

November 5th 2019

Councillor Wolfe

Resolution for Richmond City Council's Planning Committee

RE: Update of the Tree Protection Bylaw

WHEREAS, Richmond has policies to protect trees, yet the trend is that our tree canopy is declining rapidly on residential, industrial, commercial, and agricultural lands, in addition to losses in the remaining natural spaces known as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs).

WHEREAS, the priority has been on tree replacement, not tree retention, as the new trees are often limited in their root expansion potential due to hard packed fill. The infraction rates are also too low to deter landscaping techniques that cause tree mortality. There are exemptions that result in tree injury and a lack of habitat enhancement regulations, such as preserving low vegetation species and carbon-sequestering covers that offer high permeability.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Richmond hereby supports the advice from the Advisory Committee on the Environment, to update the Tree Protection Bylaw No.8057, for evaluation and public consultation to modernize it and bring it into line with community expectations and the better practices to retain and grow our urban forest.

Supplementary Memo:

To: Barry Konkin, Manager of Policy Planning Date: October 30, 2018
From: Tadd Berger, Richmond Advisory Committee on the Environment
Subject: Richmond Tree Protection Bylaw No. 8057 – recommendations for updating

1. Establish a tree working group to make recommendations regarding updating the Tree Protection Bylaw. This group could include a council member, city staff and members of the Advisory Committee on the Environment and others.

This working group's terms of reference can include:

- a. Switching the priority to tree retention instead of tree replacement in the existing tree bylaw to respect the character of existing neighbourhoods.
- b. Amending the Zoning Bylaw so that houses don't cover such a large percentage of a property and instead retain space for trees.
- c. Stop watering down the existing tree bylaw with interpretations that favour cutting trees. Until the bylaw is updated, uniformly apply the rules we have.
- d. Increasing fees for tree cutting permits.
- e. Dealing with property owners who violate the tree bylaw, for example, removing trees prior to construction which can include increasing penalties for violations up to and including revocation of a building permit.
- f. Increasing funding for urban forest planning and maintenance and overseeing the development of an urban forest strategy that includes planting more trees on public land.
- g. Liaising with staff who are completing a tree canopy inventory.
- h. Recommending ways to optimize www.richmond.ca, for example, creating a trees area to include data on the tree canopy, data on cutting permits, information on caring for trees and related.
- i. Making recommendations on developing an education campaign focused on the benefits of retaining trees compared to replacing trees.
- j. Making recommendations on whether the City should sell propagated trees to residents at reduced prices (similar to the City of Vancouver).
- k. Making recommendations to create one department to manage trees. Currently trees on city land are administered by the Parks department, trees on private land are managed by Tree Enforcement. Set backs and other by-laws affecting trees on private land are dealt with by the Planning and building Departments.

Contact: Tadd Berger, ACE chair. tberger@pinchin.com