

## City to Develop Urban Forest Strategy

With consultant, Diamond Head, we are developing an urban forest strategy, a comprehensive document which will provide baseline information about the state of our urban forest, develop a long-term vision, and adopt tangible goals for management and growth of our urban forest. This strategy is necessary to help preserve the urban forest, establish acceptable canopy coverage and forest health targets, and achieve tangible goals while managing challenges. Detailed info about the strategy is available on [Let's Talk Parksville](#).

We are asking the public to participate in a survey to help shape the urban forest vision and strategic directions for the strategy. The survey will be open until October 22 and accessible from [Let's Talk Parksville](#).

Parksville's urban forest includes all trees, vegetation and soil spanning parks, streets, existing forests and other ecosystems, agriculture lands, and private property. The urban forest is an important community resource integral to the character of the City. Trees are living assets that provide numerous benefits to the community such as capturing rainwater, cleaning air, shading, and cooling streets and buildings, promoting economic growth by attracting tourism, and reducing energy use costs including heating and cooling. The urban forest also supports our physical and mental health and wellbeing. You may have experienced these benefits during the pandemic, while walking in your neighbourhood or exploring the forested areas in and around Parksville.

The urban forest is facing challenges from climate hazards, urbanization, and declining forest health. The increase in the number of western redcedar throughout the City is a prime example of the impacts of warmer, drier summers affecting the health and species composition of our native forests. The City's resources have been stretched to manage the volume of dead, dying and high-risk trees.

Parksville also needs to accommodate a growing population, which means new housing and infrastructure are being built in areas once forest. Rarely can individual or small groups of trees that grew up in a forest be retained when development occurs because they are vulnerable to winds once exposed. In these areas, the trees that are planted in new yards, parks and along streets will form the future forest canopy.

The urban forest strategy will provide direction for the City to address these challenges while at the same time looking at the opportunities to achieve the community's vision for Parksville's future urban forest. We encourage our residents to participate. Completion of the strategy is targeted for March 2022.

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**For more information:**

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