



Memo to Council

Date: February 13, 2024
Subject: Advocacy: Incorporating Tree Canopy and Climate Goals into Housing Action –
Motion Served by Councillors Amy Lubik and Kyla Knowles

Motion Served

Notice of the following motion was provided at the January 9, 2024, Regular Council meeting:

THAT the following resolution regarding Advocacy: Incorporation of Tree Canopy Targets and Climate Goals into Bill 44 be submitted to the 2024 LMLGA and UBCM conventions, and that staff be directed to forward copies to the Provincial Ministers involved in housing, municipal affairs, and Climate Change and Environment and the Union of BC Municipalities, as recommended by the report dated February 13, 2024 from Councillors Amy Lubik and Kyla Knowles:

WHEREAS on the province of BC, along with the rest of the world, is experiencing increasing incidents of extreme weather, including deadly heat waves which are intensified by the urban heat island effect and lack of neighbourhood greenness; and

AND WHEREAS the Province has committed to addressing climate risk mitigation and adaptation at the same time as providing needed housing but may not be foreseeing potential negative consequences that can be ameliorated;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the BC Government will revise Bill 44 to embed tree protection, tree canopy expansion, and climate resilience into the policy or ensure local governments retain clear authority to:

- **protect mature trees and tree canopy in residential neighbourhoods and;**
- **implement locally developed Climate Action Plans.**

Background

BC is in an affordable housing crisis. At the same time, we are also in a climate and ecological crisis. Government intervention on housing is needed, whether all parties involved agree on how. However, we are concerned that Bill 44 could have unanticipated negative consequences for the health and livability of our communities. We are specifically concerned about the retention of mature trees and a healthy Urban Forest in our neighbourhoods.

A healthy Urban Forest provides valuable ecological services, will help us manage effects of a rapidly-changing climate and is critical to both our physical and mental well-being. Recently, we witnessed the importance to communities of local Urban Forests during the height of the recent pandemic, as well as during the unprecedented ‘heat dome’. In fact, the BC Coroner’s Death Panel Review showed that people living in neighbours with a lot green were protected during the heat dome. Further, increase, not decrease of permeable surfaces and green infrastructure during increasing atmospheric rivers is needed to help prevent flooding.

Many local governments, including Port Moody, have invested significant resources into developing local Urban Forest Management Strategies, Tree Bylaws, and Climate Action Plans. In the case of Port Moody, we are in the process of developing some ambitious tree protection and expansion policies.

Bill 44, and any other housing bill will need to ensure not just that there is housing, but that neighbourhoods are healthy and provide green spaces and trees which help people connect to their neighbours, provide a sense of community, and also protect from extreme weather events. This legislation needs to allow for local policies to ensure that development will be done in a way that adequately supports climate-resilient communities or healthy urban forests in our residential neighbourhoods.

We urge the BC government to include the above provisions in the coming legislation and consult with climate and urban forestry experts in the drafting this legislation.

Requested Timeline

<u>Level</u>	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Staff Turnaround Time</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulatory or interjurisdictional requirements Major and immediate risk and/or financial impact 	< 3 months
<input type="checkbox"/> Time-sensitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant impact to the community Significant financial impact 	3-6 months
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-urgent	All other work	< 12 months
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

Council Strategic Plan Alignment

This motion aligns with the following Council Strategic Plan Goal(s):

- Create complete and connected communities through balanced growth;
- Implement Protect, integrate and enhance our natural assets;
- Enhance the City’s green infrastructure Strengthen the City’s urban forest;

- Advance climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Prioritize implementation of climate action initiatives; and
- Plan for extreme weather, coastal flooding, and sea level rise.

Corporate Project Plan Alignment

This motion aligns with the following Corporate Project(s):

- Urban Forest Management.

Council Options

The following responses are available for Council consideration:

1. Receive for information.
2. Refer to staff to bring back a report (staff will determine if the nature of the work warrants a project proposal or a staff report, and will include considerations with respect to feasibility, resources, timeline, strategic plan alignment, and legislative analysis).
3. Other.