



## ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

### Zoning Bylaw Comprehensive Review Project *Proposed Amendments to Landscaping Provisions (Appendix 2)*

#### **Description**

A review of landscaping provisions was undertaken to address feedback and concerns raised by stakeholders during the information-gathering phase of the Zoning Bylaw Comprehensive Review Project.

#### **Using What We Learn**

Stakeholders offered valuable feedback which is included in this report. Feedback provided by stakeholders helped to frame discussion and did influence some of the proposed amendments going forward.

#### **Scope of the Review**

During the initial phase of the Zoning Bylaw Review, project-scoping workshops were held with stakeholders. During these workshops, stakeholders provided recommendations on what should be reviewed specific to landscaping. These recommendations included:

- Concerns raised about the cost of water. More energy efficient materials and alternative options should be considered, including xeriscaping and storm water retention.
- Consider allowing the use of alternative materials (e.g., aggregate rock material, decorative boulders, rubber mulch).
- Add more flexibility to landscaping requirements.
- Define the relationship between the Zoning Bylaw and Landscape Guidelines including adopting specific guidelines into the Zoning Bylaw (e.g., hard/soft landscaping requirement, standards for wood mulch, use of artificial turf in industrial areas, shrubs used in lieu of trees) to remove inconsistencies and redundancies.
- Clarify intent of the tree planting requirement (ratio / spacing).
- Concerns regarding healthy tree growth for new infill developments (e.g., issues with lack of spacing, lack of sunlight).
- Review definitions for landscaping.
- Consistency with other city standards, policies and bylaws.
- Growing season in Zoning Bylaw is different than that of the City of Saskatoon Parks Department.
- Look at options for non-conforming sites with concrete and limited area to landscape and meet soft landscaping requirements (e.g., permanent planter boxes).

- Address issues for developments with site constraints (e.g., on site conflicts between utility easements and required landscaped strip).
- Have a Saskatchewan Association of Landscape Architects member sign-off on landscaping plans.

## What We Did

Who we had conversations with	How we gathered input
Internal City Stakeholders (Planning and Development, Community Standards, Parks, Transportation, Saskatoon Water, Solicitors, Communications and Engagement)	Relevant internal Departments were contacted for review and comment for proposed amendments. No comments were received that would preclude these amendments from proceeding.
Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association (SRHBA)	Information about topics being considered for the review of landscaping was shared with the Builders Industry Liaison Committee on August 18, 2021, and the Certified Builders Group on September 23, 2021.
The North Saskatoon Business Association (NSBA)	Detailed information was shared with the NSBA at a virtual meeting on September 15, 2021.
RMTN/RMTN1 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	Detailed information was shared with the RMTN/RMTN1 Technical Advisory Committee at a virtual meeting on August 12, 2021.
Targeted Stakeholders (Landscape Architects, Planners, Developers, Designers)	Detailed information was shared with targeted stakeholders at a virtual session on September 28, 2021. Approximately sixty stakeholders were invited to the session through an e-invite. The e-invite also included information about the proposed landscaping amendments. Two stakeholders attended, both of which were Landscape Architects. An additional session was held on October 7, 2021 for two stakeholders who were not able to attend the first session.
General Public	<p>Using two approaches for soliciting input (Insightrix and the Community Advisory Panel), a survey was undertaken in Spring 2021 to ask residents from greenfield neighbourhoods their perspectives on alternative landscaping options such as xeriscaping vs trees and shrubs only.</p> <p>Information was provided on the Zoning Bylaw Review Engage Page starting on October 4, 2021. Visitors to the website were able to provide a comment on the Engage Page. Contact information for the Project Team was also included on the Engage Page. Promotion of the information on the website was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NSBA and the SRHBA were advised of the information on the Engage Page on October 4, 2021.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the Engage Page was shared with Community Associations via the Community Consultants the week of October 11, 2021.</li> <li>• An e-newsletter was used to promote the information on October 6, 2021.</li> <li>• Twitter and Facebook were used to promote the information on October 6, 2021 and October 21, 2021.</li> </ul>
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**What We Heard – Survey Results**

Using two methods for soliciting input (Insightrix and the Community Advisory Panel), a survey was undertaken in Spring 2021 to ask residents from greenfield neighbourhoods their perspectives on various topics including alternative landscaping options. Survey results for alternative landscaping are included below. Complete survey results can be found [here](#).

We organized what we heard into the summary below. Note: The language below is not verbatim from comments provided by stakeholders.

Survey respondents were asked their landscaping preference for commercial, industrial, mixed use and higher density development.

