

**CITY OF WHITEHORSE**  
**COUNCIL POLICY**

**POLICY:**           **STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT FUND**

**PURPOSE:**        To provide guidelines for the charging of streetscape improvement fees to property owners.

**AUTHORITY:**     Council Resolution #**2006-15-08** dated **July 24, 2006**

**STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT FUND POLICY**

**Background**

Downtown has unique commercial experiences including pedestrian interaction and shopping opportunities. The City's Official Community Plan supports this development and includes several policies intended to encourage residential and mixed-use development downtown. The Official Community Plan specifically states the following:

*The City shall encourage the development of vacant sites or the redevelopment of under-utilized sites for residential purposes in the downtown area. (Policy 7.1.7)*

*Multi-family residential development may consist of a use in a single structure, or a mix of Residential/Commercial uses. Buildings that have a combination of residential and commercial are encouraged, subject to commercial uses being confined to the ground floor. (Policy 7.8.2)*

*Continuity and interaction between buildings and the street, particularly on major pedestrian corridors along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, shall be encouraged. (Policy 7.8.3)*

To ensure a high standard of development the City of Whitehorse Zoning Bylaw section 5.9 requires that property owners include specific landscaping elements with development proposals. Landscaping by private property owners can contribute significantly to city beautification and can enhance tourism, commercial activity and the quality of life for residents.

The requirements for on-site landscaping and amenity space, while contributing to the aesthetics of the streets, can also limit development potential by decreasing the space available for residential and/or commercial units. Allowing landscaping and/or amenity space to be located in adjacent public right-of-ways will encourage the type of development recommended in the OCP and help to beautify the City's Downtown streetscapes.

### **Policy Statement**

It is the intent of the City of Whitehorse to provide a method for developers to contribute to the beautification of the City while creating development opportunities that are consistent with the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw.

### **Definitions**

1. "AMENITY AREA" means the area situated within the boundaries of a project and intended for recreational purposes, which may include open spaces, patios, balconies, communal play areas, lounges, sundecks and roof decks but shall not include the area occupied at grade by the buildings, service areas, parking and driveways.
2. "LANDSCAPE PLANTING AREA" means an area of land within the front yard of a lot dedicated to the planting of trees, shrubs, flower beds, and turf or a combination thereof and which may include other decorative landscape features. A Landscape Planting Area may be interrupted only by driveways, walkways, parking spaces, and required utility service boxes. These interruptions will not reduce the area used in calculating Landscape Planting Areas.

### **Objectives**

3. To beautify the streetscapes of Whitehorse.
4. To ensure that development contributes positively with regards to visual impacts on adjacent property owners and the general public.
5. To provide a method for developers to increase development density or flexibility in design.
6. To assist in creating a sense of place and/or local neighbourhoods/districts identities through a design process using accumulated private funds.
7. To make better use of the limited land available for development.
8. To incorporate Winter City design principles.

### **Eligibility**

9. Where a development is found within a zoning designation that provides for a zero front yard setback.

10. Where a development will increase the number of residential units downtown by decreasing required amenity space subject to the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw.

**Review by the Development Review Committee**

11. The Development Review Committee will assess the impact on the City block and implications to City infrastructure, pedestrian safety and movement and operation budgets.
12. The Development Review Committee will make a recommendation to the Manager of Planning and Development Services who will approve or deny the application.

**Cash in Lieu of Landscaping**

13. The Zoning Bylaw specifies the number of trees and/or shrubs required for each Landscape Planting Area. For the purpose of creating a consistent procedure, the density for trees only will be applied in the calculation of the applicable fees.
14. For each tree required according to the Zoning Bylaw, a fee of \$800 will be contributed to the Streetscape Improvement Fund.

**Cash in Lieu of Amenity Space**

15. For each square metre of amenity space reduced, the City shall collect from the property owner the equivalent cash value of the appraised property value to be contributed to the Streetscape Improvement Fund. The applicant shall provide the appraisal information from a professional appraiser.

**Streetscape Improvement Projects**

16. Within three years of the contribution to the Streetscape Improvement Fund, the City may hire a landscape architect to work with local property owners within a city block to help design a plan for streetscape improvements. If available funds are inadequate to develop improvements for an entire block, or substantial portion thereof, the City will work with the contributing property owner to carry out the improvements around that property. Improvements may be made earlier if there is no other anticipated development within the block.
17. A streetscape plan must work within the budget available, incorporate Winter City principles and address maintenance issues. Participants of the design process may explore various colours, species and layouts of

vegetation and/or other streetscape elements such as benches, decorative lights and art work.

18. The location of improvements will be subject to utility setbacks, pedestrian and vehicular circulation and safety and overall street design.
19. Council may approve the streetscape plan and expenditures by resolution or request that the design be revised.

**Expenditures from Streetscape Improvement Fund**

20. The monies collected shall be allocated to a reserve fund and recorded for use in the particular downtown block.

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