



Tree Management Bylaw Survey – Backgrounder

This background document is intended to support the Tree Management Bylaw Survey by providing additional details. Please review this document while completing the survey questions.

Introduction: The Urban Forest and Tree Management Bylaw

Trees are part of what makes Pitt Meadows feel like home. They cool our neighbourhoods during summer heat waves, help reduce flooding by absorbing rainwater, improve air quality, increase property value, and provide vital habitat for birds, pollinators, and wildlife. Trees are more than landscaping, they are important infrastructure for our community.

Right now, our tree canopy covers approximately 17% of the City's urban area. Tree canopy cover refers to the area occupied by the leaf and branch network of deciduous and coniferous trees as measured from above. The City's Urban Forest Strategy identifies our goal to increase our canopy cover to 30% by 2050. That means protecting the trees we already have and planting the trees we'll need for the future.

To help achieve this goal, the City adopted an *Interim Tree Management Bylaw* on March 3, 2026 to provide protection and permitting guidance during a community engagement process that will assist in the preparation of a community-informed Tree Management Bylaw. The Tree Management Bylaw will guide how trees are managed, protected, and replaced across our community.

What the Interim Tree Management Bylaw includes:

- ✓ Temporary direction for tree protection and replacement
- ✓ A permit process for tree removal
- ✓ Tree replacement expectations
- ✓ Provisions for responsible development and property maintenance



This background document is provided as supplemental information in support of the Tree Management Bylaw survey.

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This Interim Tree Management Bylaw does not prohibit tree removal; instead, it ensures tree removals are managed responsibly and that the overall tree canopy in Pitt Meadows does not continue to decline. The Interim Bylaw creates a foundation while we gather input from residents, farmers, builders, and property owners to shape a Tree Management Bylaw that reflects the values of Pitt Meadows.

Protecting our urban forest is a shared responsibility and your feedback will help shape its future. Reaching our canopy cover target of 30% will require a careful balance between:

- Allowing responsible tree removal
- Protecting significant and mature trees
- Outlining protection and replacement provisions during development projects
- Ensuring appropriate replacement planting
- Supporting long term canopy growth across the community

How the Tree Management Bylaw is anticipated to protect trees:

- ✓ Institute a permit process for tree removal on private property for any tree 20 cm or greater in diameter at breast height (DBH), unless an exemption applies
- ✓ Establish tree protection and replacement requirements for property maintenance activities
- ✓ Establish tree protection and replacement requirements during building and development
- ✓ Identify and protect trees that have notable significance to the community
- ✓ Provide enforcement tools for unpermitted tree removals or damage

Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) is a standard measurement of a tree's trunk diameter measured at 1.4m above ground level. The DBH provides a standard of measure, recognized by the International Society of Arboriculture, that helps to determine overall tree size, is used to calculate a tree protection zone for a tree, and is used to calculate replacement requirements.

Section 1: Tree Management Permits

Under the Tree Management Bylaw, Tree Management Permits are proposed to be required for tree removals for trees of 20 cm DBH or greater, unless an exemption applies (e.g. trees that are dead or hazardous). There are two permit types: one for tree removal for property maintenance, and one for tree removal for building or development projects. Under the current Interim Tree Management Bylaw, permit applications for property maintenance do not require professional tree assessments, management plans, or replacement tree securities, while permit applications in support of building and development projects do require tree assessments, surveys, management plans and securities. Property maintenance applications are typically short-term decisions based on ongoing use and monitoring of a property and its conditions. Development-related applications are longer term decisions based on new proposed land use and construction designs, and may have a larger impact on trees, the property, and on neighbouring properties.

