



# REPORT

## By-law Services Department

**TO:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**FROM:** Hilary Williams, Director of By-law/ Animal Services  
**DATE:** June 24, 2024  
**REPORT:** BL-07/24 **FILE NO.**

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**SUBJECT:** Boulevard Maintenance By-law Proposal

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### **BACKGROUND:**

Municipal boulevards play a crucial role in the overall appearance and functionality of any municipality. The lands, situated between roadways and private properties, contribute to the visual appeal of neighborhoods, provide space for utilities and infrastructure, and enhance the safety of both pedestrians and vehicles. Despite their importance, the maintenance of these boulevards often falls into a grey area due to the lack of specific regulations with the Township of Uxbridge.

Currently, the Township does not have a by-law explicitly mandating property owners to maintain the boulevards adjacent to their properties, nor does it have specific enforcement measures for By-Law Officers or Public Works to address complaints about long grass, weeds, or obstructions on municipal boulevards. Consequently, any complaints have Public Works staff clearing these obstructions to maintain the boulevards at the taxpayers' expense.

Enacting a new by-law would offer a more efficient and cost-effective approach to maintaining municipal boulevards, provide an enforcement tool, and clarify permitted boulevard gardens and property owners' responsibilities regarding boulevard maintenance.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Importance of Boulevard Maintenance**

- 1. Aesthetic Value:** Well-maintained boulevards enhance the overall appearance of the community. They contribute to a neat and orderly streetscape, which can boost property values and promote community pride.
- 2. Safety:** Proper maintenance of boulevards ensures that sightlines are clear for drivers, reducing the risk of accidents. Overgrown vegetation, debris, or improperly placed structures can obstruct views and create hazards for both pedestrians and vehicles.
- 3. Public Health:** Overgrown grass and weeds can harbor pests and allergens, which may pose health risks to residents. Regular maintenance helps mitigate these issues, contributing to a healthier living environment.

### **Current Challenges**

With no existing enforcing by-law, the Township has faced ongoing issues with boulevard maintenance. Complaints received over the years include:

- **Uncut grass and weeds.**
- **Buildup or dumping of debris and waste.**
- **Installation of fences, walls, or structures within the boulevard.**
- **Removing, pruning or damaging a boulevard tree(s).**

These issues not only detract from the community's aesthetic appeal but also place undue pressure on the Public Works Department. In the absence of specific regulations, Public Works staff are often required to address these maintenance issues at the taxpayers' expense, leading to inefficiencies and higher costs for the municipality.

### **Benefits of a Boulevard Maintenance By-Law**

- 1. Clear Responsibilities:** A dedicated by-law would clearly define the responsibilities of property owners regarding boulevard maintenance, reducing ambiguity and ensuring consistent upkeep.

- 2. Enforcement Tools:** The by-law would provide specific enforcement measures for By-Law Officers and Public Works to handle complaints and ensure compliance.
- 3. Cost-Effectiveness:** By shifting maintenance responsibilities to property owners, the Township can reduce the burden on Public Works staff and lower the overall costs to taxpayers.
- 4. Enhanced Community Engagement:** Encouraging residents to maintain and even enhance their adjacent boulevards through initiatives like boulevard gardens can foster a sense of community and environmental stewardship.
- 5. Safety Regulations:** Implementing restrictions on what can be placed or planted in the boulevards will prevent safety hazards. This includes prohibiting the installation of fences, posts, walls, or any sharp or dangerous objects, and ensuring that plants do not obstruct sightlines or impair the vision o Snow on Boulevards

### **Legislative Authority**

The Municipal Act provides the authority for municipalities to enact by-laws regulating the maintenance and use of the boulevard portion of highways within their jurisdiction. Leveraging this authority to implement a dedicated boulevard maintenance by-law would enable the Township of Uxbridge to address these challenges effectively.

Current Municipalities that have adopted a Boulevard Maintenance By- law are Brock, Whitby, Oshawa, Pickering, East Gwillimbury, Stouffville, Vaughan, Clarington, and Cobourg – just to state a few.

### **Conclusion**

Implementing a new Boulevard Maintenance By-law would provide a more efficient and cost-effective approach, clarify property owners' responsibilities, and equip enforcement personnel with the necessary tools to manage and maintain municipal boulevards effectively. This proactive measure would benefit the community by maintaining the aesthetic and functional quality of our municipal boulevards, reducing costs for the municipality and taxpayers, and promoting environmental stewardship.

### **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

- Good Governance
- Community Engagement
- Community Well-Being

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Report BL-07/24 Hilary Williams, Director By-law and Animal Services, be received for information;

AND THAT a stand-alone By-Law for Boulevard Maintenance be brought forward for consideration.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Hilary Williams  
Director By-law and Animal Services