

DEPUTATION REGARDING  
Mississauga By-law

# Urban Meadow Landscapes

Cities across Canada are embracing urban meadow landscapes.

The first step usually involves removing the disturbance of mowing, letting grasses and other vegetation grow naturally, and allowing a variety of plants to germinate from the soil seed bank. This results in a biodiverse mixture of native and non-native plants.



# Municipalities Across Canada are Encouraging Rewilding and Naturalization



The City of Vancouver has created meadows with long grasses and wildflowers



The City of Edmonton has rewilded properties by intentionally letting the grasses grow

# Urban Rewilding

The City of Edmonton also promotes naturalization on homeowners' yards, encouraging residents to reduce or eliminate mowing “allowing the grass to grow naturally”

Transitioning from lawns into meadows through the cessation of mowing is a common technique used in restoration, naturalization, and rewilding

A 20cm height limit on grasses would hinder the transition from lawns into meadows



## The Regulation of “Turfgrass”

The proposed bylaw seeks to introduce the term “turfgrass” defined as:  
*a ground cover of perennial grasses cultivated for lawns that forms a dense and uniform turf when mown*

The problem is, “turfgrass” is not only used to create turf (short mown grass), it is also used to create meadows with grasses growing tall

A 20cm height limit on “turfgrass” would prohibit the transition from lawns into meadows, a common practice in naturalization and rewilding

# The 20cm Height Limit on Grasses is Precisely What Was Struck Down in *Ruck v Mississauga*

The City appears to be attempting to write into the bylaw the very provision that was recently struck down in Superior Court

This would infringe on residents' constitutional rights to freedom of expression





## Mowing Does Not Eliminate Allergies – it Makes Allergies Worse

The by-law's sole justification for a 20cm height limit on grasses is the mistaken belief that mowing prevents allergens

In reality, mowing worsens allergens

Lawn mowing increases airborne pollen concentrations by 800%

Mowing also aerosolizes grass stalks, which contain allergens, and breaks pollen into smaller particles which penetrate deeper into the airways



## Mowing Does Not Eliminate Allergies – it Makes Allergies Worse

In addition, mowing stirs up dust, plant particles, and mold spores

Pollutants from lawn mower emissions attach to pollen grains and increase their allergenic potential

Air pollutants also allow for easier penetration of pollen and spore allergens because the pollutants damage the airway mucociliary clearance mechanisms

# We Don't Cut Down Trees to Prevent Allergens

Tree pollen allergies are very common, affecting up to 30% of the population

Maple, oak, and birch trees are the largest contributors to tree pollen allergies, with birch pollen allergies affect up to 16% of the general population

