

STREET TREES SURVEY

WHAT YOU SAID IN 2020



FORESTRY
york.ca/streettrees




York Region



This report summarizes thoughts and opinions from York Region residents and business owners, gathered through the Regional Municipality of York's Street Trees Survey. The survey was available online from October 5 to October 19, 2020.

This report outlines what we asked and how you responded. It identifies key themes and explains how the Region plans to use the information gathered.

Survey Background

The purpose of the Street Trees Survey was to ask residents and businesses about their levels of satisfaction regarding trees and plants on York Region roads.

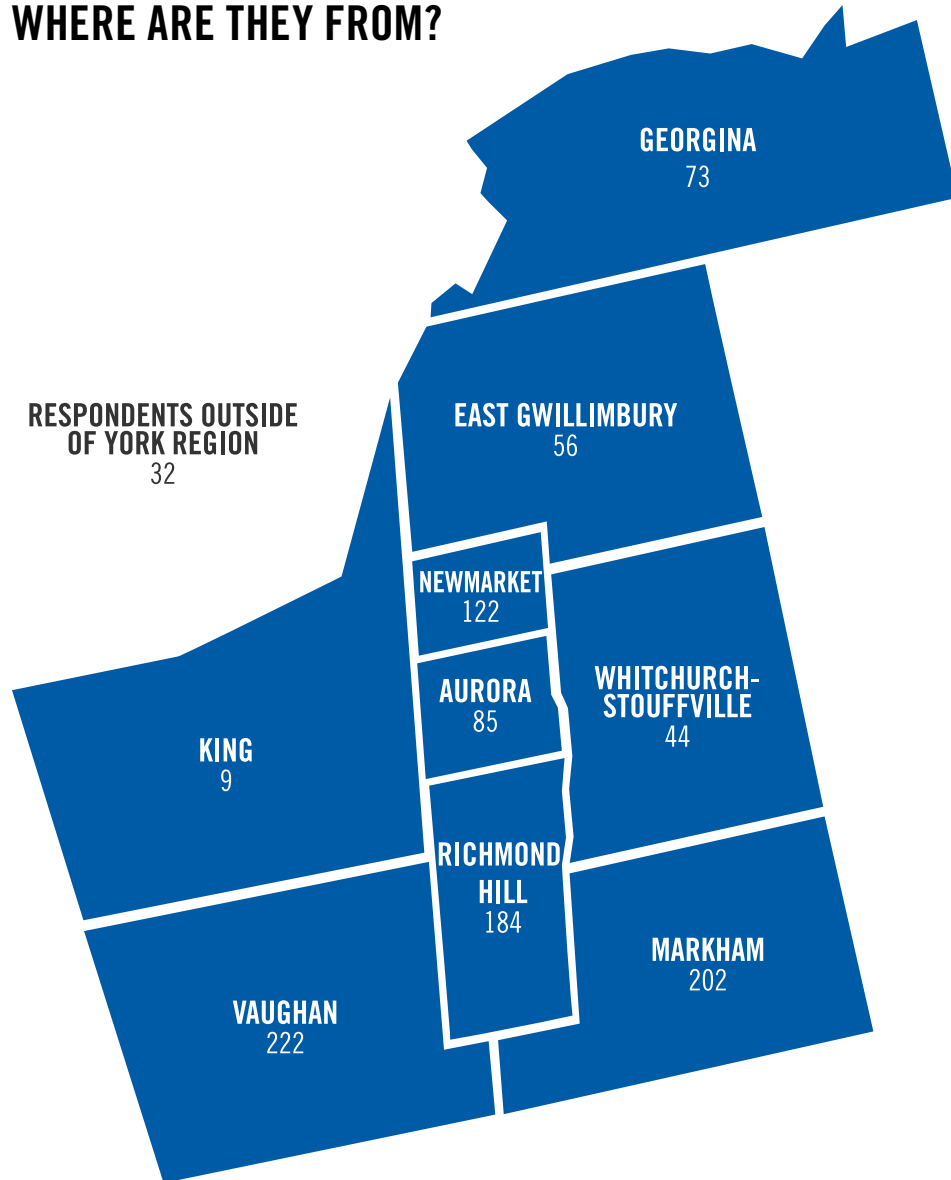
Education was provided around the difference between trees and plants on Regional roads and those in local neighbourhoods.

The survey allowed the Region to get a deeper understanding of respondents' priority issues, concerns and questions surrounding street trees and plants on Regional roads. This will inform ongoing program development and an update of the 2017 Green Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, which is currently in progress.

