

RESIDENTIAL STREET DESIGN POLICY – 3 YEAR UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the third update on the implementation and effectiveness of the Residential Street Design Policy since its approval by Council in November 2012. Council's direction in December 2013 directed Administration (Parks and Growth Management, previously called Urban Development) to continue to meet with the Urban Development Institute (UDI) and resolved two outstanding issues related to Public Tree Final Acceptance Certification (FAC) through revisions of the development agreement conditions in 2014, and transitional issues (transitioning from old to new street design standard).

There has been progress made with implementation of the policy in terms of more and wider sidewalks, public tree planting, more efficient use of land due to a narrower utility easement and solutions to the Public Tree Final Acceptance Certification process and transitional issues. Administration has tracked sidewalk and tree inventory since the policy was approved. Though a substantial amount of sidewalk has been built, not many public trees (approximately 100) have been planted. It is still too soon to provide a full report on the effectiveness of the policy until more public trees have been planted and turned over to the City to maintain. In the next few years, planting of over **5,000** additional public trees is expected. (See Attachment 1).

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit recommend that Council:

1. Receive this Report for information.
2. Direct Administration to report back to the SPC on Transportation and Transit no later than November 2017 on the implementation and effectiveness of the Residential Street Design Policy as part of the Complete Streets Policy Update.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT, DATED 2015 NOVEMBER 18:

That the Administration Recommendations contained in Report TT2015-0686 be approved.

Excerpt from the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the SPC on Transportation and Transit, held 2015 November 18:

"CLERICAL CORRECTIONS

At the request of the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chair, clerical corrections were noted in Report TT2015-0686 as follows:

- on Page 1 of 6, under the Executive Summary, second paragraph, last sentence, by deleting the amount "1,100" following the words "In the next few years, planting of over" and by substituting the amount "5,000"; and

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- on Page 5 of 6 under Number 2, last sentence, by adding the words “These phases in addition to the” prior to the words “the remaining 61 phases” and by deleting the amount “1,120” following the words “will introduce another” and by substituting the amount “5,000”.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

There were three previous reports to Council regarding the Residential Street Design Policy. (Refer to Attachment 2: Timeline)

In the first report, Council adopted the following recommendations of Report TT2012-0322 at its 2012 November 05 Meeting:

1. Approve the Residential Street Design Policy;
2. Direct Administration (Growth Management) to commence negotiations with Urban Development Institute (UDI) to:
 - a. Implement the policy, and
 - b. Work on revised development agreement conditions regarding integration, timing, construction, inspection, and final acceptance of public sidewalks, low impact development, and public trees and direct Administration to report back through the SPC on Transportation and Transit no later than 2013 April.
3. Direct Administration to evaluate if, the intent of the policy is being realized through development submissions and their review, and report back to Council no later than October 2015.
4. Direct Administration to determine the City’s minimum obligation, with respect to utility easement, with the objective of finding a means to end Calgary’s much wider than average easements, and report back with options to amend the utility easements at the 2013 April meeting of the SPC on Transportation and Transit.

In response to recommendation 4 above, a second report (TT2013-0226) was delivered to Council at its 2013 May 25 meeting. With the support of the Urban Development Institute (UDI) and the shallow utility consortium, the utility easement was reduced from a width of 3.5 metres width to 2.4 metres. As recommendation 2b above had not been resolved at that time, Council adopted these recommendations:

2. Direct Administration to continue monthly working group meetings with UDI to:
 - a. Implement the Policy, and
 - b. Work on revised development agreement conditions regarding integration, timing, construction, inspection, and final acceptable of public sidewalks, low impact development, and public trees

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3. Direct Administration to report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit with a further update no later than 2013 December.

In response to recommendation 3 above, a third report (TT2013-0793) was delivered to Council at its 2014 January 13 meeting. While most issues (previous recommendation 2.b.) had been resolved, two outstanding issues remained. To resolve these issues, Council adopted this recommendation:

2. Direct Administration to finalize the two outstanding issues (Public Tree Final Acceptance Certification and Transitional Designs) with incorporation into the 2014 UDI standard development negotiations.

Finally, this report (TT2015-0686) is in response to recommendation 3 of the first report to Council and recommendation 2 above to provide an update on the implementation and effectiveness of the Residential Street Design Policy.

BACKGROUND

Council unanimously approved the Residential Street Design Policy (Attachment 3) on 2012 November 05. The Policy improves community liveability by increasing the quantity and variety of street trees and improving pedestrian facilities along residential streets in new communities while providing the development industry flexibility in the housing product they choose to build.

At Council's direction in November 2012, a "Technical Issues" Working Group was formed in early 2013 with City of Calgary staff (Parks, Growth Management, Utility Line Assignment, Roads) and UDI representation. The group met twice in 2013 (January 30, and March 12) to discuss a number of policy implementation related issues. Most implementation issues, such as timing of the enforcement of the Policy, an escalation process when there is disagreement, reduction of the 2-year maintenance period for sidewalks, public tree requirements including soil volume, tree quantities, and tree species were resolved at that time.

At Council's direction in May 2013, Administration continued to work with UDI and the Shallow Utility Consortium. The Working Group met on three occasions in 2013 (May 16, August 14, and November 05), where most implementation issues such as Urban Forestry requirements and resolution around transitions and Shallow utility location details were resolved with the affected stakeholders. However, public trees FAC process and transitional designs related issues were still outstanding and were not resolved at that time.

