



Attachment C:

April 10, 2017 Council Report
“12 K de K Court Boulevard Trees”



REPORT

Parks & Recreation

To: Mayor Côté and Members of Council **Date:** 4/10/2017

From: Dean Gibson **File:** 2250.18
 Director of Parks and Recreation

Item #: 169/2017

Subject: 12 K de K Court Boulevard Trees

RECOMMENDATION

THAT as a supplement to the related Council resolution of March 27, 2017, Council adopt the Quayside Esplanade Boulevard Tree Maintenance Program as included in Attachment “A” to this report, communicate the City’s intentions to the Quayside Community Board, and enter into a Letter of Understanding with the Strata of 12 K de K Court as included in Attachment “B”.

ORIGIN/PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to respond to Council’s request that staff investigate matters related to specific requests proposed to Council on March 27, 2017 associated with esplanade boulevard trees as proposed by the Strata at 12 K de K Court.

BACKGROUND

At its Regular meeting of March 27, 2017 City Council passed the following resolution:

THAT staff be directed to undertake thorough pruning of the existing three boulevard trees at 12 K de K Court and increase the tree pruning cycle to once every three years as described in Option #3 in the report dated March 27, 2017;

THAT staff be directed to research existing regional policies related to city tree planting and city tree maintenance in relation to the preservation of view-scapes and report back to Council; and,

THAT staff investigate the following requests as submitted by the Strata of 12 K de K Court:

- 1. Reduce the overall perimeter of the trees (the height and width) by a minimum of 20% through drop crotch pruning techniques;*
- 2. Provide a crown clean to ensure that light passes through the branches, and that residents have the ability to see through the trees;*
- 3. Raise the canopy of the trees to eight feet;*
- 4. City staff conduct pruning and trimming in consultation with the Strata Council of 12 K de K Court; and,*
- 5. The City will maintain the reduced size and openness of the trees by pruning on an annual basis as necessary.*

Staff has since been following-up on the matter related to the requests from the Strata at 12 K de K Court.

EXISTING POLICY/PRACTICE

In early 2016, the City adopted its first Urban Forest Management Strategy. This strategy identified that the City was losing its tree canopy coverage at a rate of approximately 1.5% each year. The strategy proposed a series of recommendations to help assist the City in stopping and reversing this trend. One result has been the adoption of a Tree Protection and Regulation bylaw. Another has been direction from Council to develop an ambitious planting program for new trees.

Prior to 2016, save for a bylaw protecting trees on City streets and in specified environmentally sensitive areas, the City has had few policy or regulatory tools to guide the management of the City's Urban Forest. In the absence of policy, staff have exercised professional discretion in accordance with industry best practices as recommended by the International Society of Arboriculture. It has been the practice of the City to maintain a program to plant trees where none have existed in the past and to remove and replace inappropriate and/or diseased and damaged boulevard trees as part of the City's efforts to beautify the community, exercise stewardship over the urban forest and help sustain the ecology of the local environment.

DISCUSSION

As part of the follow-up measures directed by Council, staff have subsequently met with representatives of the Strata to better understand the proposal and reviewed the terms with

regards to their feasibility, and potential impact on departmental work plans and the overall health of the trees. Notwithstanding the priority of the Strata that the tree maintenance measures be considered solely within the context of the specific impact on their particular property, staff has also considered this matter in the broader perspective of the all trees planted along the esplanade in 2007.

