

Courtenay's Urban Forest Strategy

Public Workshop, City of Courtenay

June 25-26, 2018

DIAMOND HEAD 

Who is in the room?

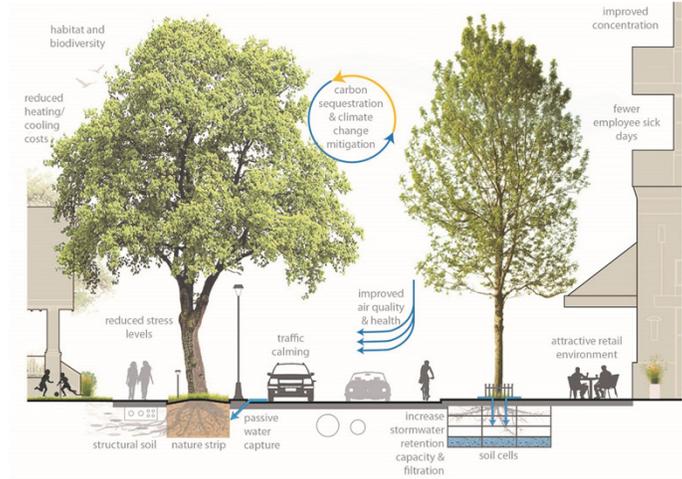


Courtenay's Urban Forest Strategy will...

... establish a **shared vision for the future** of the community's urban forest with **principles, objectives** and measurable **targets**



Why develop an urban forest strategy?

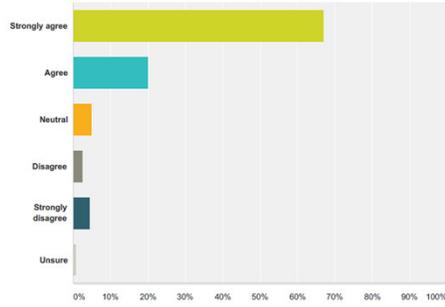


What the community has said before...



Q1 In general, I support the City of Courtenay strengthening tree management and protection policies and regulatory tools

Answered: 710 Skipped: 9

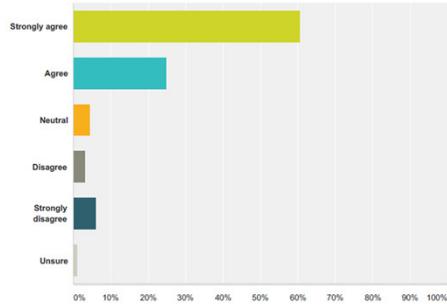


What the community has said before...



Q2 In general, I support the City of Courtenay investing more resources into tree management and protection. (This could include a modest increase to staff hours or the creation of a heritage tree list or more public education resources as examples)

Answered: 712 Skipped: 7

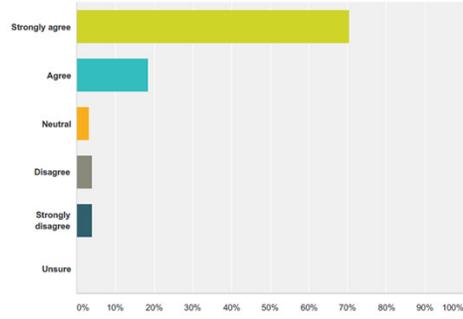


What the community has said before...



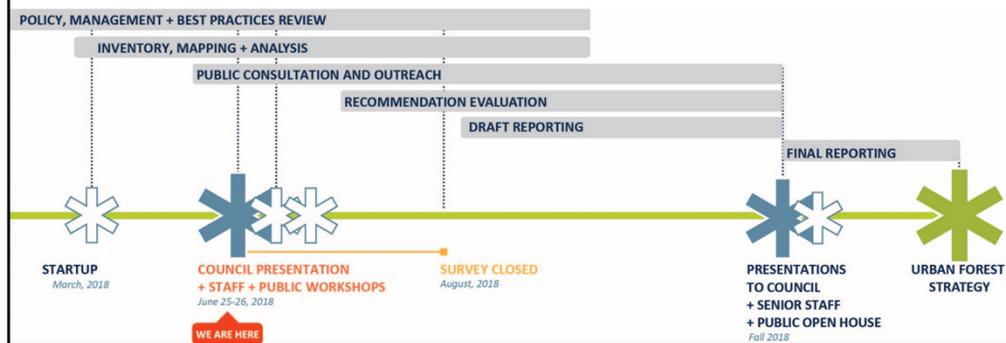
Q3 In general, I support a strong policy of keeping existing trees where safe to do so.

