



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: September 12, 2023
Submitted by: Engineering and Operations Department – Project Delivery Services Division
Subject: Urban Forest Management Strategy 2050 Report for Adoption

Purpose

To provide update to Council regarding Urban Forest Management Strategy and to request Council adoption of Urban Forest Management Strategy 2050 Report.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT the Urban Forest Management Strategy 2050 report be adopted as recommended in the report dated September 12, 2023, from the Engineering and Operations Department – Project Delivery Services Division regarding Urban Forest Management Strategy 2050 Report for Adoption.

Background

The purpose of the Urban Forest Management Strategy is to provide the City with clear direction in future decisions and management of the urban forest through the development of a vision, values, benefits, principles, goals, objectives, and recommendations. The implementation of the Urban Forest Management Strategy will plan and provide for the long-term protection and sustainable management of trees within the City. The management of urban forests in Port Moody will create a resilient urban forest on both public and private land. The scope of the strategy includes street trees, specimen trees, and native forests in parks and greenbelts throughout all parts of the City.

At the Regular Council meeting held on February 8, 2022, Council considered a report dated January 20, 2022, from the Engineering and Operations Department – Project Delivery Services Division regarding Urban Forest Management Strategy Public Engagement Strategy and passed the following resolution:

RC22/057

THAT the Urban Forest Management Strategy Public Engagement Strategy be endorsed as recommended in the report dated January 20, 2022, from the Engineering and Operations Department – Project Delivery Services Division regarding Urban Forest Management Strategy Public Engagement Strategy;

AND THAT the Tree Protection Bylaw Update be included in the Urban Forest Management Strategy, including engagement;

AND THAT staff be directed to work with Fraser Health to highlight health and wellbeing elements of tree canopy in communication materials.

Discussion

Port Moody's Urban Forest Management Strategy is a plan to sustain the city's trees and forests, creating a vision for 2050 and beyond. Trees and forests are part of the city's exceptional natural heritage and are a critical resource for the community. However, the urban forest needs proactive management to address challenges like urbanization and development, declining forest health, loss of biodiversity, and the impacts of climate change. This strategy provides a systematic approach to maintaining, protecting, and enhancing Port Moody's urban forest to create a resilient community.

The goals and objectives of the creation of the strategy includes the following:

- Develop a comprehensive Urban Forest Management Strategy which reflects a 30-year plan to 2050, and includes staff, Council, stakeholders and community input;
- Make recommendations and draft language within the Urban Forest Management Strategy to inform future OCP updates and the ongoing Parkland Strategy (2020);
- Endeavor to engage the public, community partners and stakeholders who contribute to the success of the urban forest;
- Provide the City with clear direction in the protection, planting and management of the urban forest on both public and private land;
- Conduct an assessment of our existing urban forests (where we are now) and a review of current urban forest management practices in Port Moody including, but not limited to: strategies and policies, resources, priorities, challenges and successes;
- Evaluate projected impacts to the urban forest canopy coverage on both public and private land with land use changes expected to occur under projected growth scenarios and current direction provided under the OCP (where we will be);
- Develop a cross-departmental implementation plan to achieve these recommendations. Implementation plans must be able to inform department work plans and identifying multi-year budget needs;
- Recommend urban forest management policies, bylaws, standards and other actions needed to achieve the short (5 year), medium (10 year) and long term (20+ year) strategic management objectives;

The City engaged Diamond Head Consulting to assist in the drafting of this strategy and they were tasked with providing a comprehensive plan to address these goals and objectives. Diamond Head determined a workplan to encompass these items and the staff and consultant team have moved through the various stages of assessment, investigation, evaluation, engagement and reporting to reach conclusions and recommendations contained in the Urban Forest Management Strategy 2050 report (**Attachment 1**). Diamond Head developed a framework headed by the following:

The Vision

Port Moody's abundant, safe, and resilient urban forest supports the health and well-being of our community and the exceptional environment in which we live.

The Goals

The vision is supported by five goals:

1. Plan and adapt to sustain the future of the urban forest.
2. Plant the right trees in the right places to maximize benefits and maintain a treed character.
3. Manage trees and forests to maintain public safety and forest health.
4. Protect trees and planting spaces to maintain a treed and forested character.
5. Partner broadly to implement the Urban Forest Management Strategy.

