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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The City of London will pay 25 per cent of the cost of caring for big private trees. Applications are open now.

Apply before any work starts. Funding is first come, first served, and the deadline is March 31, 2027. London arborist Jason Korkidakis of Koala Tree explains who qualifies and offers free consults.

LONDON, ON, The City of London will pay 25 per cent of the cost of caring for large, mature trees on private property through its Tree Canopy Conservation Program (TCCP), and applications for 2027 are open now. Homeowners must apply before any work starts, and funding is first come, first served.

The TCCP is a City of London funding program that helps property owners pay for qualified arborist care that keeps large, mature trees healthy and standing longer. It covers proactive work such as structural pruning, cabling and bracing, soil care and pest management, which the City says goes beyond basic trimming. The City describes the program's goal as retaining healthy mature trees for as long as reasonably possible.

The City created the program because so much of London's urban forest is on private land. A 2014 City report estimated that about three-quarters of the urban forest is on private property. The City's Urban Forest Strategy sets a goal of 34 per cent tree canopy cover by 2065, up from about 27 per cent today within the Urban Growth Boundary. To get there, the City says, trees must be planted and existing trees must be managed so they live longer, and homeowners play a crucial role.

The program began as the City's Veteran Tree Incentive Program, a one-year pilot launched on March 1, 2021, and has run as the Tree Canopy Conservation Program since 2023. City staff have said the idea came from long-standing public demand, from the Urban Forest Strategy's aim of protecting the trees London already has, and from the 2019 review of the City's Tree Protection By-law. The pilot's aim was to put off the removal of the largest trees for as long as possible while newly planted trees have time to catch up.

> "It is real money, but it is first come, first served, so I would not wait until spring."
>
> JASON KORKIDAKIS, OWNER, KOALA TREE

For 2027, the City opened applications on November 18 and will accept them until March 31, 2027, or until funding runs out. Applications are reviewed in the order they are received.

The City reimburses 25 per cent of eligible tree care, HST included, up to $1,000 per tree and $5,000 per property. For example, $2,000 of eligible work on one tree would return $500 by cheque. Eligible work includes structural pruning, removing dead or hazardous branches, cabling and bracing, soil improvements such as mulching and air spading, and pest management. The tree must be on private property in London, and it must be 50 cm or larger in diameter at breast height (DBH).

> *"A big old maple or oak is one of the most valuable things on a London property, and most people only think about it when something breaks," said Jason Korkidakis, an ISA Certified Arborist and the owner of Koala Tree. "This program helps pay for the care that keeps a tree healthy and standing longer: structural pruning, support cabling, improving the soil. It is real money, but it is first come, first served, so I would not wait until spring."*

Koala Tree's experience is that funding does not last.

> *"If you are thinking about it, apply early," Korkidakis said.*

How it works

FROM THE CITY OF LONDON

1. Get a written quote from an ISA Certified Arborist first. The City asks that quotes and supporting documents be no more than six months old.
2. Apply to the City before any work starts. Work that started or finished before the City approves the application is not eligible.
3. The City reviews the application and arranges a site visit. Wait for approval before booking any work.
4. Once approved, the homeowner books a qualified arborist. All work must be completed and paid for in 2027.
5. The homeowner sends the City the paid invoice and two photos of each tree. The City mails a cheque to the homeowner, not the contractor.

How to check your tree

The City measures diameter at breast height, 1.4 metres above the ground.

> *"Wrap a soft tape measure all the way around the trunk at chest height. If it reads about 157 centimetres or more, the tree is at least 50 centimetres across," said Korkidakis. "If you are not sure, I will measure it for you."*

A quick rule of thumb: if you can wrap your arms around the trunk and your hands touch, the tree is probably too small to qualify.

What's new for 2027

Anyone who looked into the program before should note a few changes. The minimum tree size is now 50 cm DBH (it was 40 cm). Fertilization is no longer funded, although soil care such as mulching and air spading still is. The City now funds 25 per cent of eligible costs, up to $1,000 per tree and $5,000 per property. Work must be completed and paid for in 2027. A 2026 quote can be used if it is still current, and the City asks that quotes and supporting documents be no more than six months old.

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> JASON KORKIDAKIS, OWNER, KOALA TREE

Free TCCP consult with Jason

Koala Tree offers a free TCCP consult: a site visit with Jason, who measures the tree, explains what the City will and won't fund, and quotes the work. Koala Tree helps homeowners with what they need to apply, provides a written quote and invoices that show the details the City asks for (owner name and address, invoice number,

description of the work, amount paid and proof of payment), and takes the two completion photos of each tree the City requires. Homeowners apply to the City themselves. Book at **https://koalatree.ca/london-tree-grant/book-consult/** or call 226-224-5877.

Why it matters

Keeping existing large trees healthy is one half of the City's canopy plan, alongside planting new ones, and a large share of London's trees are on private property. Korkidakis says soil care is part of keeping those trees alive.

Interviews

Korkidakis is available for interviews to discuss the Tree Canopy Conservation Program, including who qualifies and what work is and isn't eligible for funding. He can also share practical advice on what homeowners can do to keep their mature trees healthy and standing longer. Photos are available on request.

Koala Tree is an independent tree care company and is not affiliated with the City of London. Homeowners apply to the City directly on its official Tree Canopy Conservation Program page: london.ca/living-london/water-environment/trees/tree-canopy-conservation-program

Homeowner? Read about the TCCP in London or Book a TCCP Consult. Call Koala Tree at 226-224-5877.

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ABOUT KOALA TREE

Koala Tree is a tree care company in London, ON, led by Owner and Lead Arborist Jason Korkidakis, an ISA Certified Arborist (ON-3263A), TRAQ qualified, who also holds the Prescription Pruning Qualification (PPQ). Koala Tree has 10 years of professional tree care experience and an 8-person crew, carries $5 million liability insurance, and serves London, Komoka, Delaware, Strathroy, Mount Brydges and St. Thomas. Korkidakis has appeared on CBC London Morning to answer listeners' tree questions. Learn more at koalatree.ca

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SOURCES

City of London, Tree Canopy Conservation Program page (london.ca, as of Nov 18, 2026); City of London news release, Feb 25, 2026 (canopy cover); City of London staff report on the Urban Forest Strategy to the Planning and Environment Committee, Aug 26, 2014 (private ownership of the urban forest); City of London staff presentation on the Veteran Tree Incentive Program to the Trees and Forests Advisory Committee, Apr 28, 2021 (pilot launch and aims); City of London Urban Forest Strategy monitoring report, Dec 2, 2024, and 2024 to 2027 Urban Forestry business plan (program name and 2023 start).