Answered: 711 Skipped: 8



Where are we up to in the process?

- Review corporate policies and initiatives
- Inventory the resource
- Engage stakeholders in the process



URBAN FOREST STATUS

Canopy status and trends

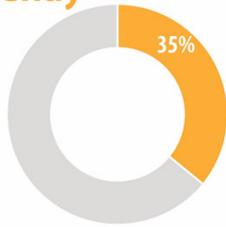
- 35% canopy cover
- Highest canopy in parks and undeveloped forest areas
- Lowest canopy in agricultural areas, downtown, commercial and new developments



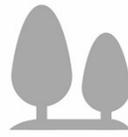
i-Tree ecosystem services estimates



Courtenay



Ecosystem services reported by iTree Canopy



Carbon Sequestration
\$638,255/yr
Storage
\$16,092,397



Air Pollution Removal
\$47,625/yr

Native habitat and biodiversity



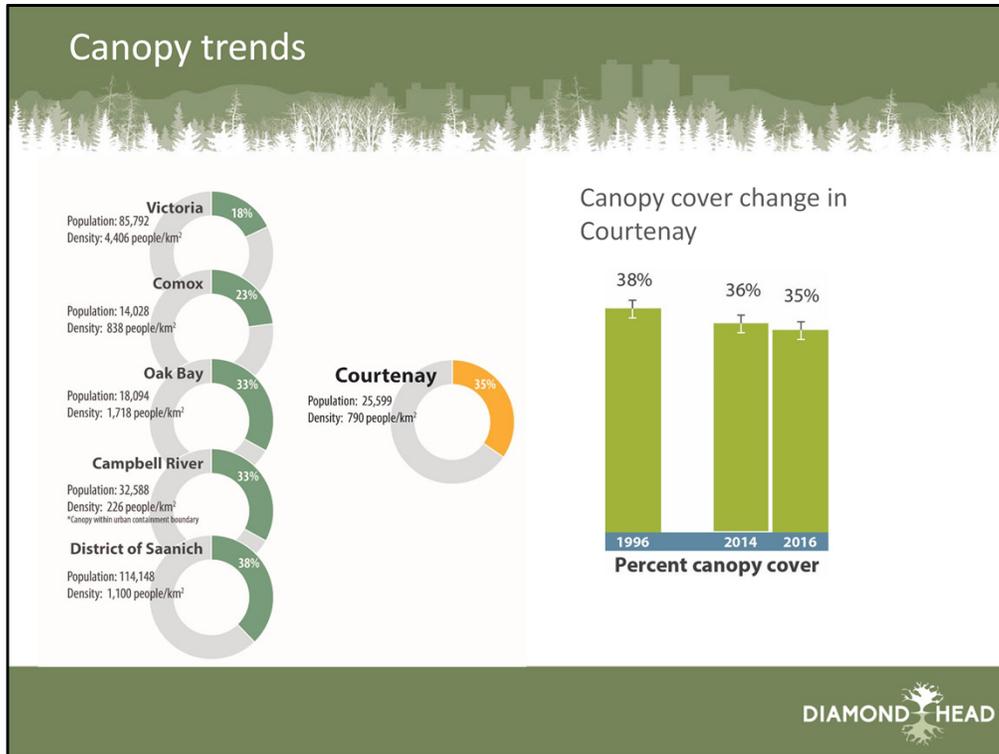
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Community character and heritage



