

5740 Lancing Road
Richmond, B.C. V7C 3A1

April 6, 2006

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

Re: Tree Protection Bylaw 8014 and Proposed Bylaw 8057

I have attended two General Purposes Committee meetings regarding a revised tree protection bylaw and offer the following comments:

1. The bylaw amounts to regulation of large trees. People who become aware of its implications will realize the potential negative aspects of a large tree on their property, and this will discourage the growth of large trees.
2. As Richmond continues to grow and become more dense, it is impossible to save large trees that were once out in the open, but are now in an inconvenient location for development. I do not expect that this bylaw will ever be used to prevent redevelopment just to save a tree.
3. With no grandfather clause to exclude current homeowners, this bylaw penalizes those property owners who suddenly find themselves saddled with numerous large trees for which permits, and their associated costs, will have to be required in order to have them removed or significantly pruned.
4. This bylaw does nothing to promote responsible stewardship of large trees. It does not address property owners that plant large trees in such a way that they impact their neighbours through overhanging branches, root systems that extend beyond their fence, block out sunlight, and drip onto a car.
5. In the future, Council will have to deal with owners that wish to appeal the results of a permit application with which they disagree.

The cost to administer the permit application process is estimated at \$250,000, and growing. I do not agree with the City spending this kind of money to regulate large trees. As I see it, growth requires development, and development often requires the removal of trees. Any additional costs borne by the developer will only be passed on to the buyer, making it even more difficult for young families to afford a place to live in Richmond.

Some years ago, there was a major development along Langtree Avenue with many new houses. I remember looking down that street and noticing how barren it was. But you couldn't say that today. The street is filled with vegetation of all types. It took time, but the owners along that street made it what it is today, warm and inviting. I believe today's owners will behave the same way, and over time will add vegetation suitable to the higher density in which they find themselves.

In accepting this bylaw, Council is missing a golden opportunity to show just how progressive Richmond can be by being proactive towards the growth of new vegetation. Instead of alienating homeowners with regulations, restrictions, bureaucracy and frustration, use the funds to promote the responsible growth of new trees that will continue to make Richmond a wonderful place to live, well into the future. I urge you not to adopt the proposed bylaw, and to replace the current bylaw with one that is proactive and encourages new trees deemed suitable by property owners.

With respect,
Stan Gray