Staff has worked with the Strata to integrate their requests into a more detailed Tree Maintenance Program for the esplanade boulevard trees. Attachment “A” includes this plan. The plan remains consistent with Council’s motion of March 27, 2017 and provides additional details by which the work program will be implemented and the standards by which it can be evaluated. For reference purposes, Attachment “D” outlines the original options considered by Council on March 27. It is important to note that the tree maintenance approach (Option #3) adopted on March 27, 2017 is intended to be applied to all trees planted on the upland side of the esplanade in 2007. It is further recognized that there are additional circumstances related to the 12 K de K property that support a more detailed understanding of the tree maintenance program fronting this site. Accordingly, a Letter of Understanding has been drafted to address this specific situation (see Attachment “B”)

The proposed Tree Maintenance Program formalizes the priority given to establishing and maintaining views of the Fraser River from the Quayside esplanade strata residences. Objectives of the maintenance program include:

- A. Maintain and enhance the overall health of boulevard trees
- B. Re-establish and maintain view corridors between trees towards the river
- C. Enhance and maintain air flow and light penetration through each tree and improve views through the trees by thinning the tree canopy
- D. Comply with applicable provisions related to tree maintenance and pruning as referenced in the City’s Tree Protection and Regulation Bylaw

It is the view of staff that the Tree Maintenance Program balances the priorities of the residents both at 12 K de K Court and along the esplanade as a whole. Recognizing Council’s priority to retain the boulevard trees and increase the cycle of maintenance, representatives from the 12 K de K Court Strata have indicated support in principle for the maintenance program and associated Letter of Understanding as included on Attachments “A” and “B”. It is expected that the Strata Council will be formally considering this approach in advance of City Council’s April 10, 2017 Regular Council meeting. Furthermore, staff feels that the maintenance program strikes an appropriate balance between ensuring sustainable tree health and responding to adjacent property owner preferences.

Subsequent to the March 27, 2017 meeting of City Council, the Quayside Community Board (QCB) has considered the matter of the increased level of service (increased pruning cycle frequency) being planned for the esplanade boulevard trees and has passed a resolution to communicate to the City its preference that any new maintenance regimes introduced at the

Quayside esplanade be applied universally to all esplanade trees planted in 2007 and that the QCB be included in further related decisions and information. Attachment “C” includes the correspondence from the QCB in this regard.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Financial Impact** – As outlined in the March 27, 2017 report to Council, the direct financial impact of the proposed option is relatively small. Of importance though will be the necessity to adjust existing work plans in order to support the required higher level of service. Relative to the size of the City’s Urban Forest, the Horticulture Division is lightly resourced in caring for trees in the City, requiring that staff routinely need to re-prioritize scheduled maintenance work to deal with emergencies and emerging issues. This approach is not considered a best practice within the arboriculture profession and will need further consideration as the extent of the City’s Urban Forest continues to grow.
- **Social Impact** – Overwhelmingly, communities value and support the greening of neighbourhoods and cities due to the esthetic and environmental benefits associated with trees. Issues surrounding trees and their impact on view corridors are largely a matter of personal preference and vary widely from household to household across the City. The adoption of the Urban Forest Management Strategy in 2016 suggests that the City has strong convictions towards the value and importance of trees in the City.
- **Environmental Impact** – The environmental benefit of trees is widely recognized. Trees filter the air, cool the earth, assist in the retention of moisture in the soil, save energy, and enhance our community’s overall economic sustainability.

OPTIONS

In consideration of the additional request from the Strata at 12 K de K Court, options available to City Council include:

1. As a supplement to the related Council resolution of March 27, 2017, adopt the Quayside Esplanade Boulevard Tree Maintenance Program as included in Attachment “A” to this report, communicate the City’s intentions to the Quayside Community Board, and enter into a Letter of Understanding with the Strata of 12 K de K Court as included in Attachment “B”.
2. Maintain the status quo with respect to the Council resolution of March 27, 2017 directing staff to increase the pruning period of the esplanade boulevard trees to a three year cycle and communicate the City’s intentions to the Quayside Community Board.

Option #1 is recommended.

COMMUNITY LIAISON

To assist with the preparation of this report, staff have met with the delegation that presented to Council to better understand the context for their concerns and to discuss potential options to address the matter. The Quayside Community Board has discussed the March 27, 2017 motion of City Council and corresponded back to City staff. The QCB has not considered the tree maintenance program proposed in this report.