Significant Trees

There may be trees in the community that could be considered as having additional value and significance to the community based on a particular size, species, ecological value, aesthetic, community landmark feature, and/or a tree of special cultural or heritage importance. These "significant trees" could be provided with additional protection. As an example, the City of Maple Ridge has identified

significant trees as trees that are 50 cm DBH and 70 cm DBH in the urban and rural areas, respectively. Under the Tree Management Bylaw, it is **proposed that significant trees would not be permitted to be removed for property maintenance unless it was determined to be unhealthy or at risk. Significant trees would also need to be further reviewed for potential retention in development plans.**

Section 2: Growing the Urban Forest in Pitt Meadows

To increase the number of trees contributing to the overall canopy in the city, existing trees will need to be protected and new trees will need to be planted. There are different approaches for growing the city's tree canopy under the Tree Management Bylaw.

Growing the urban canopy using tree replacement criteria: With this approach, a replacement tree (or trees) would be required for each tree removed through a Tree Management Permit. A key benefit of this approach is that it is generally simple and straightforward. The challenges with this approach are that it might not help to fully achieve the City's canopy cover target, and would not help to improve the distribution of trees (and the services they provide) throughout the community.

Growing the urban canopy using a tree canopy target: With this approach, each property that proposes to remove a tree through a tree management permit, or that has applied for a development or building permit, would be expected to meet a 30% canopy cover on the property (through retained and/or replacement trees). The benefits of this approach are that it will work towards achieving the City's overall canopy cover target and enhance the distribution of trees across the city. The challenge with this approach is in calculating the number and type of trees to be planted and what an appropriate trigger for planting would be.

It is proposed that under the Tree Management Bylaw:

- Tree removals for *property maintenance* will require tree replacements based on the proposed tree replacement criteria **only**; and
- Tree removals for *building and development projects* will require tree replacements based on the proposed tree replacement criteria **and** will also be required to meet the 30% canopy target.

Tree Replacement Criteria

The Tree Management Bylaw proposes to include a graduated tree replacement requirement for trees of different sizes that are removed under a Tree Management Permit. The graduated replacement requirements reflect the loss of services from the removal of trees of different sizes. The larger the tree that is removed, the more trees will be required to replace the services lost by the removal of that tree.

Tree removal in support of **property maintenance** is proposed to require the following replacements:

- a. Trees 20-40 cm DBH in size will require 1 replacement tree (similar species).
- b. Trees 41-70 cm DBH in size will require 2 replacement trees (similar species).
- c. Trees >70 cm DBH in size will require 3 replacement trees (similar species).

Tree removal to support **building and development projects** is proposed to require the following replacements:

- a. Trees 20-40 cm DBH in size will require 2 replacement trees (similar species).
- b. Trees 41-70 cm DBH in size will require 4 replacement trees (similar species).
- c. Trees >70 cm DBH in size will require 6 replacement trees (similar species).

Replacement trees are expected to be of a similar species (same canopy size category as per the Metro Vancouver tree guide) of the trees being removed. For some properties, replanting with similar species (same canopy size category) may not be feasible. The Tree Management Bylaw proposes to recognize the value in planting smaller canopy species but would attribute a lower value to those trees. Recognizing the value of smaller canopy trees encourages tree planting on-site, where the replanting of larger canopy trees is not feasible, allowing more flexibility in the site design.

Cash in lieu

When the tree replacement requirements or canopy target requirements cannot be met, applicants will have the option to provide a cash in lieu payment to the City to offset the shortfall. Cash in lieu payment values are based on the following amounts:

- Small tree canopy species = \$250
- Medium tree canopy species = \$500
- Large tree canopy species = \$1,000

Cash in lieu payments will go to the City's Tree Replacement Reserve and will be used to support tree management projects that will help to grow and maintain the City's urban forest.

Refer to Appendix A of this Backgrounder for additional information on tree replacement and canopy cover target sample calculations for different scenarios.

Section 3: Properties within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)

Farming is essential to our community's economy, food security, and character. Tree removal that is necessary to support active agricultural production would remain exempt from the requirements of the Tree Management Bylaw. The intent of the Tree Management Bylaw is not to interfere with lawful farming operations but to provide clarity and consistency where trees and buildings intersect.

