

EA INFO SHEET – Trees

November 2016

QUICK OVERVIEW

Electrification of the rail network involves installing an Overhead Contact System (OCS) that serves GO owned rail corridors. This requires the removal of trees to create a maximum 7 metre clearance zone from the centre of the outermost electrified track for safety, maintenance, and to reduce the risk of tree limbs falling on the track or overhead wires. Affected trees might be in the Right of Way, on municipal property, on private property, or they may belong to a natural heritage system.

Metrolinx understands that trees are an important part of communities. We are developing a comprehensive tree removal compensation protocol to offset the impacts where tree removal is necessary.

DEVELOPING A NEW APPROACH

Environmental responsibility is a core value for Metrolinx. We are working with the Conservation Authorities and Municipalities on a tree removal compensation strategy that will support and enhance the tree canopy across the region.

As we explore the adoption of a standard approach to tree removal and related compensation, we hope to simplify and streamline processes to make things more clear for everyone involved. Individual property owners, communities, municipalities, and Conservation Authorities will be a part of the conversation as the design for electrification and corridor expansion advances and we receive more information about impacts to individual trees.

The table on the following page (page 2) outlines Metrolinx's current practices and its proposed new protocol for tree removal for different types of trees.

WHO-DOES-WHAT WHEN IT COMES TO TREES TODAY?

Provincial Agency (Metrolinx) – Responsible for providing transit across the region. Metrolinx policy is to follow all municipal by-laws and requirements when tree removal is necessary.

Municipalities – Responsible for permitting. Issues permits for tree removal on municipal land, and where applicable, on individual properties.

Conservation Authority – Responsible for conservation, restoration, and responsible management of water, land, and natural habitats.



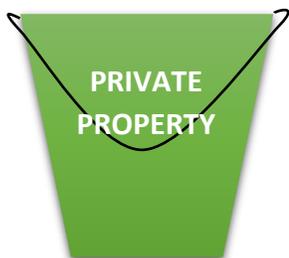
Metrolinx is committed to compensating for tree loss and making a meaningful long-term contribution to the tree canopy across the region.

	Current Practice	Proposed Metrolinx Protocol
Metrolinx Right of Way Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited need for tree removal Conduct routine maintenance activities (e.g. removal of overgrowth and brush) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake community restoration/greening/ enhancement projects to compensate for loss of trees within right of way Qualitative approach
Private Property Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply for application permits and follow relevant municipal tree removal compensation requirements Remove and compensate for trees with permission from landowner to: remove the trees on their property; and plant replacement trees on their property. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with municipalities to establish tree removal compensation framework Work with private landowner to ensure that any tree removal impacts are properly mitigated and compensated for by planting replacement trees on the landowner's property or elsewhere.
Municipal Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply for application permits and follow all relevant municipal tree removal compensation requirements Remove and compensate for trees as per municipal requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with municipalities to establish tree removal compensation framework
Natural Heritage Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Conservation Authority and/or municipalities to obtain appropriate permits and follow requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and adopt an ecosystem compensation approach to tree removal with the help of local Conservation Authorities Ensure no net loss to valuable natural heritage systems

IDEAS TO CONSIDER FOR TREE REMOVAL COMPENSATION

Tree removal compensation can take several forms. For example, when trees on private property have been removed, property owners can request that the trees be replaced on their property or elsewhere in the public realm. When there is no space for replacement trees on private land, these trees would be planted in the public realm. There are additional compensation options that may be appropriate to mitigate the loss of trees, on private property as well as municipally owned land. Partnerships, funding opportunities, and other creative ideas could be explored.

Working with local Conservation Authorities, we have developed some of the ideas you see below – but you may think of others.



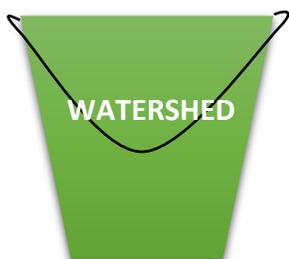
Potential compensation ideas that Metrolinx could consider for trees removed from **PRIVATE PROPERTY** could include:

- Providing individual property owners with trees on site; and/or
- Allowing a Conservation Foundation to issue a tax receipt to individual property owners in exchange for the donation of their compensation funding for the loss of trees



Potential compensation ideas that Metrolinx could consider for trees removed from public areas in the **COMMUNITY** could include:

- Supporting parkland restoration
- Supporting community led projects
- Using the cut trees to create community infrastructure (e.g. benches, tables)
- Partnering with a municipality or community group to support other ideas



Potential compensation ideas that Metrolinx could consider for trees removed from **THE WATERSHED** could include:

- Supporting the restoration and regeneration of natural heritage lands
- Partnering with a Conservation Authority to support other ideas

After the Georgetown South Project was completed in 2014, Metrolinx worked with the TRCA to offset the loss of fish habitat caused by the expansion of the rail bridge over the Humber River. Over 200 metres of shoreline enhancements were made to Humber River Marshes and about 275 riparian plantings were made on the banks of a tributary in the Scarlett Woods Golf Course.



Basking logs along the east shore of Wetlands #2



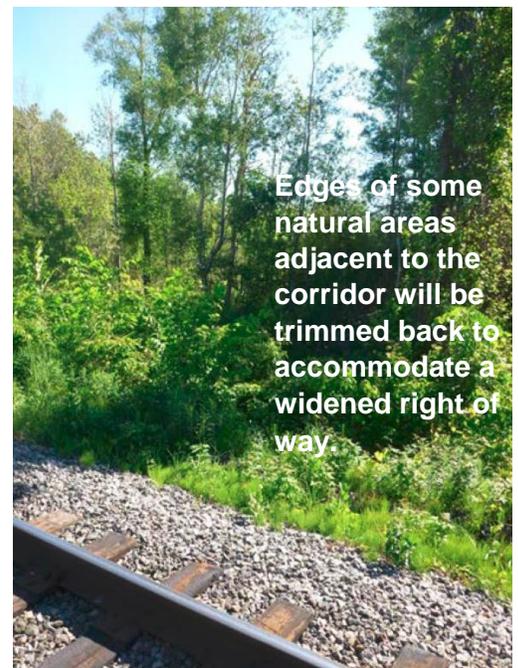
TRCA Riparian Plantings – Scarlett Woods Golf Course

NEXT STEPS

Work is ongoing between Metrolinx, municipalities and conservation authorities across the whole GO system to continue strengthening our collective approach to providing compensation for tree removal required as part of GO Transit Expansion.

Key upcoming activities include:

- Metrolinx will prepare a Draft Compensation Protocol that will be informed by public meeting feedback and comments received at Municipality & Conservation Authority Workshop held in October 2016
- Metrolinx will share the Draft Compensation Protocol with Municipalities and Conservation Authorities for review and comment
- Metrolinx Project Teams will meet with Municipalities and Conservation Authorities individually to review tree removal requirements and proposed compensation approach
- Finalize Metrolinx Compensation Protocol and establish agreements with affected municipalities.



QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. What type of compensation would you like to see considered when trees are removed: On your property? In your community? From the watershed?
 2. Do you have any other advice for Metrolinx at this point?
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For more information contact: electrification@metrolinx.com or call 1-800-GET-ON-GO or (416)869-3200