

This is the public survey on the City of Courtenay Tree Protection and Management Bylaw proposed changes

The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete and is 10 pages. The deadline for this survey is June 30, 2016.

Please return the survey to City Hall or scan it to ngothard@courtenay.ca

You may also conduct the survey online at: www.courtenay.ca/trees

Any questions may be directed to Nancy Gothard, Environmental Planner, ngothard@courtenay.ca / 250 334 4441

Note - the answer boxes are quite small. Please use as much space on the page as you need.

The City of Courtenay is looking for your feedback on ways to increase and preserve the number of trees within Courtenay neighbourhoods. The City currently has a Tree Protection and Management Bylaw, and is looking to expand its application to more lands and species, and provide more clarity for property owners who want to remove trees in a way that doesn't impact neighbouring trees.

The two core proposed changes to the bylaw are:

- **Setting a target number of trees that must be retained or replanted on all properties, depending on property size, and**
- **Applying the bylaw to all lands within the City, and including more species under special protection.**

The proposed bylaw is called a 'Tree Protection and Management Bylaw' because it aims to *protect* a reasonable number of trees in the community, while also allowing residents to *manage* trees on their property, including tree removal that does not negatively impact neighbouring properties.

Urban trees are increasingly recognized for their many social, ecological, health and economic benefits to citizens, property owners and municipalities. Like many regions, the City of Courtenay is moving towards better protection and management of trees and greenspaces as valuable green assets, while striving to increase clarity and consistency for developers and other land users. Valuing green assets is supported in the City's Official Community Plan as well as the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy.

Please tell us what you think about urban tree protection in Courtenay by filling out this important public survey.

This survey will take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete. The survey starts with a couple of questions about how strongly you value tree protection in general in the City of Courtenay, then continues to ask more specific questions about the technical details of the proposed bylaw changes. You may skip any question at any time.

There is some background and explanation material on the proposed changes to the Bylaw right in the survey itself, although we do also encourage you to take some time to review the materials available for review on the City's dedicated [website](http://www.courtenay.ca/trees) (a summary table of the proposed changes, as well as the draft bylaw).

www.courtenay.ca/trees

Before asking specific questions about the proposed bylaw changes, please answer the following questions about the importance of tree protection within the City of Courtenay from your perspective. Remember, you may skip questions at any time.

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

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure

2. 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)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure

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

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure

Next part of the survey and please stay in touch

The next section of the survey will ask more specific questions in each of the following topics:

1. Expanding tree management areas and the number of tree species protected
2. Establishing the required number of trees per lot to be protected or replaced
3. Changes to tree permit application fees

But before moving on, please provide your contact information if you would like to receive email notifications of any progress on the bylaw. All participants who enter their contact information will be placed into a prize draw for a slow-release tree watering bag that can be used on an existing tree to promote water conservation and good root development!

4. Provide only what information you feel comfortable with. Your information will not be shared.

Name

Address

City/Town

Email Address

Phone Number

5. Do you own property and/or live in the City of Courtenay?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

6. Prior to this consultation opportunity, how familiar would you say you were with the City's existing Tree Management and Protection requirements?

- Familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not familiar
- I was aware there were regulations, but I didn't know anything about them
- I didn't even know that the City had any requirements!

More areas and species subject to the Bylaw

The proposed Bylaw would apply to all lands within the City and would include more species on the protected species list.

7. Do you support the bylaw applying to all lands within the City?

Yes

No

If no, you are welcome to provide some comments on what areas you think the bylaw should apply to.

Species

In addition to the already protected Garry oak and Pacific dogwood, the following species are being considered to be designated protected species under the bylaw: Arbutus, Western white pine, Trembling aspen and Pacific yew. These species are native species that are currently rare in the City. If these species were listed as protected in the bylaw, then they could only be removed in rare circumstances such as hazardous condition or if they are preventing a landowner from developing to their allowed zoning.

8. Do you support the bylaw including the following species being listed as protected?

Arbutus (Arbutus menziesii) (also referred to as Madrone);

Western white pine (Pinus monticola);

Trembling aspen Populus tremuloides;

Pacific yew (Taxus brevifolia)

Yes

No

9. Do you have any comments about the proposed protected species list?

Use of tree number targets based on property size

The proposed Bylaw would contain a 50 trees per hectare requirement. This is proposed based on experience from other B.C. communities and what appears reasonable for an individual property. This target number would be used to inform how many trees a property owner has to retain and/or replace when developing or clearing land.

Some examples of some common zones and lot sizes are listed below to show how many trees would typically be required:

Zone	Minimum lot size	Number of trees required
R-1, Residential One (much of east Courtenay is R-1)	650m ² (approximately 0.16 of an acre, a small urban lot)	3
R-2, Residential Two (much of west Courtenay is R-2)	750m ² (approximately 0.2 of an acre)	4
RR-1, Rural Residential One	1250m ² (approximately 1/4 acre)	6
RR-5, Rural Residential Five	4000m ² (approximately 1 acre)	20

In this scenario, an applicant for a tree removal permit would have to show how they will achieve the target number of trees. The goal would be to retain existing trees, but where retention is too difficult, there would be other options for replacements. For example, the applicant could plant a new tree on their property or pay into the City's Tree Planting and Replacement Fund. If paying into the fund, the cost per tree would be \$300 to cover costs of obtaining the tree, planting, and maintaining it in its first year.