Key considerations for how the Bylaw could approach agricultural lands include:

- Limiting tree protections to non-active farming areas
- Applying tree replacements to residential areas only
- Maintaining flexibility where farming needs are demonstrated
- Supporting environmental functions that benefit farming operations

Trees within the agricultural landscapes can provide important long-term benefits including:

- Wind protection for crops
- Soil stability and erosion control
- Shade and temperature regulation
- Wildlife habitat and biodiversity corridors
- Riparian protection along waterways

Feedback from farmers, the agricultural sector and landowners will inform the development of the Tree Management Bylaw. The City's goal is to balance agricultural productivity with long-term environmental sustainability in a way that reflects Pitt Meadows character and community values.

APPENDIX A

Tree replacement and canopy target calculations for different tree removal and development scenarios

The Tree Management Bylaw is expected to provide flexibility for property owners and developers to meet the requirements for tree replacement and canopy cover targets while achieving their maintenance and development goals.

For the example scenarios below, refer to Section 3 of the Backgrounder for more information and refer to the following replacement and cash in lieu values.

Replacement values based on canopy size:

The Bylaw proposes to recognize three canopy sizes for replacement trees (as identified by the Metro Vancouver Tree Guide) based on the potential extent of canopy cover for each tree species. The Bylaw proposes that 1 large canopy species tree would be equivalent to 2 medium canopy species trees or 4 small canopy species trees, based on the difference in services these different species of trees provide.

Cash in lieu values based on canopy size:

The Bylaw proposes different cash in lieu values for trees in each canopy size category: \$1,000 for a large canopy tree, \$500 for a medium canopy tree and \$250 for a small canopy tree. These cash in lieu values are comparable to the replacement values for trees based on canopy size.

Cash in lieu value for development projects that fail to achieve a 30% canopy target:

The Bylaw proposes to double the cash in lieu value for the trees (number and canopy size) that would need to be planted to offset the shortfall in canopy cover on a development project.

Example 1: Tree removal and replacement for property maintenance (i.e. tree replacement criteria only).

Proposed Tree Removals:

- Douglas fir tree (large canopy species) with 55 cm DBH
- Pacific dogwood tree (medium canopy species) of 25 cm DBH

Required Replacement Trees:

- 2 large canopy species trees (removal of a tree with DBH between 41 and 70 cm requires a 2:1 replacement)
- 1 medium canopy species tree (removal of a tree with DBH between 20 and 40 cm requires a 1:1 replacement)

Resolution – Scenario 1:

The property owner proposes to plant 2 red oak trees (large canopy species trees) and 2 kousa dogwood trees (small canopy species trees). The total value of the trees being planted is equal to the value of replacement trees that are required.

- 2 red oak trees = 2 large canopy species trees
- 2 kousa dogwood trees = 2 small canopy species trees = 1 medium canopy species tree

The replacement tree requirement has been met; no cash in lieu is required.

Resolution – Scenario 2:

The property owner proposes to plant 1 red oak tree (large canopy species tree) and 2 kousa dogwood trees (small canopy species trees). The total value of the replacement trees being planted is less than the value of replacement trees that are required.

- 1 red oak tree = 1 large canopy species trees
- 2 kousa dogwood trees = 2 small canopy species trees = 1 medium canopy species tree

The replacement tree requirement has not been met, therefore cash in lieu required in this example would be equal to 1 x \$1,000 based on the cash in lieu value of 1 large canopy species tree.

Resolution – Scenario 3:

The property owner does not propose to plant any trees. The replacement tree requirement has not been met. The cash in lieu required in this example would be equal to \$2,500, based on the cash in lieu value for 2 large canopy species trees (\$1,000 each) plus the value of 1 medium canopy species tree (\$500).

Example 2: Tree removal and replacement for property development and/or building project (i.e. tree replacement criteria and 30% tree canopy target requirement).

