

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HILTON

BY-LAW NO.1525-26

Being a by-law to adopt a "Tree Canopy Policy".

WHEREAS Section 270(1) of the *Municipal Act, S.O. 2001, c.25*, as amended, requires municipalities to adopt and maintain a policy with respect to a tree canopy;

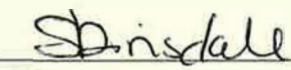
AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Hilton deems it appropriate to adopt a Tree Canopy Policy;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Hilton hereby enacts as follows:

1. **THAT** the Tree Canopy Policy attached hereto as Schedule "A" is hereby adopted.
2. **THAT** Schedule "A", attached hereto, form part of this By-law.
3. **THAT** By-law No. 1236-19 is hereby repealed.
4. **THAT** this By-law shall come into force and take effect on the date of passing.

Read a first, second and third time and finally passed this 16th day of September, 2026.


Rodney Wood, Reeve


Sara Dinsdale, CAO/Clerk-Treasurer

Schedule "A" to By-law No. 1525-26

Subject: Tree Canopy Policy
Source: By-law 1525-26
Date Approved: September 16, 2026
Resolution No.: 2026-196

1. SHORT TITLE

This Policy shall be cited as the "Tree Canopy Policy".

2. BACKGROUND

Section 270(1)7 of the *Municipal Act, S.O. 2001*, as amended, requires municipalities to adopt and maintain a policy respecting the protection and enhancement of the tree canopy and natural vegetation.

Hilton Township is a predominantly rural municipality with extensive forests, wetlands and natural shorelines. While pressures on the tree canopy differ from those experienced in urban municipalities, the Township recognizes the environmental, social and economic value of maintaining healthy trees and natural vegetation on municipal lands and encouraging responsible stewardship throughout the community.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote the protection and enhancement of the Township's tree canopy and natural vegetation on municipal properties;
- Provide guiding principles for municipal projects and decision-making;
- Encourage best management practices for planting, maintaining and protecting trees;
- Promote public awareness of the benefits of trees and healthy natural landscapes.

This policy is intended to provide guidance only and is not intended to regulate vegetation on private property except where governed by applicable legislation, agreements or municipal by-laws.

4. DEFINITIONS

"Natural Vegetation" shall mean the native or naturally occurring plant life that grows without human intervention within a geographic region.

“Shoreline Buffer” shall mean a naturally vegetated strip of land adjacent to a lake, river, stream or other waterbody that helps protect water quality, prevent erosion and provide wildlife habitat.

“Township” shall mean the Corporation of the Township of Hilton.

“Tree Canopy” shall mean the layer of leaves, branches and stems of trees that covers the ground when viewed from above.

5. APPLICATION

This policy applies to public properties owned or managed by the Township of Hilton.

The policy may also serve as a resource and guide for residents, businesses, developers and community organizations interested in promoting healthy tree cover and natural vegetation throughout the Township.

6. WHAT IS A TREE CANOPY?

A tree canopy is the collective layer formed by the crowns of trees when viewed from above. The amount of tree canopy within a community is commonly expressed as the percentage of land covered by tree crowns.

Although Hilton Township is a rural municipality with significant forested areas, maintaining and enhancing tree canopy remains important in developed areas, parks, road allowances, cemeteries and other municipal properties.

7. TREE CANOPY AND NATURAL VEGETATION BENEFITS

Protecting and enhancing the Township’s tree canopy and natural vegetation provides many environmental, social and economic benefits, including:

- **Reduced heating and cooling costs:** a mature tree canopy and natural vegetation shield against wind and snow and can also insulate buildings in the winter reducing heating costs. Canopy shade can also reduce cooling costs.
- **Improved air quality:** trees and natural vegetation filter out many common airborne pollutants.
- **Carbon sequestration:** trees can mitigate carbon emissions and help fight climate change.
- **Protection of shorelines:** by stabilizing banks, reducing sediment entering waterways and improving water quality.

- **Enhanced biodiversity:** through the preservation of native plant communities and natural ecosystems.
- **Increased property value:** studies have shown general increased in residential property values associated with the presence of trees and natural vegetation on a property.
- **Improved quality of life:** time spent in greenspace improves mental health and well-being across numerous dimensions from stress reduction to physical activity.
- **Wildlife habitat:** trees and natural vegetation create an ecosystem to provide habitat and food for birds, mammals and insects.
- **Noise reduction and privacy:** trees and vegetation create a natural buffer between properties and roadways.
- **Stormwater management:** trees and natural vegetation alter and slow the path of rainfall, recharge groundwater, reduce surface water contaminants and can prevent erosion along slopes.

8. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

When carrying out municipal operations or projects, the Township should, where practical:

- Preserve healthy, mature trees whenever feasible;
- Use native tree and plant species where appropriate (some examples are included in Appendix I);
- Minimize unnecessary disturbance to natural vegetation;
- Maintain natural shoreline buffers where practical;
- Replace trees removed from municipal property when feasible, having regard to site conditions and available resources; and
- Consider public safety, infrastructure requirements and environmental impacts when making decisions regarding tree removal.

9. DISCLAIMER

Nothing in this policy supersedes the requirements of any applicable federal or provincial legislation, municipal by-law, agreement or regulation.

Reference may be made to, but is not limited to:

- *Municipal Act, 2001*
- *Planning Act*
- St. Joseph Island Official Plan
- Provincial Planning Statement
- Ministry of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Reference Manual

10. REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed at least once during each term of Council, or sooner if required due to legislative amendments or operational needs.

APPENDIX I

This is meant as a guideline and does not include every plant or tree native to Hilton Township.

Trees	Shrubs	Partial Shade			
Ash (white and black) Balsam fir Black spruce Bur oak Chokecherry Eastern hemlock Eastern white cedar Eastern white pine Elm Ironwood Northern red oak Pin Cherry Red maple Red spruce Serviceberry Silver maple Striped maple Sugar maple Tamarack Trembling aspen White birch White walnut (butternut) Willow	Black chokeberry Elderberry Ground juniper Highbush cranberry Labrador tea Lowbush blueberry Lowbush cranberry Meadowsweet Northern bush honeysuckle Pagoda Dogwood Red osier dogwood Serviceberry Smooth wild rose Speckled alder Steeplebush Swamp currant Swamp rose Sweet gale Winterberry holly	Bearberry Bloodroot Bunchberry False Solomon's seal Foamflower Jack-in-the-pulpit Ostrich fern Other ferns Wild columbine			
		Full Sun			
		Aster Black-eyed Susan Big bluestem grass Goldenrod Milkweed Pearly everlasting			
		Aquatics	Shoreline		
		Arrowhead Cat tails White Water lily Yellow pond lily	Blue flag iris	Jewel weed	Sedges
Blue vervain	Joe pye weed		Swamp milkweed		
Boneset	Marsh St. John's wort		Tufted loosestrife		
Cardinal flower	Marsh marigold		White turtlehead		
Dwarf raspberry	Mosses		Wild raspberry		
Grasses	Rushes				