- 30% of Insightrix and 40% of the Community Advisory Panel respondents preferred trees/shrubs only. Reasons were:
  - Preference / other options do not look nice;
  - Trees add character / fits in better / uniformity;
  - There aren't enough trees;
  - Better option for our climate / other options not appropriate for Saskatoon;
  - Environmental / health benefit; and
  - Provides for a quality of life.
- Closer to 50% of respondents for both surveys preferred allowing other options such as xeriscaping. Reasons were:
  - Provides options for neighbourhoods / creativity / variety / diversity;
  - Environmentally friendly / natural;
  - Should be personal choice;
  - Less maintenance;
  - Reduces watering needs; and
  - Preference for no trees.

**What We Heard**

We organized what we heard into themes and summaries below. Note: The language below is not verbatim from comments provided by stakeholders.

Theme	Summarized Comments	Response
Artificial Turf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May see the use of artificial turf increase over time as the product evolves (e.g.,</li> </ul>	Administration is proposing artificial turf only in industrial areas, consistent with the

Theme	Summarized Comments	Response
	<p>rainwater harvesting, value in commercial areas, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The product needs to act appropriately in terms of water retention. May require technical requirements.</li> </ul>	<p>current approach. It is not proposed in other districts for sustainability reasons (e.g., heat island effect).</p>
Tree Caliper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce size of tree caliper as there is currently a supply shortage (due to Covid) and smaller caliper can grow faster.</li> </ul>	<p>No change is proposed as the current tree caliper requirement is intended to meet the intent of landscaping immediately once construction and landscape development are completed.</p>
Fence Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider a relaxation of fence height.</li> </ul>	<p>Review of fence heights not in scope of the landscaping review. Comments will be considered with future amendment packages.</p>
Flexibility for Site Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexibility welcome to assist in addressing site constraints. Support for options (e.g., planting in the boulevard if approved by Parks, somewhere else on the site, etc.).</li> <li>Challenging to meet the requirements for utilities and landscaping (e.g., tree requirements) and other site constraints.</li> <li>Language needs to shift to consider landscaping as part of the infrastructure, rather than an aesthetic aspect.</li> </ul>	<p>Administration is developing options to provide flexibility for situations with site constraints. Any amendments to the Zoning Bylaw would be managed in future amendment packages.</p>
Alternative Landscaping Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed options are appropriate and need to be allowed for.</li> <li>Expansion from current status quo of “this has to be grass” makes sense.</li> <li>Developers will likely only use rain garden option if they can use it to offset storm water calculations.</li> </ul>	<p>Proposed amendments provide for alternative landscaping options including xeriscaping, rain gardens and bioswales. Alternative landscaping options are in line with the City’s Low Impact Development Guidelines.</p>
Required Number of Tree Plantings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The regulation that prescribes the number of tree plantings is intended to be a ratio, not spacing and often is taken as a spacing.</li> <li>Tree species should have different spacing requirements.</li> </ul>	<p>It is proposed this section of the Zoning Bylaw be amended to clarify the required number of trees is a ratio. Landscape Guidelines will provide information on spacing for tree species.</p>
Landscaping Requirements in Industrial Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation to remove landscaping requirements in industrial areas as the space is better used for parking. Landscaping requirements are expensive and onerous, and it is not necessary for industrial areas.</li> </ul>	<p>Administration is not recommending the removal of required landscaping in industrial areas. City Council may provide direction to Administration should City</p>

Theme	Summarized Comments	Response
		<p>Council wish Administration to review this option.</p> <p>Alternative landscaping options have been included in the proposed amendments to provide flexibility in how landscaping is applied to a development site.</p> <p>Also included in the proposed amendments is additional flexibility for non-conforming sites in Established Neighbourhoods, the C.N. Industrial Area and the Airport Business Area (e.g., change of use, additions) to allow for the landscaping requirements on these sites to be reduced and be consistent with nearby properties. Administration is proposing to allow for the use of permanent planter boxes.</p>
Maintenance of Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure landscaping requirements are met for the long-term and the survival of vegetation.</li> </ul>	<p>The Zoning Bylaw has requirements that all required and approved landscaping be maintained at all times.</p> <p>Administration is not proposing amendments to this section of the bylaw.</p>

### What Went Well

- Working with industry and targeted stakeholders with experience specific to landscape development provided insight into their perspectives on the current regulations.
- Trying different engagement tactics such as workshops to gain feedback.
- Working to make our engagement report more accessible.

### What We Can Do Better

- Engaging virtually, because of COVID-19, made it difficult to follow best practices for inclusive, accessible engagement.

### What's Next

- Additional amendments to the Zoning Bylaw will be brought forward in future amendment packages or through separate topic-specific reports.