



October 25, 2024

Edmonton City Council
1 Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, AB T5J 2R7

RE: UPE01925 Trees on Public and Private Property

Dear Urban Planning Committee and City Council:

BILD Edmonton Metro is a non-profit organization representing over 500 companies in the building and development industry. Our members are committed to shaping our region to ensure more people and businesses choose to live, invest, and thrive here.

The report that is set to be discussed on October 29 contains a number of different initiatives. We are happy to see that further discussion about new bylaws for trees on private property and the potential for the Housing Accelerator Fund to be used for tree-related projects are not being brought forward.

There are several potential initiatives provided that are low cost and could increase the canopy across the city. This includes providing education and trees to people moving into newly built homes so that they can plant appropriate trees and ensure they remain healthy into maturity. There may even be opportunity to partner with our membership in new development areas to promote such programs. Programs such as Root for Trees and partnerships with local communities should continue so that the long-term provision of trees continues, with a focus on drought resistant species.

The idea of providing more flexibility for variances or changes to setbacks for infill projects with trees on site is another great opportunity to save mature trees. Such an approach allows site planning to prioritize trees over the location of the building pocket.

Similarly, in addition to waiving the requirement for a new tree (which the Zoning Bylaw already allows), consideration should be given to also waive the requirement for four shrubs where a tree is preserved for small-scale residential development on lots less than eight metres wide. This ensures that fewer mature plantings are removed to make way for lower impact plantings.

A concern for members of BILD Edmonton Metro is the amount of tree waste created annually through stringent requirements for acceptance into the City's inventory. While we agree that a healthy tree must be in place for it to be

transferred to the city for long term maintenance, there are likely hundreds of trees annually that are discarded for having the wrong shape or other minor infractions. Tree waste, created by inspection standards, is an area that is not addressed in the report despite being raised by BILD Edmonton Metro's members; rather, the focus is on compliance with standards.

While industry supports the expansion of Edmonton's tree canopy, the most effective means of adding to that inventory may not be with adding requirements to the Zoning Bylaw for items like increasing collection of securities and adding inspections to small scale residential lots. Instead, Urban Planning Committee should consider enhancing the City's investment in the purchase of Natural Areas at market rates to capture healthy, mature trees before land is graded for site preparation. It should also increase capital investment over time in naturalization to enhance green space in existing neighborhoods.

In general, any program should undertake an assessment of the overall impact of regulatory approaches in terms of the cost to operate programs and the potential increase in the tree canopy.

We thank administration for considering some of our earlier feedback and look forward to future consultation on changes that impact building and land development.

Sincerely,



Lindsey Butterfield, RPP
Vice- President, Government Relations & Policy
BILD Edmonton Metro

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