



FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLIC RELEASE

March 28, 2024

An Open Letter to the City of Edmonton in Response to Communications Received March 13, 2024: "CIRCULATION: Zoning Bylaw Text Amendment to Minimum Tree Requirements for Small Scale Residential Developments"

Dear City of Edmonton Zoning Bylaw Team,

On March 13, 2024 the President of Highlands Community League received email correspondence from a Team Member from the Zoning Bylaw Development Services Team relating to "CIRCULATION: Zoning Bylaw Text Amendment to Minimum Tree Requirements for Small Scale Residential Developments". This correspondence included the following documents, requesting review and feedback by April 3, 2024 – a three week window:

1. *Minimum Tree Requirements for Small Scale Residential Development- Markup and Rationale*
2. *DRAFT REPORT - BYLAW 20775 Zoning Bylaw Text Amendment to Minimum Tree Requirements for Small Scale Residential Development*
3. *Attachment 1: Modelling for Minimum Tree Requirements*

The Highlands Community League is writing to express deep concern with the approach to Phase 4 of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal. We understand this feedback request is the first of many to come. Our concerns are as follows:

1. **Clarity and Direction:**
We note a lack of clear direction regarding the expectations for the information provided. Specifically, we seek clarification on the intended recipients of the materials, the type of feedback solicited, and the extent to which such feedback can influence the current Phase of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal process.
2. **Timelines for Review:**
We express our concern regarding the absence of a reasonable timeline provided for the review of the materials. An expanded timeline would allow for thorough consideration and meaningful input.
3. **Information Dissemination:**
There is ambiguity concerning the role of our Community League in disseminating the information to our members and the broader community. Clear guidelines on how this information should be shared would facilitate effective communication.



4. **Engagement Opportunities:**

We advocate for the inclusion of workshops, working sessions, and public engagement opportunities to navigate the highly technical materials provided. Such interactive sessions would enhance understanding and foster constructive dialogue.

As a stakeholder deeply invested in our community's well-being, we recognize the significance of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal process and its long-term implications. However, we must emphasize that our League, like many others, operates entirely on volunteer efforts. Since the initiation of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal in 2018, we have experienced turnover in Board Members.

Moreover, recognizing the significant interest and engagement of our community members in the Zoning Bylaw Renewal, we are committed to reflecting community perspectives and urging the city to ensure that citizens are given ample opportunities to voice their opinions. We seek a deeper understanding of how this proposed approach facilitates meaningful citizen participation in decision-making processes.

We are writing to bring attention to the challenges posed by the current approach to engagement. Specifically, requesting a review of a bylaw amendment within a three-week window, which does not align with our monthly Board meetings, presents a significant obstacle. This timeframe, coupled with a lack of support, direction, engagement opportunities, and meaningful discussions, creates an unreasonable demand on our volunteer-led organization.

We strongly believe that meaningful engagement requires sufficient time, resources, and support. Therefore, we respectfully request a more inclusive and accommodating approach that considers the constraints faced by volunteer-based entities like ours. This could include extending the review period, providing clear guidance and resources, providing a pathway for our community members to engage in this process, and offering opportunities for dialogue and collaboration.

By addressing these concerns and fostering a collaborative environment, we can ensure that the Zoning Bylaw Renewal process is conducted in a manner that is transparent, equitable, and beneficial for all stakeholders involved.

Thank you for considering our perspective and for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Highlands Community League

CC:

Ashley Salvador, Councillor – Ward Metis

Laura Cunningham-Shpeley, Executive Director – Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues

Stacey Leach – Neighbourhood Resource Coordinator, Highlands

Zoning Bylaw Team- zoningbylawrenewal@edmonton.ca