CONCLUSION

The Parks and Recreation Department is tasked with the responsibility of caring for the City's inventory of trees on public lands, including hundreds of trees on City boulevards. In all cases, staff strives to exercise sound, professional judgment and attempts to balance the interests of individual property owners against the larger interests of the community as a whole.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment "A" - Proposed Maintenance Program for Trees on Quayside Esplanade Boulevard

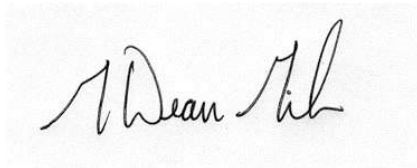
Attachment "B" - Letter of Understanding for Esplanade Boulevard Trees fronting 12 K de K Court

Attachment "C" - Correspondence from Quayside Community Boards Re: Universal Approach to Esplanade Tree Maintenance March 30, 2017

Attachment "D" - Esplanade Boulevard Tree Options as presented to City Council on March 27, 2017

This report has been prepared by:
Dean Gibson
Director of Parks and Recreation

Approved for Presentation to Council



Dean Gibson
Director of Parks and Recreation



Lisa Spitale
Chief Administrative Officer



Attachment "A"

Proposed Maintenance Program for Trees on Quayside
Esplanade Boulevard

Quayside Esplanade Boulevard

April 2017

Maintenance Program for Trees on upland side of esplanade (planted in 2007)

Objectives:

- A. Maintain and enhance the overall health of boulevard trees
- B. Re-establish and maintain view corridors between trees towards the river
- C. Enhance and maintain air flow and light penetration through each tree and improve views through the trees by thinning the tree canopy
- D. Comply with applicable provisions related to tree maintenance and pruning as referenced in the City's Tree Protection and Regulation Bylaw

In consideration of these objectives, the City will:

- 1. Maintain the trees on a three year pruning cycle (commencing in 2017) with annual inspections during intervening years accompanied by pruning to maintain view corridors, address epicormic shoot growth and any other tree health or public safety issues.
- 2. Prune the trees during the initial pruning cycle interval to:
 - a. remove or subordinate weak, crowded or competitive stems and limbs
 - b. thin the tree crown (crown cleaning) through removal of select secondary branches from main lateral stems to reduce the weight on limbs and increase air and light penetration
 - c. where practical, implement directional pruning as part of a young tree training program
 - d. raise the elevation of the tree canopy to six feet
 - e. manage the overall tree canopy (width and circumference) through the removal of materials not to exceed more than 25% in the first pruning interval.
- 3. Prune the trees in subsequent pruning cycles with the focus on:
 - a. managing epicormic shoot growth
 - b. tree training for structural soundness and promotion of tree health
 - c. raising the elevation of the tree canopy to eight feet as the trees mature
 - d. managing the overall tree canopy (width and circumference) of trees through the removal of materials not to exceed more than 15-20% in any pruning interval.
 - e. maintaining view corridors of the river between trees primarily through the use of directional pruning
 - f. maintaining light and air penetration through the tree canopy to improve views through the trees
- 4. Consult with the Quayside Community Board at the end of the first pruning cycle (2020) to review the success of the tree maintenance program in terms of meeting the stated objectives.

Attachment "B"

Letter of Understanding for
Esplanade Boulevard Trees
fronting 12 K de K Court

April 10, 2017

**Letter of Understanding for Esplanade Boulevard Trees fronting 12 K de K Court
between
City of New Westminster and Dockside Strata (NW2459)**

This letter of understanding will serve to further elaborate on the objectives and intended actions to be taken by the City of New Westminster (Parks and Recreation Department) with specific respect to the **two Yellowwood trees and one Black Gum tree** fronting the Dockside Strata at 12 K de K Court.

