

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

TO: *MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS*

SUBJECT: SIDEWALK IMPLEMENTATION ON UNION STREET

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT staff be directed to re-evaluate the sidewalk implementation on Union Street, as outlined in the report titled “Sidewalk Implementation on Union Street”, dated November 6, 2023.

REPORT

The Environment Committee, at its meeting held on October 18, 2023, received the *attached* correspondence, bringing attention to a number of mature trees in the 4500 and 4600 blocks of Union Street being removed to accommodate the building of a new sidewalk, and the perceived disconnect between the City’s New Sidewalk Program, Urban Forest Management Strategy and Climate Action Framework.

Staff advised the Committee that the New Sidewalk Program is guided by the Burnaby Transportation Plan to help prioritize the construction of new sidewalks in the City. The evaluation framework of the program was endorsed by Council in 2021, and considers pedestrian demand, safety and equity as part of the prioritization. Residents are engaged and have the opportunity to provide feedback during the planning and design phases of each new sidewalk project.

The City strives to preserve as many trees as possible in all sidewalk projects. However, for the Alpha sidewalk project, due to infrastructure design requirements in the area, it was not technically feasible to plant replacement trees in the same block due to conflicts with significant Telus communication ducts within the boulevard.

In addition, at this site, a separate sidewalk to potentially maintain the trees is not desirable is due to the grade difference along Union Street. Having a separate sidewalk

will require stairs at the front of properties which creates accessibility challenges to home owners, which is a concern received by neighborhood residents.

In light of this, the Alpha sidewalk project will plant at least two new trees for every tree that is removed, resulting in the removal of 38 trees but an additional 88 trees to be planted in the neighbourhood. This will exceed City's 2:1 replacement ratio, which is normally used for when replacing boulevard trees.

The Environment Committee echoed the writer's concern with the perceived disconnect between the New Sidewalk Program, the Urban Forest Management Strategy and Climate Action Framework, and the impact of removing all trees in the 4500 and 4600 blocks of Union Street.

Arising from discussion, the Committee recommended that staff re-evaluate the sidewalk implementation along Union Street.

On behalf of the Environment
Committee,

Councillor J. Keithley
Chair

Councillor M. Santiago
Vice Chair

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Correspondence from Kate McMahon