

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

From: Kate McMahon [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 10:25 AM
To: LegislativeServices <LegislativeServices@burnaby.ca>
Subject: Sidewalk expansion/tree canopy concerns

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Hello

I would like to bring to the Environmental Committee's attention an apparent gap between the City's Sidewalk Expansion program, Urban Forest Strategy and Climate Action Framework.

I am highly supportive of the Sidewalk Expansion Program, but have become aware that in the name of active transportation and climate action, a significant number of mature trees are to be felled. I have attached the plan for 2 blocks of Union Street which show that *every single* tree on the south side of the street is to be taken down to accommodate the sidewalk. (Note these trees are **not** to be replaced in this location as there is Telus infrastructure that apparently new trees would interfere with and there are new utility standards that must be adhered to.)

Full disclosure that this is my street. However, I am most concerned that if the current approach being taken to replacing trees with concrete is being applied citywide, how many mature trees are we losing in the name of climate action?

These trees that are to be removed are at least 50 years old. They provide significant shade, cooling the street in the summer. They provide habitat for important wildlife, like pollinators. They capture carbon and improve property value. At a time when we are facing extreme heat, a biodiversity crisis and a climate crisis, replacing trees with concrete seems absurd. The city's tree replacement policy is great, but new trees take many years to contribute to the neighbourhood and environment the way a mature tree does and are difficult to successfully establish in our increasingly hot and dry summers. Every effort should be made to protect mature trees.

A few curves in the plan and/or a more thoughtful approach to planning sidewalks should certainly allow for preserving most of these trees.

I have been corresponding with Keera Wang, the project manager for this part of the project, who has been kind enough to answer my questions, but has not provided a reason why the sidewalk could not be designed to accommodate these trees or how many trees are being lost in this project altogether.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

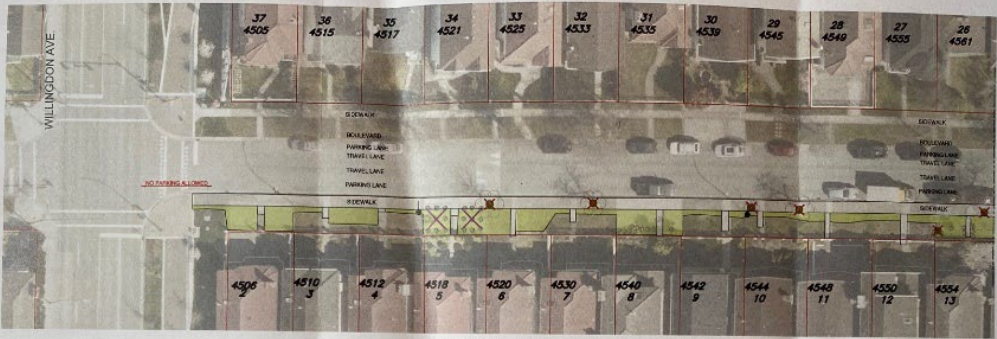
Sincerely

Kate

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Kate McMahon (she/her)

[REDACTED]
Living and working in the ancestral territories of the hən̓q̓əmi̓ñəm̓ and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh speaking peoples



UNION STREET
PLAN
SCALE 1:500

TREES REMOVED = 6
TREES PLANTED = 0

D.L. 122



UNION STREET
PLAN
SCALE 1:500

TREES REMOVED = 9
TREES PLANTED = 0

D.L. 122

- LEGEND
- TREE TO BE REPLACED
 - ✕ TREE TO BE REMOVED
 - ✕ EXISTING TREE TO BE PRESERVED
 - TREE TO BE PLANTED
 - STREET LIGHT POLE
 - WARDEN
 - CONCRETE CURB & GULLY
 - TYPICAL MANHOLE
 - EXISTING CURB & GULLY
 - EXISTING MANHOLE
 - PROPERTY LINE



NO.	REVISION	DATE	BY	CHKD.
1	ISSUED FOR PUBLIC REVIEW	11/20/17	JK	JK
2	ISSUED FOR NOTIFICATION LETTER	02/09/18	JK	JK



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

UNION STREET



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (2020-14)

SLIP	NO.	DATE	BY	CHKD.
1	1-20	11/20/17	JK	JK
2	1-20	02/09/18	JK	JK

8022-01