

Dec 13, 2018

Tree Protection

Requests to Victoria Mayor & Council to be made during Lisa Gordon's delegation

Thank you for including tree protection in your 2019-2022 draft strategic plan.

You have demonstrated your support for the urban forest by including: a) Review Tree Preservation Bylaw, b) Implement the 2013 UFMP and c) asking staff to report back on options for increasing parks planning staff resources for coordinating the UFMP implementation.

I have some additional suggestions to more clearly define your commitment to the urban forest.

I request that you amend the draft strategic plan operational priority about heritage as follows:

Current draft: Heritage Conservation and Heritage Designation

Proposed amendment: Designation and conservation of natural and built heritage

I request the 2019 (and future) budget provide for implementation of the 2013 UFMP and strengthening of the 2005 Tree Protection Bylaw, including bylaw enforcement.

I also request that Mayor & Council consider the following six actions:

- Assign current staff to conduct an immediate inventory of significant trees, perhaps starting with a public nomination process like Saanich does. Knowing the number and location of significant trees will root the bylaw review process in reality.
- Set neighbourhood-based targets for increasing Victoria's tree canopy and assign staff with urban forest canopy expertise to participate in the local area planning process as part of your climate adaptation plan.

- Budget for a permanent staff position starting in 2019 to review the bylaw and implement the 2013 UFMP. Give this position the authority to work with all three departments making decisions affecting trees: engineering, planning and parks. Depending what options staff bring you in their response to your recent request, you might reconsider whether Parks is the best base for this multi-departmental responsibility. The development department has more staff working directly with landowners and has ability to recover DCCs and to request amenity contributions to do, or pay for, that work.
- Provide greater transparency to the public by reporting annually on a) permits approved and denied for tree removal by size, species and location, b) species and locations of new trees planted (not including those on rooftops or in containers), and c) annual canopy loss / gain by neighbourhood.
- Learn from other jurisdictions about financial incentives for tree protection on private land. UBCM has endorsed a program the BC Land Trust Alliance calls CTIP (Conservation Tax Incentive Program)
<https://ltabc.ca/programs/tax-incentive-program/>
<http://www.highlands.ca/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/2863?fileID=3055>
- Convene an Urban Forest Steering Committee / Advisory Group to support the above tasks. The group could assist with a review of best practices in other jurisdictions, including financial incentives to private landowners. I would happily serve on this group and know others willing to serve, with love.