



OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM

Page: 1
File:
Pending #:

TO: MAYOR, J. LEHMAN AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: D. FRIARY, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

NOTED: A. MILLER, RPP, GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH
MANAGEMENT

M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: SIDE LOT GRASS CUTTING

DATE: OCTOBER 25, 2021

This Memorandum has been prepared in response to inquiries from members of Council regarding the current level of service for grass cutting on City owned boulevards as well as the associated costs.

Boulevards Cut by the City

Private properties with reverse lot boulevards are cut and maintained by the City. The reverse lot boulevards are categorized as the boulevards that are located at the rear of private property that is typically separated by a fence or a wall. These areas are not easily accessible by the property owner. Reverse lot boulevards typically border on heavily travelled major roads where access is not appropriate, as it would impede the flow of traffic.

Boulevards Cut by the Property Owner

The established practice for property owners has been that they cut the front boulevard, located on the City right-of-way, adjacent to their property, at the same frequency as their front lawn. At corner lots, the side lot boulevard located on the City right-of-way is also maintained in the same manner by the property owner.

Neglected Boulevards

In some cases, a private property owner does not cut the grass on their adjoining boulevard, and this often results in a complaint being received from neighbouring residents or concerned citizens. When this occurs, staff will inspect the area and request that the homeowner cut the grass if it has reached a height of 6" and does not include dandelion flowers. If the homeowner can not comply with the request within a reasonable timeframe, Parks Operations staff will advise the homeowner that they will cut the boulevard grass and, thereafter, it will be the homeowner's responsibility to cut. Where no response is ever received from the homeowner, staff will note these areas and cut them on a cycle that maintains them to a 6-inch standard.

Financials

1. Parks & Forestry Operations will continue to cut the neglected boulevard areas primarily on a complaint basis to bring them in compliance with City By-law 2011-107. Staff shall continue to note areas that need cutting each year so that these areas can be addressed with the homeowner or cut in an organized and efficient manner by City staff if required. The operating cost of addressing neglected boulevards is approximately \$27,000 per year.
2. If the City were to provide side lot boulevard maintenance, the cost would be passed along to ratepayers who, for the vast majority, already complete this task effectively and efficiently. The estimated operating cost to mow the 4,100 residential side lots to a height of 6" to 12", as per City

By-law 2011-107, would be \$179,000 per year, including but not limited to staff and truck rental, as well as an additional capital cost of \$127,000 for mowers, trailers and string trimmers.

3. The estimated operating cost to maintain all residential side lot areas to the Park's boulevard standard height of 3"-6" would be \$299,000 per year. An additional \$211,000 in capital cost would be required to purchase the necessary equipment to maintain boulevards to Park's standards.

Recent Complaint Trend and Action to Resolve

Parks & Forestry Operations are routinely addressing requests for the City to cut side lot boulevards. In 2020, there were 207 service requests initiated by residents for boulevard grass cutting. Staff will mow a side lot boulevard when a resident neglects to respond to requests to cut their side lot boulevard. This has ensued ongoing complaints regarding the uncut boulevards from neighbouring residents (e.g., Mapleton Ave., Mapleview Dr W., Yonge St. and Esther Dr). This approach has been successful in reducing complaints from side lot boulevard property owners and area residents by maintaining the vegetation to a 6-inch standard. However, estimated cost of cutting these additional areas is \$3,500 annually, which brings our annual total to \$30,500 for neglected boulevards. This amount is included in the Park's Maintenance Annual Operating Budget.

For more information, please contact Dave Friary, Director of Operations at extension 4848 or at Dave.Friary@barrie.ca.