Background

The City has worked with representatives from Dockside Strata to draft a document entitled “Quayside Esplanade Boulevard Maintenance Program for Trees on upland side of esplanade (planted in 2007)” (attached to this letter) that outlines the objectives behind of the tree maintenance program for the esplanade and identifies the specific actions the City intends to take to achieve those objectives. It is recognized that while the esplanade boulevard trees fronting the Dockside Strata have been placed generally in keeping with the pattern and spacing of the remaining esplanade boulevard trees planted in 2007, the specific positioning of the Yellowwood and Black Gum trees at 12 K de K Court has resulted in the trees being closer to the building face than other trees along the esplanade. It is also recognized there is a unique history between the City and the Dockside Strata Council regarding planting of the trees. These facts, combined with the massing of a significant portion of the Strata building close to the property line and the elevation of the ground floor units relative to the elevation of the trees, is contributing to a greater sense of impact on views towards the river than in other locations along the esplanade. Accordingly, action is warranted to further address this specific situation above and beyond the typical measures that will be undertaken for the maintenance of all other esplanade boulevard trees planted in 2007.

Actions to be taken by the City

In consideration of the above described circumstances unique to the Dockside Strata and the adjacent esplanade boulevard trees, the City will undertake the following additional measures for the two Yellowwood and one Black Gum boulevard trees to those actions outlined in the maintenance program as follows:

- a. The Dockside Strata will be consulted as part of the City's three year pruning cycle and as part of annual inspections during intervening years.
- b. During the initial 2017 pruning cycle, the overall tree canopy (width and circumference) will be managed through the removal of materials to a target of 25% taking into consideration the need to also not compromise the health of the trees.
- c. During subsequent pruning cycles, the overall tree canopy (width and circumference) will be managed through the removal of materials to a target of 15 – 20% taking into consideration the need to also not compromise the health of the trees.
- d. Following the initial 2017 pruning cycle, a benchmark for future pruning can be established for reference in subsequent years as part of the annual inspection of the trees to determine:
 - the extent to which the intended maintenance program objectives (including managing overall crown width and shape, maintaining view corridors, and tree health) are achieved,
 - if a different course of action (which may include measures up to removal and replacement of the trees) is warranted.

Notwithstanding the rights of the Council of the City of New Westminster to introduce resolutions or bylaws that may supersede this Letter of Understanding, the City of New Westminster and the Dockside Strata agree that this Letter of Understanding shall remain in effect for the duration of the life of the existing two Yellowwood trees and one Black Gum tree, or until such time as the parties mutually agree to end this agreement.

For Dockside Strata		For City of New Westminster
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Print Name

Print Name

Attachment: Quayside Esplanade Boulevard Tree Maintenance Program (April 2017)



Attachment "C"

Correspondence from Quayside Community Board
re: Universal Approach to Esplanade Tree Maintenance

March 30, 2017



Quayside Community Board (QCB)
 PO Box 453,
 #104-1015 Columbia Street,
 New Westminster, BC,
 V3M 6V3

Dean Gibson, Director
 Parks & Recreation
 600 Eighth Street,
 New Westminster, BC
 V3M 3S2

March 30th, 2017

Re: Tree pruning proposal passed by council on March 27th, 2017

Dear Mr Gibson,

The Quayside Community Board would like to confirm that the motion passed by Council on March 27, as stated in the staff report, is intended to apply to all esplanade boulevard trees planted back in 2007. The QCB appreciates the fact that there may be some uncertainty around the amendment introduced by Councillor Puchmayr as it may pertain to only the trees fronting 12 K de K Court (Dockside Strata) versus all trees along the extent of the esplanade boulevard.

As a result our board discussed this at our recent meeting on March 29th. The Quayside Community Board wishes to make comment on its preference with respect to a "universal" approach to the boulevard trees in question. To that end; the Board has moved and seconded the following motion for Council's consideration in the final report from Parks and Recreation:

"Whereas it is understood that on March 27, 2017 New Westminster City Council passed a resolution in support of an increased pruning cycle for the boulevard trees along the upland side of the Quayside esplanade and specifically for three trees fronting the Dockside Strata, and

Whereas the related staff report indicates that the pruning approach would be applied to all boulevard trees along the upland side of the Quayside esplanade in order to maintain a degree of uniformity in the growth and development of this row of riverfront trees, and

Whereas New Westminster City Council will be giving further consideration to a subsequent staff report related to the impacts of a proposal from the Dockside Strata for additional prescriptive objectives for the pruning approach and specific performance metrics for the pruning of the trees ,

Therefore be it resolved that the Quayside Community Board communicate to the City its preference that a universal approach be applied to maintaining and pruning all boulevard trees along the upland side of the Quayside esplanade such that all Quayside residents receive equitable benefit from this maintenance program along with being included in further decisions and information regarding the same."