For new multi-lot subdivisions over 1 acre in size, the proposed bylaw would require that

the developer examine the opportunity for retaining the 50 trees per hectare prior to determining their subdivision layout. The retained trees could be located on private or public land.

10. Do you support the use of a tree number target to inform how many trees should be retained or replanted on a property?

Yes

No

If you answered no, do you have other ideas of how to determine how many trees should be retained or replaced on a property?

The following two questions are about how important keeping existing trees is to you.

For example, the City is trying to understand how important retaining existing trees is compared to being allowed to remove existing trees and replace them with new trees.

The City is also trying to understand whether properties in existing neighbourhoods and new multi-lot subdivisions should be treated the same.

11. **For properties within existing neighbourhoods** (this would include properties that already have a home or business on them), please indicate which statements describe the best approach to tree management in your view (select all that apply, and/or provide a new statement that describes your view):

Applicants should always be required to retain the target number of trees where it is safe to do so

Applicants should be allowed to plant new trees on their property to achieve their target number of trees for their property, even if it means not retaining any existing trees on the property

Applicants should be allowed to pay into the Tree Planting and Replacement Fund to achieve the target number of trees for their property, which will be used to plant trees elsewhere

I value keeping existing trees, but I also want flexibility. Retaining trees should always be the first choice, but there may be circumstances when replacing the tree or paying into the Tree Planting and Replacement Fund are suitable options

Flexibility in tree management is most important to me. Whether an applicant keeps a tree, replants a tree or pays into the Tree Planting and Replacement Fund should be equal options to the applicant in all instances

If you would like to provide a different or another statement to describe how you feel about this question, please include it here.

12. **For new multi-lot subdivisions** (this would include properties that are not previously developed, or have very little development on them), please indicate which statements describe the best approach to tree management in your view (select all that apply, and/or provide a new statement that describes your view):

- Applicants should always be required to retain the target number of trees where it is safe to do so
- Applicants should be allowed to plant new trees on their property to achieve the target number of trees for their property, even if it means not retaining any existing trees on the property
- Applicants should be allowed to pay into the Tree Planting and Replacement Fund to achieve the target number of trees for their property, which will be used to plant trees elsewhere
- I value keeping existing trees, but I also want flexibility. Retaining trees should always be the first choice, but there may be circumstances when replacing the tree or paying into the Tree Planting and Replacement Fund are suitable options
- Flexibility in tree management is most important to me. Whether an applicant keeps a tree, replants a tree or pays into the Tree Planting and Replacement Fund should be equal options to the applicant in all instances

If you would like to provide a different or another statement to describe how you feel about this question, please include it here.

Tree permit application fees

A person would be required to obtain a Tree Cutting Permit whenever removing more trees on their property than their required target number, and when doing development and land clearing activities in close proximity to retained trees.

Currently Tree Cutting Permit application fees are \$250 for the permit and an additional \$5 for every tree removed.

The proposed bylaw would have a sliding fee structure, reflecting that not all tree cutting and management situations are the same (note that GST does not apply to Permits). The \$5 fee for each tree removed would not apply.

Single family lots up to 1000m ² (approximately 1/4 acre) or only two trees removed on any sized lot	\$50
Single family lots between 1000m ² and 4000m ² (between 1/4 and 1 acre)	\$100
Larger lots, and new multi-lot subdivisions	\$250/acre
Hazardous tree removal	No fee

13. Do you support the proposed sliding scale of tree permit application fees?

Yes

No

If not, please describe what changes you would make

The City is considering requiring a security fee of \$1000 per protected tree, when conducting development close to a protected tree. The protection security would be returned upon proof that the tree was not damaged during the adjacent development activities. This is suggested as a best practice as tree protection fencing can fall apart over time, and can be moved. Some other communities in B.C. require a protection security.

14. Do you support the City requiring protection securities to provide financial incentive to adequately protect trees during adjacent development activity?

- Yes, always
- Yes, but only for very special trees such as protected species
- No
- Don't know

Comment

15. If you answered 'Yes' to question 13, do you think the proposed protection security amount of \$1000 per protected tree is:

- A good amount
- Too high
- Too low

If you answered too high or too low, how much do you think it should be?

Survey conclusion

16. Do you support the inclusion of a heritage or significant tree list to the bylaw, possibly at a later date? The list would include individual trees of unique cultural value to the community. Trees on this list would be treated similar to protected species in that only in very rare circumstances could they be removed.

Yes

No

If yes, do you know of any trees you would like to see added to that list? Please provide an address or description of location if possible.

17. As the city grows trees will be cut when development occurs. Urban Forest Strategies implemented in other cities in B.C. help to monitor the existing urban forest and identify areas on public and private lands where trees can be planted. Do you support the undertaking of an Urban forest Strategy in order to maintain and protect the City's urban forest?

Yes

No

Unsure

18. Do you have any ideas of what the City could do to promote tree retention and planting on private property?

19. Do you have any other comments related to the proposed bylaw changes?