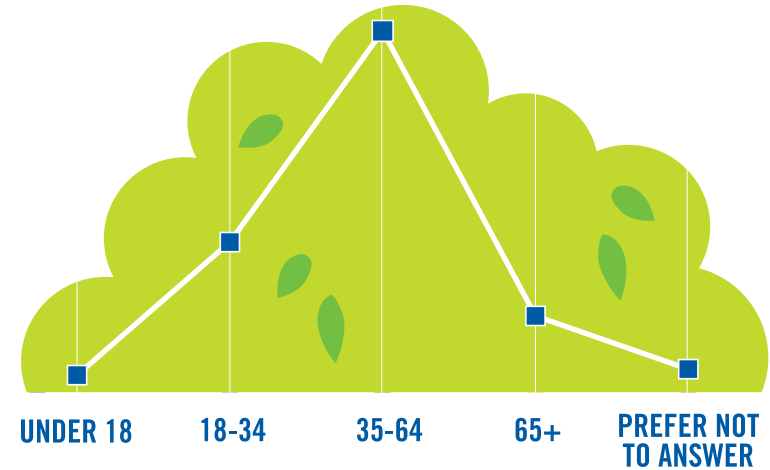
WHO WE HEARD FROM

The Street Tree Survey had a total of 1,029 completed survey respondents. Thirty-two submissions from participants outside of York Region were included.

WHERE ARE THEY FROM?



HOW OLD ARE THEY?



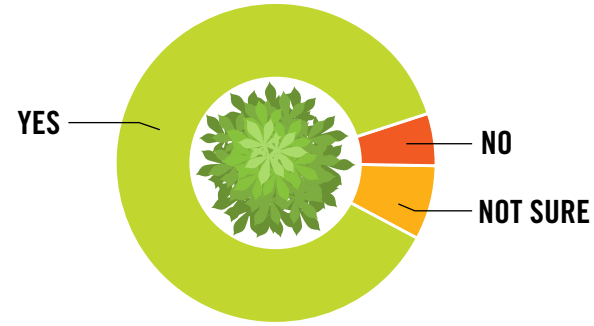
HOW DID THEY HEAR ABOUT THE SURVEY?



WHAT WE ASKED

Have you noticed trees and plants on Regional roads?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	87.5%
No	5.1%
Not sure	7.5%



How you classify yourself to respond to the survey?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Commuter (driver)	67.4%
Commuter (passenger in a vehicle)	16.0%
Pedestrian/runner	8.8%
Resident whose property fronts/back onto a Regional road	3.9%
Recreational cyclist	2.0%
Professional driver (transit, ridesharing, shipping/transportation/delivery, emergency services, other)	0.8%
Infrastructure/maintenance worker (water/sewer, roads, construction)	0.6%
Commuter (cyclist)	0.4%
Local business owner fronting onto a Regional road	0.1%



Why you think street trees and plants are there, what benefits do they provide to you?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Help make the community beautiful	93.6%
Improve air quality and/or produce oxygen	81.2%
Provide a welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists	72.4%
Provide a calming environment	67.8%
Help reduce the impacts of climate change	62.8%
Improve the quality of life	61.0%
Provide shade for users of the road or sidewalk	59.0%
Help absorb rain/snow/water	53.4%
Provide a habitat for animals	50.6%
Encourage a sense of community	50.4%
Increase property value	39.6%
Calm traffic	25.3%
Reduce crime	4.6%
I think street trees are dangerous	1.5%
I have never noticed street trees on major roads	1.4%
I don't think street trees/plants have a purpose	0.8%
I don't have an opinion about street trees/plants	0.3%
Other (please explain)	5.2%

Beautification

Improve
air quality

WELCOMING
ENVIRONMENT

Reduce stress

PROVIDES
SHADE

Improve
quality of life

Absorb water

Community

Animal
habitat

INCREASE
PROPERTY VALUE

Traffic calming



WHAT WE ASKED

For the next set of questions/statements, a score of 1 represents strongly disagree and 10 represents strongly agree:

Street trees and plants are an important part of your community?



We need more street trees and plants on Regional roads to improve the quality of our air and water?



Street trees and plants are an important part of your daily activities?



Increasing the number of street trees and plants on York Region roads will help us avoid the full effects of climate change?



Street trees and plants are an important part of your commute/travels?



The street trees and plants on Regional roads make your quality of life better?



York Region is doing a good job of planting street trees and plants on Regional roads you travel on or live near?



How much do you agree/disagree, more of our tax dollars should be allocated to increasing the number of street trees and plants on Regional roads?



York Region is effectively protecting the street trees and plants on Regional roads in your community?



I think York Region is doing a good job maintaining existing street trees and plants?



You are confident York Region's efforts will ensure there will be more street trees and plants on Regional roads in the next 10 years?



If a street tree and/or plant does not survive it should be replaced as soon as possible?



Street trees and plants are important to me and funds should be budgeted for them to be maintained/replaced as needed?



I think York Region should be planting more trees and plants on Regional roads, where possible?



I think York Region has a good amount of trees and plants on Regional roads?



I think we have enough trees and plants on Regional roads and would prefer money be spent in other areas.



