

# The Leslieville/South Riverdale Tree Project

## Objectives, Questions and Answers

April 30 2011

### Objectives

1. Encourage homeowners to sign up for a free tree from the City's front-yard tree planting program, review tree options , help identify potential tree planting sites and sign them up.
2. Provide basic education to residents on care for new trees.
3. Encourage the planting of backyard trees (subsidized) utilizing the services of LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests) and sign them up for a LEAF consultation if desired

### Best Practices

#### How Much Time?

- Volunteer will need to go out at least 3 times in order to maximize the number of residents contacted in the target area. Saturday mornings are the best time, although weekday evenings and weekend afternoons may work.
- On average, a "tour" may take 3 to 4 hours.
- Identify parks, schools and businesses in your form but do not address these yourself (different city departments deal with each of these entities).

#### Key Things to Say?

- The tree canopy in Leslieville is dying. Most trees (the ones that are 25 to 40 meters in height) were planted when the area was subdivided (around 1910 to 1920). They are at the end of their lives.
- Trees produce oxygen.
- Trees clean the air (e.g. they absorb carbon dioxide and other pollutants).
- Trees clean the soil (e.g. absorb some chemicals and toxins).
- Trees prevent erosion and stop pollutants from making it to our lake.
- Trees provide shade and cooling (e.g. people use air conditioning less).
- Trees are sound barriers (e.g. the more trees on a street, the less noise you'll hear from cars, streetcars, etc.).
- Trees protect birds (and keep bigger birds like pigeons out!).
- Trees increase property value (study after study shows that properties and streets with a canopy are consistently rated as preferable living areas by homebuyers).
- Homeowners can put a spike with the words "Tree here" in the ground to identify where they want the tree (we will provide them with a sign shortly).
- Once people sign up, they will get a little sign to put on their lawn to show how much they care about our environment.

## Common Objections and Myths?

- Tree roots will clog my drain pipes. False! Tree roots will only go into a pipe that is already cracked. The problem is already there to start with. People need to change broken pipes whether they have a tree or not.
- Trees may be a home for squirrels and racoons. True, but would you rather have them in your garage?
- Tree leaves are a mess to clean up. Actually, it's best to leave tree leaves in your garden and allow them to decompose/compost. They nourish gardens and help you get bigger/better plants, flowers, etc. Cover some annuals with 5 cm of leaves (e.g. rosemary, thyme, oregano, etc.) and there's a good chance they'll come back next year.
- Trees will bring down power lines. 1) BOLD removed weaker trees from our list, like Silver Maples (lovely trees but they do lose limbs when they get older). 2) The trees we plant today will not reach maturity in our lifetimes. Depressing yes, but they won't cause us any issues. 3) City property does not end at the sidewalk but at the bottom of people's front steps! Once a tree gets into the power lines (years from now), Urban Forestry is responsible to come and trim them – for free! – because it's their tree on their property.

## How?

- Volunteers should speak from the heart regarding their own convictions about the importance of trees
- Be *respectful*. If someone absolutely does not want a tree, thank them for their time and leave.
- Some people will be willing to sign up for a tree during the initial conversation. Others will want to consider their options/consult with other household members. Volunteers will need to return to some households to complete the consultation and sign up process.
- If there's no one home, leave a flyer and write on it when you will come back to speak with them.
- If someone would like a more in-depth consultation regarding the placement and choice of a tree, tell them that a city person will come by and get in touch with [treeproject@srhc.com](mailto:treeproject@srhc.com) or 416-461-1925 x268.
- If someone has a dead or dying tree, tell them the city will come by to look at it and get in touch with [treeproject@srhc.com](mailto:treeproject@srhc.com) or 416-461-1925 x268.
- If a homeowner has an older tree, suggest planting a new one (e.g. other side of property). Most 25/40 meter trees in our neighbourhood are on their last legs!
- If people are hesitant, suggest planting a slow growing tree like a Red Oak (very slow growing) or a Red Maple (moderately slow). They will not see a big tree in their lifetime. PS: A Red Maple is green in the summer and turns bright red in the fall. Permanent dark red maples are called Crimson Maples, are not native and are more susceptible to disease. For these reasons, they are not on the city list.
- Volunteers can take advantage of chance encounters with neighbours to introduce themselves as a tree pilot project volunteer and see if they can talk then or at a later time.
- If there are city-owned properties on the street, volunteers can engage the residents about signing up for a tree and note in the comment box that the property is city-owned.
- If the house is a rental property, ask for the contact information of the landlord or ask the resident to seek permission to plant a tree.