



## REVISED AGENDA - VICTORIA CITY COUNCIL

Thursday, March 13, 2025, 6:30 P.M. - 11:00 P.M.

Council Chambers, City Hall, 1 Centennial Square

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees Nation and Xwsepsum Nation

*Victoria City Hall is a place where civil discourse, respect and inclusion is paramount. We ask each of us to help make city hall a place where we are all welcome and valued, where speakers and listeners honour the protocols that guide our work, and no form of discrimination is tolerated.*

Pages

**\*A. POETRY**

*Recording of readings by Marie Metaphor Specht, Poet Laureate*

**B. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**C. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

**D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**E. REQUESTS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL**

E.1 Susanne Rautio: Public Participation in Public hearings (phone)

E.2 Jan Firstbrook: Density and the Urban Forest (in-person)

E.3 Diana Smardon, the Committee to End Homelessness: Homelessness, Affordable Housing, Cancel Pool (in-person)

E.4 Edward Pullman: Wayfinding for Cycling Routes (phone)

E.5 Carol Sokoloff: Centennial Square (in-person)

\*E.6 Kirk Buhne: Proposed Official Community Plan (in-person)

*Addendum: New Speaker*

\*E.7 Carollyne Yardley: Urban Forest and Natural Assets (in-person)

*Addendum: New Speaker*

\*E.8 Jason Jones: The Redesign of Centennial Square (in-person)

*Addendum: New Speaker*

**F. EXTENDED ADDRESS TO COUNCIL**

**Participation is available by the following ways:**

1. **Attend in-person**
  - Council Chambers, Victoria City Hall, 1 Centennial Square, Victoria, BC
  - Email [councilsecretary@victoria.ca](mailto:councilsecretary@victoria.ca)
    - Maximum 5 minutes to address Council
2. **Speak live – via telephone**
  - Email [councilsecretary@victoria.ca](mailto:councilsecretary@victoria.ca)
    - Maximum 5 minutes to address Council
    - Register by 2:00 p.m. the day before the meeting
3. **Audio/video submission:**
  - Email submission to [councilsecretary@victoria.ca](mailto:councilsecretary@victoria.ca)
    - Maximum 5 minutes in length
    - Must be received by 2:00 p.m. the Tuesday before the meeting

*Preregistration is required to ensure your spot as a speaker and should time permit, walk-ins may have an opportunity to address Council.*

**G. NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

**H. CLOSED MEETING, IF REQUIRED**

**I. ADJOURNMENT**



“Victoria 2050” | Urban Tree Canopy | Gap Analysis  
March 13, 2025

Dear Mayor and Council

**Overview:** Urban tree canopy data has been collected over multiple years by City of Victoria to facilitate ongoing monitoring of its urban forest canopy. The City outsourced urban tree canopy (vegetation) change detection analysis twice before. The method used in 2007-2013 and 2013-2019 should be repeated with the most recently obtained urban tree canopy measurements (2023). This analysis will provide better understanding of how the urban forest has been impacted by development policies and practices over the last four years. The results of that analysis will clarify how present land use development policies and the Tree Protection Bylaw interrelate. This analysis is integral to understanding proposed changes to the Official Community Plan (OCP) and their potential impacts on the urban forest over the medium to long term.

**Action items:** Request that the Urban Forestry staff perform the following measurements and incorporate into the Draft OCP “Victoria 2025.”

1. a) 2021-2025 neighbourhood-level metrics on quantity of trees retained and quantity of trees removed through developments, b) 2021-2025 neighbourhood-level metrics on quantity of development sites that met Tree Protection Bylaw tree minimums compared to developments that did not meet the Tree Protection Bylaw tree minimums. (Attachment F – Approach to Site Servicing Renewal – Urban Forest)
2. Obtain vegetation (urban tree canopy) change detection analysis for 2019-2023 using the methods from previous surveys by Terra Remote Sensing (2007-2013, 2013-2019) (Attachment A: Natural Assets 4.3 Urban Forest, city-wide canopy cover quoted at 28 per cent).
3. Define the percentage of plantable space for residential zoning parameters relative to findings of Actions 1 and 2 (Attachment C – Approach to Zoning Modernization – Other Key Residential Zoning Parameters).

**Background:**

The Rockland Neighbourhood Land Use Committee requests Urban Forestry Planning staff (or a third party urban forestry consultant) to conduct analysis of data obtained in Action Items 1, 2 and 3, and incorporate into Draft OCP “Victoria 2025” on anticipated medium and long term urban forest impacts. The City of Victoria measured its urban forest and conducted vegetation assessments using LiDAR technology in 2007, 2013, 2019, and 2023, focusing on neighborhood and citywide levels, it also included plantable space.

From 2013 to 2019, Victoria's urban forest grew by 2.37%, achieving a citywide canopy cover of 28.8%. The growth aligned with urban forestry management practices and the Official Community Plan (OCP), predating the updated Tree Protection Bylaw (21-035). The Tree Protection Bylaw has not been updated since the introduction of City of Victoria's Missing Middle Housing Initiative and Province of BC Bills 44 and 37 and is considered outdated in relation to lot densification. This is significant, because housing policies which prioritize building structures and utilities, can conflict with Bylaw protections for trees and limit tree planting efforts. Additionally, the Tree Reserve Fund, accumulating over \$1.8 million from 2021 to 2024, raises questions about the City's valuation of trees and its ability to address tree minimum deficits.