Property size: 1,000m²

Canopy Cover Target: 300m²

Proposed Tree Removals:

- Western red cedar tree (large canopy species) with 35 cm DBH
- Western red cedar tree (large canopy species) with 100 cm DBH
- Douglas fir tree (large canopy species): 55 cm DBH

Required Replacement Trees:

- 2 large canopy species trees (removal of tree with DBH between 20 and 40 cm requires a 2:1 replacement)
- 6 large canopy species trees (removal of tree with DBH greater than 70 cm requires a 6:1 replacement)
- 4 large canopy species trees (removal of tree with DBH between 41-70 cm requires a 4:1 replacement)

Resolution – Scenario 1:

In the design of the site, 2 red maple trees (large canopy species trees) and 3 paperbark maple trees (small canopy species trees) are proposed for planting. The replacement tree requirement of 12 large canopy species trees has not been met.

2 red maple trees (2 large canopy species trees) + 4 paperbark maple trees (equivalent value to 1 large canopy species tree) = **3 large canopy species trees.**

The shortfall in replacement planting is equal to **12 – 3 = 9** large canopy species trees. Therefore, based on the cash in lieu value of \$1,000 for large canopy species trees, the cash in lieu required for tree replacement in scenario 1 is **\$9,000.**

The canopy cover for the proposed trees is approximately 438m² which is greater than the required 30% canopy target of 300m². Therefore, the canopy cover target is met and no additional cash in lieu is required.

Resolution – Scenario 2:

In the design of the site, 4 paperbark maple trees (small canopy species trees) are proposed for planting. The replacement tree requirement has not been met.

4 paperbark trees (4 small canopy species trees) = **1 large canopy species tree**

The shortfall in replacement planting is equal to $12 - 1 = 11$ large canopy species trees. Therefore, based on the cash in lieu value of \$1,000 for large canopy species trees, the cash in lieu required for tree replacement in scenario 2 is **\$11,000**.

The canopy cover for the proposed development is approximately 112m². Therefore, the 30% canopy cover target is not met. The canopy cover shortfall is $300\text{m}^2 - 112\text{m}^2 = 188\text{m}^2$. This canopy cover shortfall would be satisfied with the planting of 1 large canopy species tree (177m² *) and 1 small canopy species tree (15m² *). The cash in lieu value required to offset the shortfall in canopy cover is two times the value of the trees that need to be planted or $2 \times (\$1000 + \$250) = \$2,500$. Therefore, a cash in lieu payment of **\$2,500** for the shortfall in canopy cover is also required.

For Scenario 2, the overall cash in lieu value required for the proposed development would be equal to $\$11,000 + \$2,500 = \mathbf{\$13,500}$.

***Please note:** for the purposes of calculating cash in lieu values for the shortfall of canopy cover, canopy areas of 15m², 65m² and 177m² will be used for small canopy trees, medium canopy trees and large canopy trees, respectively.

Example 3: No trees on the property for a development and/or building project.

Property size: 700m²

Canopy Cover Target: 210m²

Proposed Tree Removals:

- No trees on the property

Required Replacement Trees:

- No replacement trees required (no trees removed)

Resolution – Scenario 1:

In the design of the site, 4 Pacific dogwood trees (medium canopy species trees) and 2 star magnolia trees (small canopy species trees) are proposed for planting on the development property. There is no replacement tree requirement as no trees were removed.

The canopy cover for the proposed trees is approximately 298m². Therefore, the canopy cover target is met and cash in lieu is not required.

Resolution – Scenario 2:

In the design of the site, 4 star magnolia trees (small canopy species trees) are proposed for planting on the development property. There is no replacement tree requirement as no trees were removed.

The canopy cover for the proposed trees is approximately 52m². Therefore the canopy cover target is not met. The canopy shortfall is 210m² - 52m² = 158m². The canopy shortfall would be satisfied with the planting of 1 large canopy species tree (177m² *). The cash in lieu required to offset the shortfall in canopy cover is two times the value of the trees that need to be planted, or 2 x \$1,000 = \$2,000. Therefore, a cash in lieu payment of **\$2,000** for the shortfall in canopy cover is required.

***Please note:** for the purposes of calculating cash in lieu values for the shortfall of canopy cover, canopy areas of 15m², 65m² and 177m² will be used for small canopy trees, medium canopy trees and large canopy trees, respectively.