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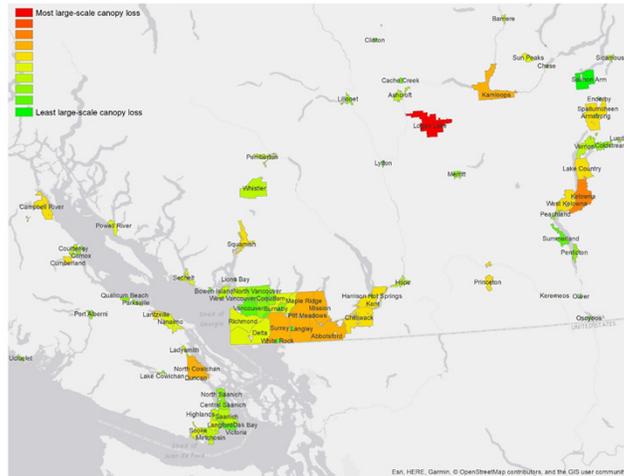
URBAN FOREST TRENDS



- Canopy in Courtenay is in line with other nearby municipalities with similar population, density and land use. Comox has lower canopy cover but a large portion of its land use is the Comox Valley Airport.
- Courtenay, like Campbell River has large areas of privately held forested land that are likely to develop at some time in the future.
- If these lands were completely denuded, Courtenay's canopy cover would drop significantly.
- The urban forest strategy is an opportunity to consider how to manage this change thoughtfully to ensure that the City maintains an urban forest legacy for the future.
- Over the last 20 years, Courtenay has been gradually losing canopy cover.

Canopy trends

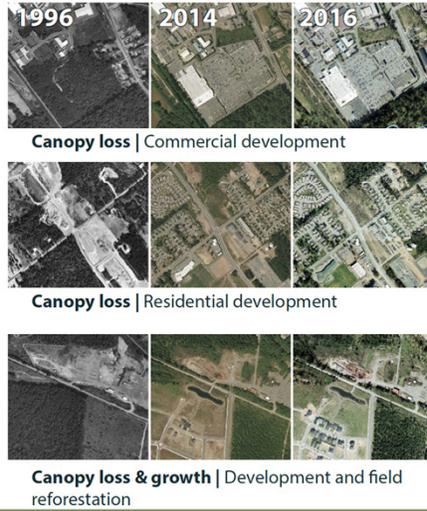
Large-scale forest loss exceeds gain in 90% of BC municipalities



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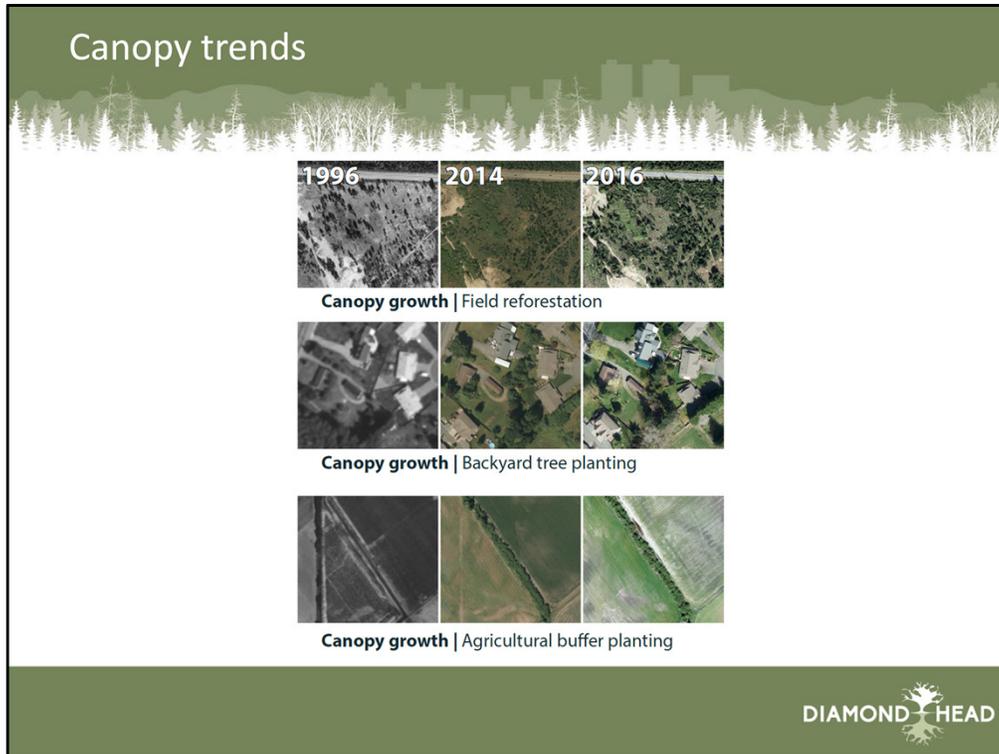
- Putting things in perspective, canopy cover decrease is a general trend for cities in BC and North America

