

Report to Council



Date: January 27, 2020
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Okanagan Rail Trail Landscaping and Screening Requirements and Minimum Landscaping Buffer Treatment Levels
Department: Development Planning Department

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Development Planning Department dated January 27, 2020, with respect to Okanagan Rail Trail Landscaping and Screening Requirements and Minimum Landscape Buffer Treatment Levels;

AND THAT Zoning Bylaw Text Amendment Application No. TA19-0004 to amend City of Kelowna Zoning Bylaw No. 8000 as outlined in the report from the Development Planning department dated January 27, 2020 be considered by Council;

AND FURTHER THAT the Zoning Bylaw Text Amendment Bylaw be forwarded to a Public Hearing for further consideration.

Purpose:

To consider an application to amend the Zoning Bylaw to introduce landscape buffering and screening requirements for properties adjacent to the Okanagan Rail Trail and amend the Minimum Landscape Buffer Treatment Level descriptions to further clarify the intended outcomes of the buffers.

Background:

As part of the City's ongoing initiatives to enhance and encourage use of the Okanagan Rail Trail (ORT), Planning staff are considering appropriate interfaces between uses on private properties abutting the ORT and the trail corridor. The ORT travels through different areas with a wide range of uses, including parks, single family residential areas, light to heavy industrial uses, the airport, and rural and agricultural land. Each of these areas presents distinct opportunities and challenges. Staff identified a need for interim measures to support an improved interface prior to completion of a broader land use review and associated recommendations and are recommending landscaping requirements as a means of accomplishing this.

Discussion

Landscaping and screening regulations present an opportunity to achieve several objectives: provide shade for trail users, improve visual appeal, add a buffer to adjacent uses, and provide secure access between private property and linear trails. Currently, the Zoning Bylaw outlines different landscape buffer requirements for different uses and Development Permit design guidelines provide direction on the landscape design. Introducing a landscape buffer specific to properties abutting the ORT, regardless of use, would support a more consistent landscape treatment and help to achieve the objectives identified above.

Amendments to the landscaping and screening requirements in the Zoning Bylaw would introduce new standards for properties along the ORT, resulting in improved landscaping with trees and fencing along the ORT. A minimum 3.0 m wide landscaping buffer would be required with trees to be planted every 10 m within the buffer area. The standards require one pedestrian access gate for any fences between the ORT and adjacent properties, providing employees, patrons and residents the opportunity to access business and homes via the ORT. The gates would be a minimum of 1.6 m wide in order to accommodate cargo bikes and trailers. Pedestrian access gates would be maintained and controlled by the private property owner, and no vehicle access is permitted.