The Target

Canopy cover increased to 59% city-wide from 58% by 2050, and increased in urban areas outside of parks and industrial lands from 28% to 31%.

Priority Actions

- Establishing canopy cover or tree density targets in the Zoning Bylaw, and supporting permeable surface, greenspace, tree planting and other forms of greening requirements;
- Incorporating the City's trees and forests in the Natural Asset Management program, and into the City's Asset Management and Maintenance Connection systems;
- Developing standards for structural soil, soil cells, permeable surface materials and ensuring standards produce infrastructure that supports tree health and canopy cover targets;
- Developing 10-year planting programs for public urban and natural areas, prioritizing areas with low tree equity and declining service value;
- Updating tree policy and bylaws to support improved site design, boulevard tree planting standards and remedies for the unauthorized removal of City trees;
- Advocating for a working group to monitor and mitigate Western redcedar decline and other climate driven health issues in forested natural areas;
- Defining "Significant Trees" for protection through the Tree Protection Bylaw or during a development process, and exploring a grant program to support people with maintenance.

Introduction

The report discusses the various benefits of the urban forest, and the reasons that the management of the urban forest is important, both in general as well as specific to Port Moody. The urban forest plays a vital role in creating a healthy and sustainable urban environment for the Port Moody community. Benefits in Port Moody are evident on multiple scales and include beautification, sense of place and recreation as well direct benefits such as pollination, carbon storage and air filtration. Other notable positive effects of the urban forest include community mental and physical health, economic benefit, civic pride, reconciliation value, habitat and biodiversity and overall climate resilience. It is noted that these benefits do not come without some level of management in urban forestry. This can apply to native forests in urban and rural land as well as residential areas in suburban and urban settings.

One key target described in detail in the Diamond Head report and listed as a key goal of the strategy relates to canopy cover targets. Understanding the extent of the tree canopy in Port Moody allows recommendations for a realistic canopy cover target based on the City's

needs and urban forest vision. As part of the strategy, Port Moody's canopy cover was measured on various levels including city-wide, by neighbourhood, by land use and by land ownership or environmental designation. Below is a table that shows the canopy cover by neighbourhood in Port Moody (Table 1). Currently Port Moody's overall canopy coverage is estimated at 58%. For comparison, targets in neighbouring communities include New Westminster canopy coverage target of 27% and City of Vancouver target of 30%.

Neighbourhood	Canopy Cover
Ioco, Northwest Port Moody	79%
Heritage Mountain, Twin Creeks, Heritage Woods	57%
April Road, Pleasantide	47%
Moody Centre	44% (29%*)
Noons Creek, Mountain Meadows	41%
Glenayre, Seaview, College Park, Harbour Heights	33%
Inlet Centre	27%
Coronation Park	24%

* The neighbourhood boundaries of Moody Centre include the Chines natural areas and the (largely forested) Suncor property. Without these lands, Moody Centre's canopy cover would be 29%.

Engagement

Staff worked with the consultant team from Diamond Head to implement two rounds of public engagement activities, as described in the approved Public Engagement Strategy. Phase one of the Urban Forest Management Strategy Public Engagement Strategy was completed in summer of 2022 and phase two activities completed in early 2023. Engagement included public surveys, online forum, public pop-up events, stakeholder workshops, as well as an open house event and presentation. Diamond Head provided the Urban Forest Management Strategy Engagement Summary reports to summarize all engagement efforts and capture public feedback.

Some key takeaways from the phase two engagement include:

- Excellent level of public satisfaction with the draft UFMS.
- Public feedback to suggest higher canopy target by 2050.
- Suggestions for adjustment of implementation priority of some items.
- Feedback on additional content for topics such as tree retention, replanting and safety.
- Suggestion to improve partnerships with First Nations, schools and community groups.

During these sessions, to follow Council direction staff also included engagement activities specific to the Tree Protection Bylaw update project. It is anticipated that upcoming Tree Protection Bylaw activities and draft bylaw will be informed by the final Urban Forest Management Strategy and will continue further engagement into late 2023.

