



Report to Council

From the Office of Councillor Amy Lubik

Date: February 18, 2021

Subject: Union of British Columbia Municipalities and Lower Mainland Local Government Association Resolution Requesting Enabling Legislation for Municipalities to Have the Ability to Require Green Roofs

Purpose

To propose a resolution regarding providing enabling legislation for local governments to require green roofs where they may see it to be an important component of resilience planning for 2021 Lower Mainland Local Government Association and Union of British Columbia Municipalities Consideration.

Recommendation

THAT the following resolution regarding requesting enabling legislation for municipalities to have the ability to require green roofs be endorsed by the City of Port Moody and forwarded for consideration at the 2021 Lower Mainland Local Government Association and subsequent Union of British Columbia Municipalities convention as recommended in the report dated February 18, 2021 from Councillor Amy Lubik regarding Union of British Columbia Municipalities and Lower Mainland Local Government Association Resolution Requesting Enabling Legislation for Municipalities to Have the Ability to Require Green Roofs:

WHEREAS Green roofs serve multiple societal goals, including improved stormwater management, better regulation of building temperatures, reduced urban heat island effects, and increased urban wildlife habitat and biodiversity;

AND WHEREAS currently the *Local Government Act (LGA)* allows a local government to require landscaping under section 527 and to control runoff under section 523, but the *LGA* and *Community Charter* do not empower local governments to require and enforce the related building standard of construction (prohibited under the *Building Act*) or require and enforce maintenance of green roofs, including with security requirements;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT UBCM request that the Province amend the *Local Government Act* to provide enabling legislation for local governments, should they choose to do so, to expressly require green roofs and enforce the related building standard of construction and maintenance of green roofs, including with security requirements.

Background

Port Moody has proven to be a leader in climate and environmental advocacy and has supported many resolutions to support climate and environmental resilience to Provincial and Federal bodies. There are many benefits to incorporating green roofs into municipal planning^{1 2}. As we work towards a climate action plan at the same time as contemplating large developments, we will need to have all the tools we possibly can to ensure resilience and avoid creating urban heat islands or areas that lack green cover. Currently Port Moody has been successful in creating some green roofs, but we have had push back in other developments. Many communities face the same issues though it is important to realize that we all come from different contexts and we need to respect the different circumstances we face; however, we should all have access to as many tools as possible.

Issue:

Local governments in B.C. do not have the power to require and enforce the related building standard of construction (prohibited under the Building Act) or to require and enforce maintenance of green roofs, including with security requirements.

Our ask to BC Government through UBCM and LMLGA:

To amend the Local Government Act to empower governments to require and enforce the related building standard of construction (prohibited under the Building Act) or to require and enforce maintenance of green roofs, including with security requirements, should they choose to do so.

Discussion

Environmental benefits:

- The trees and plants on green roofs use shade and evapotranspiration to reduce temperatures on the roof surface, which in turn, reduces temperatures of the surrounding air and reduces the urban heat island effect.
- Green roofs improve the regulation of building temperatures, thus they decrease the need for energy use. In particular, this reduces the need for cooling technologies, which reduces emissions.
- Green roofs and photovoltaic panels have been shown to be complimentary technologies which enhance each other's performance.
- With moderated urban air temperature and building temperatures, there is a reduced need for technological systems to moderate these, and thus reduced air pollution.
- The vegetation on green roofs positively impacts air pollutants through photosynthesis.

Biodiversity benefits:

- Green roofs contribute to increased urban wildlife habitat and biodiversity.
- In particular, these can act as a wildlife corridor to connect habitats of mobile species. Green roofs can be designed to specifically cater to pollinators.

Economic benefits:

¹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339366455_Wellbeing_Green_Roofs_Vertical_Gardens

² http://www.growinggreenguide.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/growing_green_guide_ebook_130214.pdf

- With improved building temperature regulation, there is a reduced cost to owners and occupants associated with cooling buildings.
- While the upfront costs of green roofs are higher due to increased labour and materials; however cities with green roof bylaws for longer periods have been able to significantly reduce upfront costs.
- Green roofs reduce the exposure of roof waterproofing membranes to large temperature fluctuations, and green roof lifespans have been recorded between 30 and 75 years. This can be compared to a conventional roof lifespan of 15 to 20 years.
- Green roofs also create local jobs in design, construction, maintenance and product supply.

Human health:

- Green roofs provide an excellent green space which can operate as a variety of different functions.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of access to green space, particularly in urban neighbourhoods.
- Green roofs also improve health through the availability of a natural view which has been found to decrease job stress, ailments, and the number of sick days taken by employees.
- Green roofs can serve as community hubs, increasing social cohesion, sense of community, and public safety.

Last year there was concern regarding a similar motion at UBCM that the ask was to require green roofs unilaterally. Some councillors, including the resolution sponsors, tried to clarify that the intent was to enable, not mandate; however, the motion failed, though the vote was close. This motion follows that vein with specific clarification that we are asking for enabling legislation should councils wish to use it.

Other Option(s)

THAT the report dated February 18, 2021 from Councillor Amy Lubik regarding Resolution for Lower Mainland Local Government Association and Union of British Columbia Municipalities Consideration Requesting Enabling Legislation For Municipalities To Have The Ability To Require Green Roofs be received for information.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

There are no communications and civic engagement initiatives associated with this report.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

In submitting a resolution to LMLGA and UBCM, Council's strategic plan objectives are met by demonstrating dedication to:

- The health and wellness needs of residents;
- Climate Action
- Courage to lead and embrace new ideas.