



Staff Report to Council

DATE: Monday, January 16, 2023

DEPARTMENT: Planning

SUBJECT: Request for Proposal for Urban Forest Management Plan

BACKGROUND:

At the Langford City Council meeting of December 5, 2022, Council directed staff to explore options for developing a tree management policy in the City of Langford. Following this meeting, staff were notified of several instances of tree cutting in the community, in the absence of an official tree cutting policy or bylaw, and in contravention of existing Development Permit requirements. As a result, Council acted to adopt an interim tree management bylaw (Bylaw No. 2115) on December 21, 2022. The interim bylaw is in effect until a more comprehensive strategy for regulating the urban forest is in place.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council direction with respect to moving forward with such a strategy: a comprehensive urban forest management plan. This would involve preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to retain a professional consultant. Specifically, the RFP would include:

1. Background review of Langford's current policies & bylaws with respect to tree cutting, replacement and retention, and other tree protection measures with respect to its urban forest, (including a review of the draft form the City's proposed DPA for Climate Action);
2. Basic summary of data available on the state of Langford's urban forest;
3. Background review of urban forest management plans and bylaws of other municipalities to determine proven best practices for urban forest management within an eco-regional and climate-informed context appropriate for the City;
4. Conduct an initial public consultation phase, which would include:
 - Online survey on community values & preferences
 - Public mapping of important urban forests/places
 - Facilitation of workshop/s (staff, Council, public, stakeholders)
 - Open house/s

5. A review, analysis and synthesis of data gathered from both the review of best practices and public engagement;
6. Provide draft options to the City for an urban forest management plan and bylaw, along with the cost implications associated with implementing each option, including municipal staff time and resources, tree removal and replacement costs for homeowners and developers, and suggested costs associated with replacement standards.
7. Potentially conduct a second public consultation phase depending on the option or options selected, which would include:
 - Online survey for feedback on the draft strategy
 - Workshop/s
 - Open house/s
8. Submit and present a final urban forest management plan and associated bylaw, along with public feedback to the City.

Ultimately, the RFP and resulting outputs will inform all related bylaws, plans, and policies to achieve identified objectives.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

A preliminary review of the available planning reports from other BC municipalities provides insight into the potential outcomes of the RFP process. While a review of each is beyond the scope of this report, it is worth noting that one common theme amongst many municipalities was implementing a tree protection bylaw alongside a more comprehensive strategy, such as an urban forest management plan, to better inform other planning priorities.

Jurisdiction	Key Management Strategy	Implementation Method
City of Courtney	Bylaw establishes a tree density target of 50 trees per net developable hectare of land for greenfield sites. For infill sites, cash-in-lieu option available (replacement reserve fund). Protected trees based on following criteria: species type, all trees within environmental DP area, all trees on slopes greater than 30%, all trees over 0.5 m in height, and all public trees.	Bylaw and Urban Forest Management Strategy
District of Oak Bay	Bylaw designates protected trees based on species and DBH - uses a canopy cover target approach at the time of building permit. The canopy target varies by zone and ranges from 50%	Bylaw and Urban Forest Management Plan

Jurisdiction	Key Management Strategy	Implementation Method
	for Community Institutional Zoning to 20% for Multi Unit Residential	
City of Colwood	Bylaw establishes protected trees based on species and DBH. Replacement trees required for all trees removed at ratio of 1:1 for 5 trees or less, and 2:1 for >5 trees. Cash-in-lieu option available if trees cannot be accommodated on site. No tree cutting permit required where a development permit has been issued that addresses tree removal.	Bylaw
City of Victoria	Bylaw sets a tree minimum on each lot based on type of trees removed (e.g., protected, species, or hedges). Includes replacement standards.	Bylaw and Urban Forest Master Plan
District of Sooke	In progress: Council directed staff to develop a purpose-based engagement strategy for tree management.	Draft Bylaw
District of Saanich	Bylaw designates protected trees based on species and DBH. Includes replacement standards on sliding scale depending on specific scenarios (i.e., range between 1:1 to 1:3)	Bylaw and Urban Forest Strategy (In-progress)
City of Kelowna	Bylaw only applies to lands in environmental and hazardous DP area. Sets a replacement ratio based on DBH.	Bylaw
City of Port Moody	Bylaw requires a replacement ratio of 2:1 for significant trees. Significant is defined as a tree “important to the community”. This includes heritage, landmark and wildlife trees.	Bylaw and Urban Forest Management Strategy (In-Progress)
City of Abbotsford	Bylaw applies to any tree over 20cm in diameter. Replacement ratio up to 3:1 depending in size of trees removed. Urban Forest Management Strategy in draft form. Sets a canopy cover target city-wide of no net loss by 2040 (meaning total canopy cover is at 40% of city).	Bylaw and Urban Forest Management Strategy (in- progress)
City of Nanaimo	Bylaw applies to any tree in a Development Permit Area or area designated by covenant. More specifically, designates heritage trees, wildfire trees, landmark and fire interface trees. All subdivisions to protect at least 20% of trees on the parcel exclusive of the area set aside for park dedication.	Bylaw and Urban Forest Management Strategy
Township of Esquimalt	Bylaw sets replacement ratios based on tree species and DBH. Where the number of replacement trees is less than the number of protected trees removed, a cash-in-lieu option to plant trees in parks and other public lands may be considered.	Bylaw and Urban Forest Management Plan
City of Campbell River	City does not currently have a tree replacement bylaw or policy, however the Urban Forest Management Strategy indicates that a tree canopy goal will be established in the future. Some protection is provided through the Development Permit process	Urban Forest Management Plan

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The costs associated with developing an urban forest management plan could be covered through funds provided to the City through the provincial government’s Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP)¹.

As part of the 2022 program, the City of Langford received a one-time payment to support the implementation of local climate action policies that reduce emissions and prepare the community for the impacts of a changing climate. It is expected that these funds would fully cover the costs of the consulting work.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

The *Community Charter* enables Council to “regulate, prohibit or impose requirements in relation to [...] trees” (sections 8(3)(c), 50 and 52). The *Community Charter* provides municipalities with the rights to provide services and develop bylaws including the development of Tree Bylaws and Official Community Plan environmental protection provisions.

The *Local Government Act* sets out in S.527 (1) that a local government may, by bylaw, set standards for and regulate the provision of screening or landscaping for one or more of the following purposes: ... (b) preserving, protecting, restoring, and enhancing the natural environment; and (c) preventing hazardous conditions. Further, S.488 allows local governments to designate development permit areas for...(a) protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems, and biological diversity, (e)-(f) establishment of objectives for the form and character of intensive residential, commercial, industrial or multi-family development, and (h)-(j) establishment of objectives to promote energy and water conservation and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

OPTIONS:

Option 1

THAT Council

- 1) Direct staff to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) outlining specific action items to be included in an overarching urban forest management plan including full public consultation and costing analysis;

AND

- 2) Authorize staff to use funds from the Local Government Climate Action Program (“LGCAP”) to pay

¹ [Local Government Climate Action Program - Province of British Columbia](#)

for the consulting work;

OR Option 2

THAT Council

Take no action at this time with respect to an urban forest management plan.

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