

Community Insights Summary

A variety of engagement activities were conducted to gather feedback from the public and interested parties about resilient landscaping on private property, including:

- Public survey and questionnaire that ran from July 15 to August 5, 2026
- An industry-focused workshop on July 8, 2026, with city-building partners including a mix of builders, developers and landscape professionals from local industry associations.
- Targeted interviews with community organizations from July 23 to August 14, 2026.

The following provides a summary of the feedback used to inform the proposed actions to improve zoning regulations to increase resilient landscaping. Given the complexity and technical nature of regulating landscape practices, detailed feedback on proposed zoning changes was primarily gathered through the questionnaire, workshop and targeted interviews to allow for in-depth discussion and clarification.

General feedback:

- Survey participants generally prefer education and programs over regulation.
- Regulations were mostly supported for tree canopy, soft landscaping, and parking lots.
- Some community groups advocated for a flexible, points-based system ("green factor score") to increase resilient landscaping; context-based regulations; and updating rules to address urgent concerns and issues such as tree loss.

Drought-resistant and Native Plants:

- Strong support for requiring drought-resistant and native plants for new developments.
- General concerns were raised about local plant availability.

Naturalization:

- Questionnaire respondents supported requiring a wider variety of plants.
- Some workshop participants expressed desire for flexible requirements to allow for simpler, high-quality designs that may use fewer plant types.

Topsoil Depth:

- Broad agreement that sufficient soil depth and volume is vital for plant growth and survival.

- Questionnaire respondents supported putting clear soil standards in the bylaw.
- Industry participants noted potential challenges in enforcing soil standards post-installation.

Soft Landscaping:

- Questionnaire respondents supported higher soft landscaping requirements across all development types.
- Industry members noted current challenges meeting soft landscaping standards for small scale residential developments and highlighted potential challenges in commercial contexts where parking is prioritized.
- Interview participants and questionnaire respondents suggested improving the soft landscaping definition and noted a need to adjust requirements to encourage better soft landscaping choices.

Low Impact Development (LID):

- General feedback from the questionnaire indicated support to require new developments to provide LID, though few thought soft landscaping credits would incentivize LID.
- Workshop participants raised concerns over LID costs and complex approvals, and supported incentives.
- Some community groups noted the importance of soil depth and quality to increase stormwater absorption and consider calculations for LID based on different development types.

Tree Count and Canopy Cover:

- General support for regulating tree canopy over counts to align with the City's tree canopy goals and environmental benefits.
- Workshop participants highlighted a need for flexible standards to address underground utilities and constrained sites.
- Participants and community groups also recommended allowing smaller plant sizes (at installation) for small scale residential development to reduce barriers for residents.

Landscaping in Parking Lots:

- General support for regulations that improve plant growing conditions in parking areas.
- Feedback from the questionnaire indicated strong support for more shade trees and more space and soil for trees.
- Suggestions from workshop participants included more flexible parking island requirements to promote plant survival.

Attachment 3

Feedback from the survey, workshop, questionnaire, and interviews underscored the importance of educational tools, resources and outreach programs to raise awareness and guide resilient landscaping practices. Participants also advocated for financial incentives, such as rebates or grants, to help reduce financial barriers. Conversely, some survey respondents expressed concerns regarding regulatory overreach, emphasizing a preference for flexibility in managing their own properties.

A comprehensive report of the engagement feedback will be included in the report presented to Urban Planning Committee (tentatively scheduled for December 1, 2026).