Yet we don't cut down birch, maple or oak trees to prevent allergies

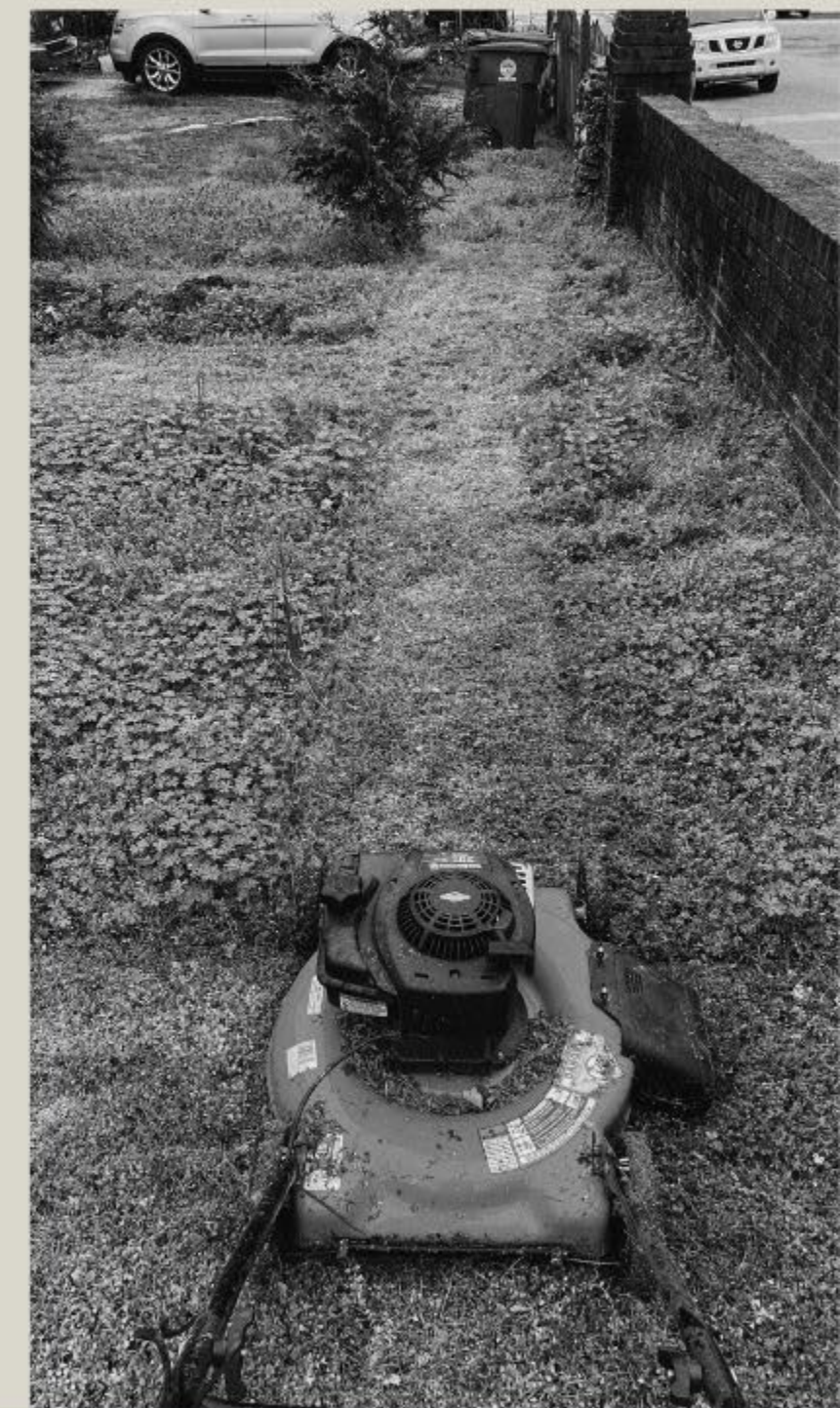
A 20cm height limit on "turfgrass" is arbitrary and inconsistent with society's approach to other plant allergens



# Air Pollution from Lawn Mowers

Gas-powered lawn equipment emits pollutants such as:

- carbon dioxide
- carbon monoxide
- hydrocarbons
- volatile organic compounds
- nitrogen oxides
- particulate matter



# Air Pollution and Public Health

In Canada, gas-powered lawn equipment releases 80,000 tonnes of emissions per year

Exhaust emissions from lawn equipment can lead to health problems such as respiratory disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease, neurological conditions, and premature death

A 20cm height limit on grasses would encourage the use of such equipment, contributing to public health risks



# Noise Pollution from Lawn Equipment

Gas mowers generate noise levels above 100 dB

Leaf blowers generate noise levels from 100-115 dB

Any noise above 85 dB can cause hearing loss

A study of grass trimming workers found hearing loss in 82.6% of those workers

A 20cm height limit on grasses would encourage the use of noisy lawn equipment which can lead to hearing loss, a threat to public health and safety



# Lawn Equipment and Injuries

A US study of lawn-mower-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations found:

- 51,151 lawn-mower injuries during the 8-year study period
- Common injuries included lacerations (46%), fractures (22.4%), and amputations (21.5%)

The article concluded: **“Lawn mowers are a source of preventable injury among children and adults.”**

A 20cm height limit on grasses would encourage the use of lawn mowers, which leads to injuries. If the City is concerned about public safety, it should ban the cosmetic use of powered lawn equipment rather than encouraging it.



# Lawn Mowers and Climate Change

Operating a gas-powered lawnmower for **1 hour** emits greenhouse gases equivalent to driving a car **480 km** (from Mississauga to Ottawa)

The City of Mississauga declared a climate emergency in 2019

To protect the climate, the city should ban the cosmetic use of powered lawn equipment

A 20cm height limit on grasses would encourage the use of polluting, gas-guzzling equipment



# A 20 cm Height Limit on “Turfgrass” Presents Many Unconsidered Risks to Public Health and Safety and the Environment

In the interest of upholding Canadians’ Constitutional rights, protecting the climate, preventing air pollution and allergens, and protecting the public from unnecessary injuries, I request that the City of Mississauga refrain from adopting a height limit on grasses

