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Toronto is advancing a zoning by-law amendment that would reclassify outdoor swimming pools and hot tubs so that they no longer count as "soft landscaping" in rear yards. In practical terms, this technical change would:

- Reduce the amount of "countable" soft landscaping on paper when a pool is proposed.
- Push many otherwise routine pool projects below the minimum soft-landscaping requirement, forcing more homeowners to apply for minor variances.
- Increase project costs, timelines, and the risk of refusals, even when the physical impact on trees and neighbouring properties is minimal.

This proposed amendment is bundled into a broader package intended to protect trees and limit so-called "iceberg homes." While those objectives are important, pools and hot tubs are being included in a way that treats them like hard paving or building mass, rather than recognizing them as long-standing, compatible backyard amenities.

- Backyard pools and hot tubs play a meaningful role in communities:
- They support family gatherings and multi-generational connection at home.
- They encourage staycations, reduce travel, and support local economic activity.
- They provide daily health benefits, including low-impact exercise, aquatic therapy, stress reduction, and improved mental well-being.
- They offer safe, supervised environments for children to learn water safety and swimming skills.

If you are located in Toronto, and thinking of putting in a pool we urge you to take immediate action:

1. **Contact your local City Councillor and members of Council** (contacts below) to oppose the reclassification of pools and hot tubs for soft landscaping calculations, and request that they be treated in a more balanced and practical manner.
2. **Submit a written comment to the City Clerk** regarding item "Growing Space for Trees: Protecting and Enhancing the Tree Canopy While Supporting Infill Housing and Addressing Concerns with Iceberg Homes" (PH27.1), specifically opposing the provisions that remove pool and hot tub water surfaces from soft landscaping calculations.

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Ward 25, Scarborough-Rouge Park: Councillor Jennifer McKelvie
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Proposal:

Updated definition of soft landscaping: "means **landscaping** excluding hard-surfaced areas such as decorative stonework, retaining walls, walkways, artificial turf, permeable pavements, or other hard-surfaced landscape-architectural elements".

Amend Regulation 10.5.50.10(7) as follows:

(7) Swimming Pools or Similar Ancillary Structures Containing Water Deemed to not be Soft Landscaping for Specified Regulations

In the Residential Zone category, for the calculation of **soft landscaping** required by regulation 10.5.50.10(3) and (4), the area of **soft landscaping** does not include the water surface area of outdoor swimming pools, hot tubs, fountains, or other **ancillary structures** used to hold water, except for artificial ponds.