

From: Sharon MacGougan, President, Garden City Conservation Society  
To: Special Planning Committee, November 17, 2021  
Re: Increase of maximum fines for Tree Protection Bylaw 8057

The Garden City Conservation Society strongly supports increasing fines for the illegal cutting of trees from the current \$10, 000 to \$50,000.

We lose too many mature trees in Richmond, through a variety of means, including illegal tree cutting.

City staff work hard to protect trees through the development process and it is particularly discouraging when those "protected" trees, the ones that are healthy and provide good habitat for birds, end up "disappearing" through the actions of either a misinformed owner or someone that just doesn't like trees.

\$10,000 does not make up for the loss of a decades old tree.

Increasing penalties provides more incentive to keep that tree. But even an increased penalty is not enough to solve the problem.

Further comments and recommendations:

1. Increase public education. A notice in the newspaper or online once or twice a year is not enough.
2. Signage is effective. The current "Stop all Tree Work" signage left in place means something. It draws attention to the problem and people read them. Signage could be also helpful on boulevard trees when excessive pruning or topping (not by city) takes place.
3. Working to protect trees takes time for investigation and follow up. Do we have adequate Tree Protection staff in Richmond, given that our population continues to grow?

More proactive work needs to be done to protect trees from being illegally cut in the first place. Trees take decades to grow and the loss is significant. If we are serious about not allowing the illegal cutting of trees, we need to take strong action: increase penalties, increase public education and give our Tree Protection department all the resources they need to do their job.

In conclusion, it is heartbreaking when mature trees are illegally cut. Let's do whatever we can to stop it from happening. Increasing penalties is a good first step.



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