



July 21st, 2022

To: Mayor Gondek, Councillor Terry Wong, and Calgary City Manager,

We are writing this letter to convey our strong commitment as a community to the protection of our urban forest. In Crescent Heights, our trees are a part of the character, history and beauty of our inner-city community - and they are an integral part of the foundation that we need to rely on in our city to help support our fight against climate change. The protection of our urban forest is identified as one of our community vision priorities as presented to Ward 7 this past March.

Our trees make our urban community environment livable. They provide us with beauty and energy-saving shade; they calm traffic; they take massive amounts of carbon dioxide out of the air and sequester it as carbon in their wood; their canopies slow down stormwater runoff, which takes the strain from expensive municipal drainage systems; and they provide food and shelter for wildlife.

We strongly request that our trees be protected, maintained, and enhanced. We request that the trees on our boulevards and public spaces take priority over public utilities – we believe that public utilities should be designated to our laneways and carriageways and should not interfere with the replacement /planting of the trees on our boulevards and public spaces.

We want to ensure that our mature trees on public spaces be protected from private and commercial development – from being damaged or even removed to accommodate new development and private utilities.

We were very disappointed to learn that the City recently gave permission to a private developer to remove one of the mature trees in our community situated on the public boulevard. We believe strongly that every other option should have been explored, regardless of expense, before removing one of the mature trees from our urban forest – including denying the development.

We also need to be focused on preserving our mature trees and consider strategies such as a staggered planting system before they need to be replaced so that we are never without the canopy of mature trees lining our urban streets.

We need our old growth. By its simple nature, a tree offers compounding benefits as it grows and ages. As it ages, and grows in size, the mature growth sequesters more and more carbon, intercepts more sun light, and gives an ever-expanding amount of space for people and animals to live and play.

Calgary's tree coverage is currently at 8.25%, this includes trees planted on both public and private property. From what we understand the City is working to grow and expand our tree canopy coverage to 16%. It is counterproductive to this goal and our City's goal to combat climate change if we continue to remove the mature trees from our urban forest and deny planting opportunities to prioritize utilities.

We are asking that the City confirm for us their commitment to uphold this dedication to the urban forest in our community, with a schedule/timeline, and a commitment to work with our community to ensure the protection and sustainment of our urban forest, with a focus on City rights-of-way.

We request a meeting with the relevant City representatives to discuss how we ensure that the City and all the City's departments also make the preservation, protection and expansion of our urban forest in Crescent Heights a priority.

We look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,

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