

## 41. Trees

(Date??)



### WHAT'S YOUR TREE DOING FOR YOU?

I recently received a wonderful short video from Public Works, Tree of All Trades, made by the Halifax Regional Municipality. You can view it at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyXDjOamDj8>. It explains all the amazing benefits one tree provides us, let alone the incredible benefits afforded by thousand of trees that form our urban forest.

For instance, among their many “trades” is their amazing role as air purifiers. Trees sequester and store carbon dioxide and trap air pollutants. They are also excellent coolers and have been proven to reduce the urban heat island effect by providing shade through evapotranspiration. This occurs when the sun hits the leaves of a tree causing water to evaporate, thus cooling down the air. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, a combination of shading and evapotranspiration can reduce air temperature by 1 to 5 degrees. And we certainly needed that this summer! Trees are also great allies when it comes to storm water management. Their roots absorb runoff water and, in the process, filter it. By limiting runoff water, the roots help stabilize the ground where the tree is planted. And trees also reduce street and sidewalk maintenance, as shade can slow down pavement deterioration.

Other benefits they provide you personally include: adding aesthetic value to your property, enhancing your health and well-being, increasing the value of your home, reducing stress, noise pollution, road rage and even crime rates!

In Montreal West, every year during the spring and fall, the Town plants between 60 and 80 trees on the public right of way in front of private properties. First, Public Works and the Environment Department identify available spaces. These are spaces without trees or where there is a considerable gap between trees. Then the selection of “the right tree for the right spot” begins. This selection takes into account many factors such as the lot size, surrounding infrastructure (Hydro lines and poles, gas or water pipes, private infrastructure, etc.), the suitable tree species (diversity is of utmost importance), the size of the tree at maturity, etc. Residents are then given the opportunity to choose from among three appropriate tree species.

When your turn comes, you will receive a letter from Public Works notifying you that a tree will be planted in the front of your property. Please choose one of the three being offered, and let them know your preference as soon as possible. A few weeks later the tree will be planted.

We hope that you will appreciate the wide range of economic, health and environmental benefits that trees have to offer. And planting them now ensures that the next generation of Montreal Westers enjoy the same quality of urban environment we are so fortunate to have today.

*Maria Torres, Councillor  
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- **Inventory. (December 2023, Informer)**



### **YOUR STREET TREE HAS A PROFILE**

Public Works regularly gets requests for public tree inspections and maintenance (primarily from concerned homeowners). But sometimes there are misconceptions about how the department prioritizes this work. So I'd like to provide a bit of context.

In 2010 the Town undertook a comprehensive evaluation of all our public trees (the first in over 25 years). What do I mean by "comprehensive"? A profile of each individual tree was created noting its species, size, age, and structural health (including its trunk and crown). Then a prescription was provided for work needed, if any. Using best industry practices, another full inventory was done in 2020, once again evaluating all the public trees with a certified arborist. So each of our mature public trees has been evaluated by an external arborist at least twice in the last 13 years. And our regular tree maintenance program is primarily designed around that inventory data.

Public Works also keeps track of all in-

coming requests from residents who may be concerned about a public tree. Once a call or message comes in, a foreman or other qualified staff member will go and inspect the tree. Our staff have been given training by a certified arborist to identify key issues. Based on these field inspections and the info from the tree inventories, Public Works will have a clear idea of what needs to be done, if anything (e.g. pruning, safety trim) and what priority to give the work. If a case is more complex, an outside arborist can be called in. And any new data collected is then added to that tree's profile.

Residents are encouraged to call Public Works if they have concerns about a public tree, but please understand that

the department already has a valuable set of data on that tree. For instance, you may notice a crack in the bark, but PW data may show it's been there since 2010 and not getting bigger. That's the advantage to having these extensive profiles. So, please don't hesitate to contact the department, but know that Public Work's assessment of your tree issue will be based on a lot of pertinent information that you may not have on hand.

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(April-May, 2021, Informer)



The Town of Montreal West is committed to maintaining the integrity of our tree canopy so that it can continue to provide us with its innumerable economic, health, environmental and aesthetic benefits. Here are some updates on our ongoing tree initiatives.