Based on annual costs to maintain trees and planter boxes, what you recommend the Region plant in the future?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Mostly trees (most cost-effective option)	38.7%
A mix of trees and planter boxes (not expensive or inexpensive)	34.1%
Whatever York Region experts feel is best for the area	17.9%
Whatever is cheaper to maintain	4.1%
Whatever is easier to maintain	3.8%
Mostly planter boxes (most expensive option)	0.8%
I don't have an opinion on this/not sure	0.7%

WHAT YOU SAID

"Street trees are important in providing shade along regional corridors encourage people to walk and cycle. Please continue to plant trees."

"I like the mix of planters and trees - just happy to see greenery rather than trash lining the streets. Keep up the good work!"

"I believe that focus should be on the native trees of our region. Native plants play a crucial role in biodiversity and protection of environment."

"Trees are great! I can't wait for the ones on Bathurst to grow!"

"Please keep planting trees. They are so important to the environment and to the lives of people and animals. They also provide a calming and positive atmosphere."

"Keep up the good work, they certainly look vibrant and attractive. I am proud to live in a region with beautiful and well maintained street trees."

"Keep York Region green. The trees are great and shows York Region's commitment to sustainability and reducing the carbon footprint of regional roads."



THEMES OF COMMENTS

Plant Choices/Recommendations (187)

- male/female species
- fruit bearing versus non-fruit bearing
- not poisonous to animals
- shelter for animals
- more community gardens
- larger versus smaller trees
- preferences of planter boxes/trees/beds
- pollinator friendly

Improve Maintenance and Litter Removal for Existing Trees (99)

- snow storage
- litter removal
- regular maintenance

Planting Locations (84)

- don't block signs/safety
- ensure roots have room to grow and don't damage infrastructure
- don't plant under hydro lines
- don't plant trees in the middle of the road to encourage animals to cross
- plant for success
- ensure safety for pedestrians (things falling from trees)
- gator bag concerns

Issues Concerning Local Parks, Residential Streets/Neighbourhoods and Residential Yards (82)

- yard issues
- park concerns

Roads Concerns (75)

- development/construction
- planning
- what trees are planted where (middle of the road)

Love for York Region (68)

- general happiness with the way things are and the work that is being done currently

Funding/Partnerships/Budget/Taxes (48)

- concerns about costs, spending of tax dollars
- partner with community groups, schools

Improve Dead Tree Removal/Replacement (30)

Tree Protection (21)

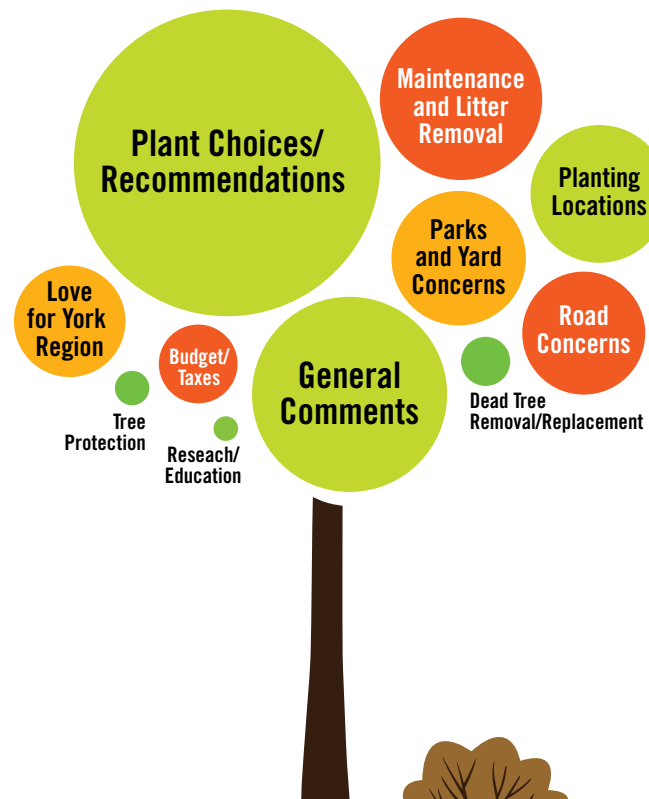
- don't allow developers to clear cut and/ remove trees
- protect old growth trees
- create more by-laws for tree protection

Research/Education (15)

- look to other areas for best practices
- provide education about tree maintenance
- provide education about types of trees/ identifiers

General Comments (119)

- love of trees (colours, benefits, beautification)



Thank you for taking the time to give us your feedback. Your responses will help inform the Region's forestry program, initiatives and communications. Results outlined in this report will be combined into the [Corporate Asset Management Plan](#), scheduled to be presented to Council in 2022.

While the trees are continually growing, our education and engagement team continues to share messages of service delivery and programing. For information on these programs, contact Access York at 1-800-464-9675.

To receive program updates and learn more about other initiatives, sign up for our [Greening e-Newsletter](#) or visit york.ca/streettrees