Canopy trends



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- In Courtenay, canopy has historically been lost to a range of natural and human disturbances
- Since 1996, canopy has been lost to development, but areas have also seen forest growth over time (see bottom example)



- Canopy has also grown where fields reforested (naturally or with human intervention), where trees were planted, in backyards, on streets and in parks, as well as in agricultural areas.

HOW CAN THE STRATEGY SHAPE THE FUTURE URBAN FOREST?

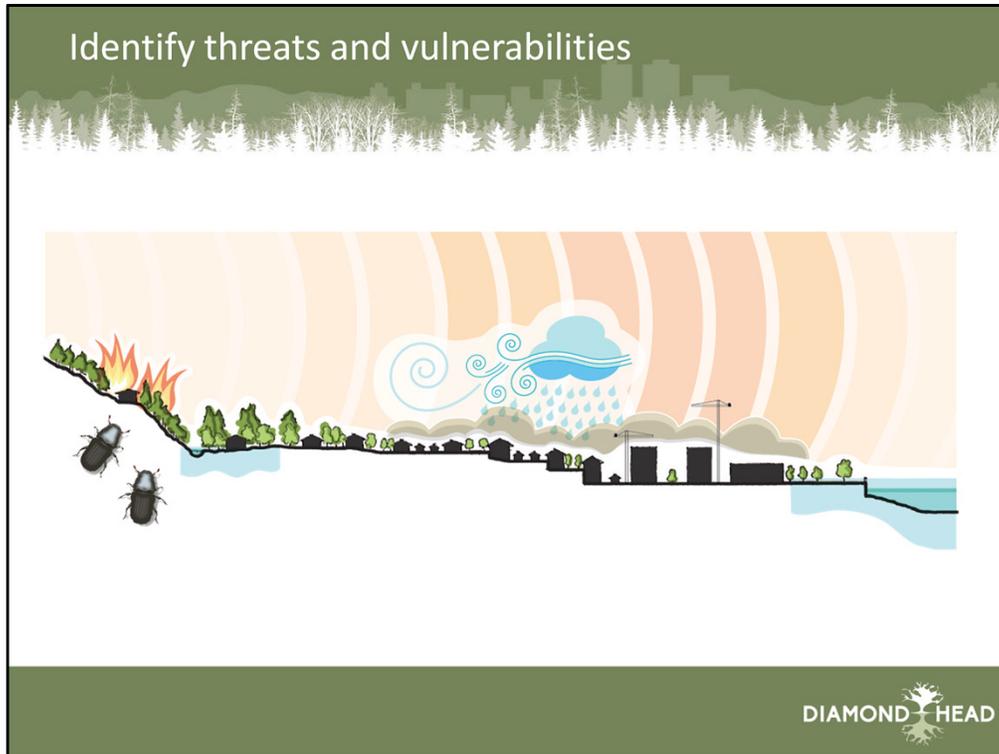
Knowing all of that about Courtenay's urban forest, how can the strategy shape its future?