### **Tree inventory results**

Last summer, a full inventory of all public trees in Town was carried out, which entailed the collection of size, health and condition information for each tree by a certified arborist. Prior to this exercise, the most recent inventory had taken place in 2011 at which time we were warned of a severe deficit of young trees to replace the larger trees expected to naturally senesce (die). Despite this predicament and the removal of trees due to the emerald ash borer and Turcot construction, we are proud to report that the Town's tree canopy has increased and its resilience has improved thanks to aggressive tree-planting efforts over the past ten years. For example, the Town's tree cover percentage has increased from 28.75% in 2011 to 30.03% in 2019 and species distribution has become more diverse resulting in a canopy less susceptible to insects and diseases.

That being said, we still have plenty of work to do: though the proportion of small trees has improved from 15% to 28% it still falls short of the ideal of 40%. In addition, overall tree health has seen a slight decline. The Public Tree Planting Program as well as an ambitious tree maintenance program are two initiatives that are in place to respond to these concerns.

### **Public planting program**

Every year, the Town plants public trees in available spaces throughout its territory, i.e., the easement between the sidewalk and property line. This year, the council has set a goal of planting 100 new trees. At the time of this article's printing, the spring session of the annual tree planting program will be well underway. If a location adjacent to your home has been selected for the planting of a public tree you will receive (or have already received) a letter from the Public Works department asking you to select your species preference from a list of options chosen specifically for suitability in the available space. If you did not receive a letter but wish to have a public tree planted adjacent to your

property, you may contact Public Works at any time and we will evaluate the suggested location for planting in the fall of 2021.

### **Maintenance**

The recent tree inventory has provided us with a detailed picture of the maintenance requirements to keep our public trees in safe and healthy condition. As over half of public trees have been recommended for some type of intervention within the next five years (typically involving trimming or pruning) you may notice an elevated level of tree activity particularly during the summer months. Tree maintenance is an ongoing process and security issues are usually prioritized over aesthetic issues.

As a last resort, some trees unfortunately need to be removed – if this is the case for a tree adjacent to your home, you will receive a notice from the Public Works department in advance of the tree's removal.

### **Private tree giveaway**

The eighth annual tree giveaway, where Montreal West residents can order a tree for 10\$ to plant on their own property, is taking place again this year. Though by the time of this article's publishing tree reservations will have closed, we expect to deliver all orders during the week of May 17.

We thank all residents for their participation and for their contribution to a greener community.

*Article written by Dezso Lovicsek,  
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Montreal Public Works department  
on behalf of*

**Maria Torres**, Councillor for Public Works,  
Public Buildings and the Environment

- **Tree planting program, mandatory planting. (May, 2022, Informer)**



### **TREE PLANTING SEASON**

The month of May marks the beginning of tree planting in MoWest. Those of you who've ordered trees through the \$10 Tree program will receive them, and about 80 locations have also been selected to plant Town trees alongside residential streets.

Sadly, we had to remove 92 public trees in 2021 – mostly ash trees infested with the emerald ash borer. Last year we managed to plant 80 trees, but that still put us behind. And we already had some catching up to do. Our deficit of young trees has been well documented in our recent tree inventory which catalogues all our public trees (by species, age, location, maintenance and health status). It's really quite amazing how much we know about all our public trees!

So this year we will be planting 80 trees (half in spring and half in fall) to help make up for this deficit and ensure MoWesters continue to enjoy the benefits of a healthy green canopy: shading pedestrians, mitigating storm water damage, purifying the air and raising property values, to name a few.

Each of the 80 planting locations has been pre-selected by a certified arborist and the precise positioning will be confirmed by the Public Works department prior to planting – to avoid any conflicts between the new tree and private or public infrastructure. Residents are given a choice of three tree species deemed ideal for their specific location. Some residents, on learning they are scheduled to have a tree planted on the public domain in front of their home ask, "Why here? There are already plenty of trees on my street." But of course it's imperative to recognize that in 50 years most of the trees we see now will be dead. If we don't continue to plant new trees every year, we'll be leaving a barren landscape to future generations.

Of course the aesthetics of your front yard are largely up to you, but the public domain in front every home is used for the installation of public infrastructure like lamp posts, hydro poles, fire hydrants, traffic signs and, yes, street trees.

There are also many MoWesters who request a tree planting in front of their homes. To get on the list, just give Public Works a call or fill out the online form. Someone will evaluate your property and be in touch.

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