A separate Working Group was formed in early 2013 with City of Calgary staff (Parks, Growth Management, Utility Line Assignment, Roads) and the Shallow Utility Consortium (Shaw, TELUS, ATCO, Enmax Power Corporation, Enmax Power Services Corporation) to discuss a reduced utility easement width. The group was able to reduce the existing 3.5 metres shallow utility easement to 2.4 metres, except for Residential Entrance Street which requires 3.0 metres utility easement width to accommodate wider trench for larger diameter utility pipes. The redesigned utility easement satisfied the requirements of all stakeholders. There have been no reported increased costs associated with utility installation since the policy has been in effect,

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however the shallow utility consortium does have concerns about the potential increased costs to access utilities in the future within the reduced easement width adjacent to public trees.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

The focus of this report, per Council's direction is:

1. Update two outstanding issues;
 - a. Public Trees FAC Process
 - b. Transitional Designs
2. A three-year update on the implementation and effectiveness of the Residential Street Design Policy since its approval by Council in November 2012.

1a. Public Trees FAC process:

In December 2013, Council also approved recommendations to continue dialogue between Parks, Growth Management and UDI to finalize the two outstanding issues (See Recommendation # 2, TT2013-0793 above). Administration (Parks) continued to work with UDI to resolve the outstanding issue related to Public Tree FAC. To resolve these issues around the public tree approval process, a UDI Industry Bulletin for a CCC/ FAC procedure was developed (see Attachment 4). The following terms have been agreed to between UDI and Parks:

- A separate Construction Completion Certification (CCC)/ FAC will be processed for residential street tree planting behind a curb and gutter, or monolithic sidewalk. All other trees within the phase will be CCC/ FAC as per current guidelines.
- Line assignment drawings will identify trees to be planted behind curb and gutter or monolithic sidewalk to be included in the separate CCC/ FAC.
- When 70% of the buildings are complete (ready for occupancy) within the separate CCC/ FAC area, with trees planted as required, the developer may submit for a CCC.
- During the maintenance period, the developer will continue to plant trees as buildings are completed. Upon expiration of the maintenance period and subject to 100% of the trees being planted, and 85% of the buildings completed, the developer may submit for FAC.
- All other specifications and guidelines related to tree planting apply.

Some minor issues between Parks and the development industry related to FAC remain. However, Administration (Parks) and the development industry will continue to work towards the satisfactory resolution of these issues.

1b. Transitional Designs:

Administration has been working with the development industry on a case by case basis to resolve transitional designs issues. There have been a few examples of successful transitioning from old to new design standards. Most transitions occurred at logical locations (typically at nearest intersection, 90 degree corner).

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2. A Three-year update on the implementation and effectiveness of the Residential Street Design Policy:

Administration (Parks, Planning and Transportation Planning) tracked the Subdivision Plans that were submitted since the policy has been in effect. A total of 79 Subdivision Plans in mostly new communities involving new street design standards have been submitted to date. CCC has been issued to 18 subdivision phases to date. Over 8 km of the new residential street standard has been constructed and over 100 trees have been planted in those 18 phases (See photos in Attachment 5). **These phases in addition to the** remaining 61 phases, still at early stages of the development, will introduce another **5,000** public trees to these communities (See Attachment 1).

Shallows utilities have been installed successfully in reduced utility easement width on several locations, there have not any issues or concerns been raised from utility companies. There may be some increased costs related to long term operations for shallow utilities.

In summary;

- New residential street design standards are being implemented, with over 8 km of the new residential street standards has been constructed.
- Approximately 100 trees have been planted, and many more to come as development continues.
- Public trees FAC process issue has been resolved. A revised CCC/FAC procedure has been developed.
- Shallow utilities are being installed successfully in reduced utility easement width. Potential lifecycle and maintenance costs for shallow utilities have not been determined.
- Transitioning from old to new design standards have been successfully implemented on cases by case basis.

Some custom residential street design submissions have been received since the Policy went into effect. These have created complexity and considerable administrative time to review and approve. For these reasons, custom residential street designs are not recommended, unless warranted for unique projects.

Strategic Alignment

This report supports the implementation of the 2012 November 05 Council approved Residential Street Design Policy (TP0018) which supports the Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP) and Council priorities # 2 and # 3 “A City of Inspiring Neighborhoods” and “A Healthy and Green City”

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

There have been no reported increased costs associated with utility installation since the policy has been in effect, however the shallow utility consortium does have concerns about the potential increased costs to access utilities in the future within the reduced easement width adjacent to public trees.

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Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

Current and future capital budgets are not impacted by the report. However, additional operating budget will be required for Parks for the lifecycle/maintenance of more public trees.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

None

Risk Assessment

None

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

There has been progress made with implementation of the policy in terms of more and wider sidewalks, more efficient use of land due to a narrower utility easement and solutions to transitionary issues and Final Acceptance Certification processes. However, it is still too soon to provide a full report on the effectiveness of the policy until more public trees have been planted and turned over to the City to maintain.

For this reason, it is recommended that Administration report back on the effectiveness of public street tree implementation, as part of the Complete Streets Policy Update, no later than November 2017.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Sidewalk and Tree Planting Inventory
2. Reports Timeline – Residential Street Design Policy
3. Residential Street Design Policy
4. UDI Industry Bulletin – Revised CCC/FAC Procedure
5. Community Photos