Major themes

- Protection
- Planting
- Management
- Stewardship
- Learning and adaptation



Urban forest strategies general focus on those five major themes



We also review the major threats and vulnerabilities of Courtenay's urban forest. For example, what are the potential impacts of climate change on the urban forest? Are there pests or diseases that might threaten some tree species? Etc.

Review local trends and opportunities



Finally, we look throughout the City to assess opportunities to grow the urban forest: are there certain parks, streets or land uses that could support more trees?
For example, are there opportunities to plant more trees on Duncan street?



The Downtown Playbook process highlighted the community's desire to see a greener downtown



Perhaps it could one day look like this!

**THERE IS A LOT WE CAN DO...
BUT WHAT IS COURTENAY'S VISION?**

Our plan for the workshop

- Visioning: what's special about Courtenay and its urban forest?
- Mapping: opportunities and priorities for improvement
- Project's next steps & other opportunities for engagement

Today's workshop – visioning



1. Thinking of your own story...

- a) What makes Courtenay a special place to live?
On **yellow** post it notes
- b) How does the urban forest contribute to what is special about Courtenay?
On **green** post it notes
- c) Group similar ideas and choose a word that describes the theme of that group
- d) Report out on the main themes that were discussed at your table



- a) What makes Courtenay a special place to live? On **yellow** post it notes and place them on the top of your paper (5 mins)
- b) How does the urban forest contribute to what is special about Courtenay? On **green** post it notes (10 mins)
- c) On your paper, group similar ideas and choose a word that describes the theme of that group (10 mins)
- d) Report out the groups' findings (themes with some descriptive words) (10 mins)

Today's workshop – mapping & priorities



1. Mapping important urban forest places and values

- a) On the map, where are urban forest places you value? Use the **green dots**.
- b) On the map, where are the urban forest places you think could be improved? Use the **yellow dots**.

2. Priority actions

Now, thinking about what you value and what could be improved, consider the themes on the side of your map.

- a) What are some actions you think the UFS should take? List them under each theme.
- b) Move around the room, looking at the lists on each table. Vote on the 5 actions you think are most important for the strategy to address.



1. Opportunities & priorities mapping

Work in table groups – on the map:

- a) On the map, where are urban forest places you value? Use the **green dots**.
- b) On the map, where are the urban forest places you think could be improved? Use the **yellow dots**.

2. Priority actions

Now, thinking about what you value and what could be improved, consider the themes on the side of your map.

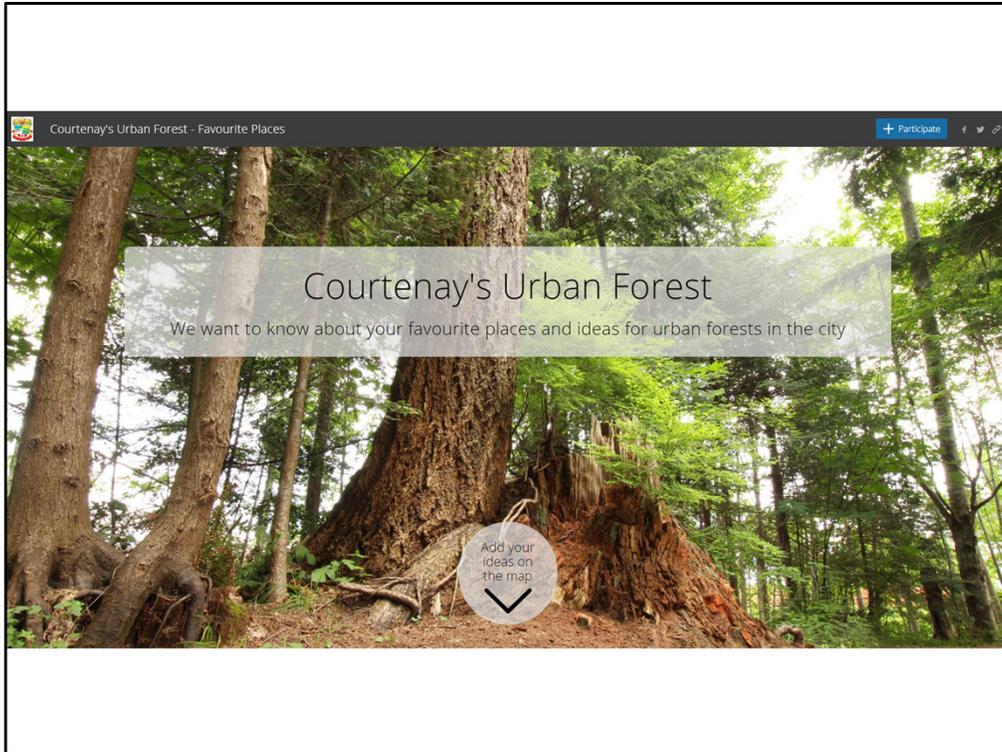
- a) What are some actions you think the UFS should take? List them under each theme:
 - Protection
 - Planting
 - Management
 - Stewardship
 - Learning and adaptation
- b) Move around the room, looking at the lists on each table. Vote on the 5 actions you think are most important for the strategy to address.