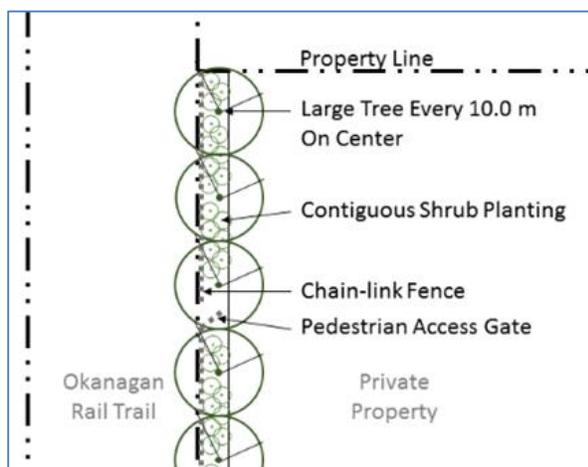


Figure 1 - Level 6 Minimum 3.0m Landscape Buffer

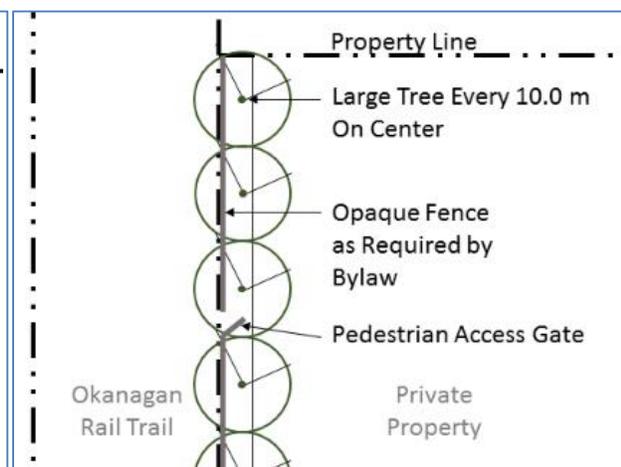


Figure 2- Level 6 Landscape Buffer with Opaque Barrier

Property owners would be required to follow the new landscaping requirements as part of development or redevelopment of property abutting the ORT and Development Permit plans will need to reflect these landscaping requirements. Private property owners will be responsible for maintaining the landscaping and screening located within the buffer area on their property. It should be noted that properties in the Agricultural Land Reserve and properties zoned P₃ - Parks and Open Space would be exempt from these requirements.

Additional amendments to Section 7 are proposed to update incorrect section references to Section 7.7, which should instead read Section 7.6. Modification of the Minimum Landscape Buffer Treatment Level descriptions for Levels 2, 3 and 4 are proposed to further clarify the intended outcomes of these landscape buffers. These proposed amendments are intended to dispel the misconception that the minimum landscape buffer widths can be reduced with the construction of a continuous barrier (such as

a fence). The intent of these landscape buffers is to provide a minimum 3.0m width buffer which must be planted with vegetation and may include a continuous barrier (such as a fence). Further, the amendment proposes removing the diagrams which are outdated and do not contribute to clarifying the intent of the Minimum Landscape Buffer Treatment Levels.

For a comprehensive review of the proposed changes, see Attachment 'A': Summary of Changes.

Conclusion

The inclusion of new landscaping requirements for properties along the ORT will provide a consistent approach to landscaping on private property along the ORT as well as improve the public-private interface between recreation or active transportation uses and adjacent uses.

Internal Circulation:

Active Transportation
Crime Prevention
Development Engineering
Parks Planning
Policy and Planning

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy:

Kelowna Official Community Plan (OCP)

Transportation Corridor (TC) Future Land Use Designation

In Kelowna's Official Community Plan (OCP), lands with a Future Land Use designation of Transportation Corridor (TC) are railway (public or private), transit, cycling or pedestrian corridors or other uses that complement an alternative transportation function. The corridor that makes up the Okanagan Rail Trail (ORT) has the TC future land use designation.

Chapter 7: Infrastructure

General transportation policies within the OCP place increased emphasis on sustainable modes of transportation, with Active Transportation (walking and cycling) accorded the highest priority (Objective 7.6; Policy 7.6.1). In addition, Active Transportation infrastructure is seen to increase resilience in the face of higher energy prices; improve community health; and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Objective 7.8). The OCP's objective to provide a city-wide linear park and trail network (Objective 7.13) identifies the ORT as one of the top six linear park priorities (Policy 7.13.1).

Chapter 14: Urban Design Development Permit Areas

The OCP's Urban Design guidelines encourage the promotion of interesting, pedestrian friendly streetscape designs and pedestrian linkages as well as the promotion of alternative transportation with enhanced streetscapes and multimodal linkages. Linking industrial developments to recreational opportunities is encouraged through the design of industrial developments (14.7.5). The design guidelines prioritize the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians (14.8.1) and promote the use of alternative modes of transportation in site design (14.8.2).

Pedestrian and Bike Master Plan

The City's Pedestrian and Bike Master Plan encourages the application of higher design standards for high demand or 'strategic' active transportation routes, such as the ORT, as one of the objectives in order to increase walking and cycling as practical modes of travel and to improve safety and convenience for pedestrians and cyclists.

Linear Parks Master Plan

The Linear Parks Master Plan envisions an interconnected network of outstanding linear parks with the goal of providing safe and enjoyable trails and infrastructure and providing trail connections that increase city-wide and neighbourhood connectivity.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Communications Comments:

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Attachments:

Attachment 'A': Summary of Changes