No further vegetation change detection has been conducted since the 2019 assessment, and Mayor and Council has not asked how the land development and urban forest management guidelines, bylaws, and policies are linked.

The Tree Protection Bylaw establishes a minimum tree density for new developments based on 50 trees per hectare and is predicated on a projected canopy coverage over time but lacks empirical evidence supporting its effectiveness.

The Bylaw also suggests a feasible 15% canopy cover within 30 years, primarily applying to private properties, yet a city or neighborhood canopy target has not been set.

The release of 2023 LiDAR data offers a chance to update urban forest measurements and analyze changes from 2019 to 2023 to build City of Victoria’s understanding of links between existing urban forest policies and land use changes over the past five years. Measurements inform Bylaw modernization, help navigate constraints, and will further the goals set forth in the “Victoria 2050” vision and the Urban Forest Master Plan.

Neighborhood-level canopy deficiencies negatively impact residents' physical and mental health, and wildlife habitats which emphasizes the need for a review of the Bylaw's effectiveness. Further data should be considered to understand the effectiveness of the existing Bylaw, beginning with an urban forestry inquiry analyzing the number of completed development projects between 2021-2025 that have met the Bylaw tree minimum requirements.

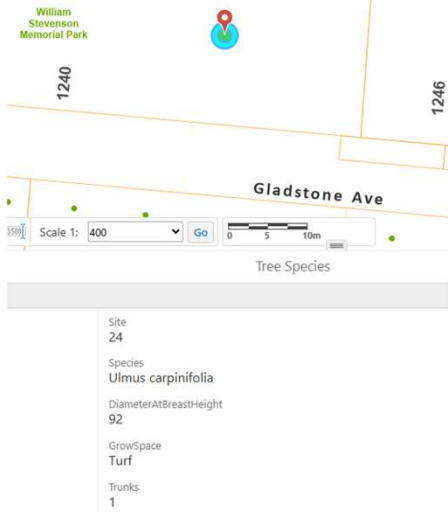
The City's Urban Forest Management Plan (2013) is also well out of date. Establishing neighbourhood level and citywide urban tree canopy targets at both neighborhood and citywide levels would enable City staff to prioritize areas for enhancement on private and public lands, and measure their progress toward achieving targeted outcomes.

Sincerely,

Carollyne Yardley  
Co-chair, Rockland Neighbourhood Association, Land Use Committee  
[www.rockland.bc.ca](http://www.rockland.bc.ca)

## Urban forest measurement:

Trees (Parks Inventory)



Tree Canopy 2023



Source: City of Victoria Maps (VicMap)

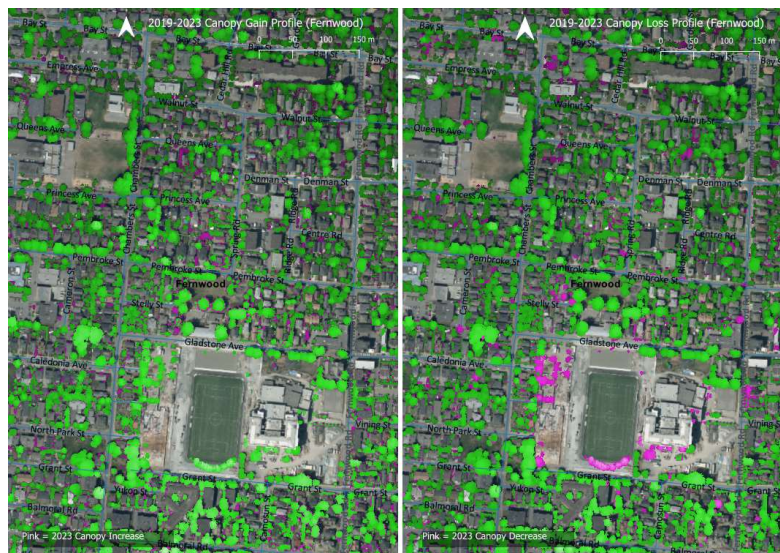
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## Urban forest monitoring:

2013-2019

Neighbourhood	% change from 2013-2019
Burnside	10.37%
Downtown	23.78%
Fairfield	4.88%
Fernwood	8.79%
Gonzales	5.95%
Harris Green	6.39%
Hillside Quadra	13.28%
James Bay	13.93%
North Jubilee	10.46%
North Park	9.26%
Oaklands	9.19%
Rockland	4.40%
South Jubilee	8.21%
Victoria West	18.79%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.28%</b>

Source: City of Victoria (Terra Remote Sensing)



2019

2023

2

**Request that City of Victoria Urban Forestry staff perform the following analyses and provide recommendations**

- 1.       a) 2021-2025 quantity of trees retained and quantity of trees removed**  
**b) 2021-2025 quantity of development sites that met tree minimums compared to developments that did not meet tree minimums.**
- 2.       Obtain vegetation (urban tree canopy) change detection analysis for 2019-2023**
- 3.       Define the percentage of plantable space for residential zoning parameters relative to findings of Actions 1 and 2**