem Grass Canada Goldenrod Common Milkweed Flat-topped Aster New England Aster Pearly Everlasting	Blue Flag Iris Blue Vervain Boneset Cardinal Flower Swamp Milkweed Joe Pye Weed White Turtlehead

DISCLAIMER

This policy does not take priority over any By-laws, Resolutions or Agreements of the Township of Machar Council.