Motion was approved unanimously by all in attendance.

Should you request attendance at council for presentation, please let me know. Thank you for consideration and we look forward to further communication regarding our motion and the report to council.

Yours truly,

Vickie Turvey,
 Quayside Community Board, President



Attachment "D"
Esplanade Boulevard Tree Options
as presented to City Council
On March 27, 2017

Esplanade Boulevard Tree Options as presented to City Council on March 27, 2017

1. ***Maintain the Status Quo*** – Undertake routine pruning of the trees in conjunction with the planned maintenance of other trees along the Esplanade. This schedule indicates that the trees would receive pruning in 2017 and approximately every five to seven years thereafter with corresponding monitoring at year three intervals to assess if a subsequent small pruning prescription is warranted and to address potential issues associated with epicormic shoot growth. It is noted that the subject trees have yet to receive pruning associated with training the growth of young trees. As such, the pruning in 2017 is likely to be somewhat more comprehensive than would typically be performed during other subsequent maintenance cycles.

From an arboricultural best practice perspective, the intended outcome of the 2017 maintenance pruning cycle (currently scheduled for completion before mid-April) will be to manage and shape the tree canopy to enable a strong, healthy and balanced tree canopy. The scope of work will include performing an in-depth pruning practice that improves the structural integrity of the trees. This includes removing or subordinating weak, crowded or competitive stems and limbs as well as thinning branches to reduce weight on limbs and increase air and light penetration. Once the Arboriculture crew has finished with the prescribed pruning, the trees will be noticeably less dense and wide. It is not considered a best practice to attempt to lessen the height of these trees. This weakens a tree and puts it at risk for future ailments and failures. Having said that, there are pruning practices referred to as drop crotch pruning that could be applied to the Yellowwood trees should it be warranted as they become taller and older.

2. ***Remove and replace three trees***
 - a. ***Tree Transplantation*** – Two or three of the subject trees (Yellowwood, Black Gum) can be removed either by cutting them down or by digging them up and relocating them to an alternate location in the City. New trees, selected to be less impactful on the views, could then be planted in the location of the old ones. This approach, while partially satisfying the interests of the directly impacted residents, will diminish the overall effect of the balanced and unified pattern of tree species along the length of the esplanade.
 - b. ***Tree Cutting*** - Alternatively, the trees could simply be removed by cutting them down. This would represent approximately one half of a day of the City arboriculture crew's time to remove the three trees plus \$450 in contracted services to remove the remaining stumps. Under this scenario, in order to align with the City's tree protection bylaw, two new trees should be planted for every one tree removed. Therefore the total cost to remove the three trees

and replace with six trees (three at 12 K de K Court and three elsewhere in the City) would be approximately \$3,450.

3. ***Undertake thorough pruning of trees and increase tree pruning cycle*** – The intent of this approach is to, over time, manage the rate of growth and density of the canopy with the objective of maximizing view corridors without compromising the long term health of the trees. The pruning in the initial year will be similar to that described in above Option #1 but the frequency of pruning would be escalated from the current five to seven year cycle to a three year cycle. Following this initial pruning cycle, a benchmark for future pruning for the subject trees can be established. This benchmark can then be used in subsequent years as part of an annual review of the trees to determine:
 - the extent to which the intended outcomes (managing overall crown width and shape, maintaining view corridors and tree health) are being achieved,
 - if a different course of action (i.e. Option #2 above) is warranted.

Option #3 was supported by City Council at their meeting of March 27, 2017.