WHAT'S NEXT?

More opportunities for engagement

- Online story map
- Online survey
- Public open house in Fall

www.Courtenay.ca/urbanforest



Courtenay's Urban Forest - Favourite Places + Participate

Row of 6 mature sycamores	Older forests with some wide but not tall trees.	Green Corridor along Mallard Drive
Aspen crabapple sedge ecosystem	Garry oak woodland	Old dogwoods
Heron Rookery	Sycamores / London Plane Trees on 2nd St	Sequolia Neighbourhood - 17th to 21st and Stewart...
Older forest (~100 years) in Roy Morrison Park	Cemetery Garry oak heritage trees	

Esri, HERE, Garmin, NGA, USGS, NRCAN | Esri, HERE

Courtenay's Urban Forest - Favourite Places

Add your contribution

Photo *

Drag and Drop
or
Click to pick a file

Title *

Enter a title

Location *

Enter a location

[Locate Me](#) [Find on Map](#)

Description *

Enter a description (200 words or fewer please)

[Show terms and conditions](#)

Accept Terms and Submit

Close

* Required Fields

Esri, HERE, Garmin, NGA, USGS, NRCAN | Esri, HERE

Zoom in closer to see some of Courtenay's favourite urban forest places

Move the spyglass around to view the image underneath.

Submit your own favourite location(s) here

Courtenay's Urban Forest Strategy f t

Courtenay's Urban Forest Story Map

Urban Forest Status and Trends

A common metric used for measuring urban forests and their change over time is canopy cover (i.e., the tree canopy covering the land when viewed from above). The map to the left summarizes canopy cover percentage by block. Use this map by clicking on the blocks to find out the percent canopy cover of different neighbourhoods in the city and use the spyglass to see what those areas look like on the air photo underneath.

Courtenay's urban forest in 2016 had:

- 35% Canopy cover (+/- 1.5%), or 1,131 hectares
- Its tallest tree measured to date is 57.4 m (or 188 feet, in Roy Morrison Park)
- Its oldest trees measured to date are Garry oaks in the Toulum River Valley (~150 years old)
- 2,431 inventoried City trees
- Most common City trees are maple, oak, cherry, ash, pear and katsura

Canopy cover is not static. It changes over time depending on the rate that trees grow or die and as they are replaced or removed. Canopy loss occurs primarily due to removal of ageing or unhealthy trees, or due to development. Disturbances like drought, flood, wildfire and insect and disease outbreaks, can also cause unexpected and widespread tree mortality. Climate change may increase the frequency or extent of disturbance events in Courtenay's forests.





Esri, HERE, Garmin, NGA, USGS, NRCAN | Esri, HERE


Next steps in the strategy process



- Draft the vision and objectives
- Report on the status and trends in Courtenay's urban forest
- Report on key opportunities to improve management practices and build resilience
- Develop an action plan with 5-year implementation time steps
- **Present draft to Council, Senior Staff and public**