Current State and Vision

The Urban Forest Management Strategy 2050 report includes the Vision for Port Moody and discussion on how related targets may be achieved. Scenarios for Port Moody's canopy are described in the report:

1. Status quo (gradual decline) – 2050
 - Canopy decreases to 56% (from 58%) city-wide and 24% (from 28%) in urban areas outside of parks and general industrial lands.
 - This status quo scenario assumes that, in urban areas, approximately 350 trees would be removed, and approximately 350 trees would be planted each year in urban areas.
2. No net loss (stable/small gain) – 2050
 - Canopy is maintained around 58% city-wide and grows to 31% (from 28%) in urban areas outside of parks and general industrial lands.
 - This no net loss scenario assumes that approximately 350 trees would be removed, and 1,100 would be planted each year in urban areas.
3. Net growth (gain) – 2050
 - Canopy increases to 60% city-wide, and 35% in urban areas outside of parks and general industrial lands.
 - This growth scenario assumes that approximately 350 trees would be removed, and 1,500 would be planted each year in urban areas.

The recommended target explained in the strategy report is for the Scenario #2 - No net loss. Key metrics of this target include a 59% city-wide canopy cover and 31% canopy outside of parks and general industrial lands. Goals to achieve these targets are outlined in the Urban Forest Management Strategy 2050 report and more detail is provided on targets for additional land-use designations in Port Moody.

Opportunities and Challenges

Based on the recommended strategy and associated targets, opportunities shown in the strategy report are highlighted to 2050.

Reconciliation

- Urban forestry as the potential to support reconciliation outcomes, like enhancing and restoring Indigenous land management in the forest landscape.

Stewardship

- Stewards include locally focused environmental non-profits, naturalists, community associations, and institutions actively engaged in environmental management as well as residents, business owners, and companies passively caring for trees on their property.

Leveraging development

- Redevelopment in Moody Centre has considerable potential to grow the urban forest in low canopy cover areas if policies support the creation of adequate new tree planting sites.

External funding

- New initiatives from higher levels of government offer opportunities for Port Moody to access funding to sustain and grow its urban forest.

Potential challenges to reach 2050 targets are noted in the strategy and include:

Climate change

- Future species selection will need to consider diversity and drought tolerance through the planting of climate-adapted species in urban areas.

Urban development

- While the City aims to achieve a 2:1 replacement ratio for development-related tree removal, where sites are too small to accommodate both these trees and the new building, builders can pay cash-in-lieu to the City for planting elsewhere on public land.

Tree inventory diversity

- The risks of low biodiversity among managed urban trees include vulnerability to forest health factors and reduced ecosystem service values.

Forest Health

- Poor forest health is increasingly being connected to indicators of climate change. The City is working to improve forest health monitoring through use of its asset management system, Maintenance Connection, but remains largely complaint driven.

Equity

- By recognizing equity as a value to uphold during strategy implementation, Port Moody will support community health holistically, reinforcing its strong quality of life goals and helping limit damaging urban heat island effects.

Biodiversity

- Trees play a critical role in supporting high levels of biodiversity because they provide structure for many organisms and different habitat needs.

Conserving soils

- Soil quality and quantity, especially in urban areas, can be a limiting factor for young tree survivorship.

Conclusion – Implementation and Monitoring

The conclusion of the Diamond Head report reviews the goals and actions listed in the introduction of the report and details strategies that help outline the pathway to achieving targets outlined in the report, with multiple actions attached to each strategy that provide detailed guidance for the City. In this section of the report, comparisons are shown with other local municipalities as well as international cities and their respective management practices to highlight successful initiatives and policies that may serve as examples for Port Moody moving forward. Lastly, these various actions are also shown in the framework of a practical implementation and monitoring structure. The collection of targets and performance indicators are detailed in a guidance matrix to help ensure targets and practical application of methods are aligned to achieve success.

Other Option(s)

THAT the Urban Forest Management Strategy 2050 report be received for information.

Financial Implications

After Council endorsement of the Urban Forest Management Strategy 2050 report staff will include implementation measures in Capital Program and Operational planning.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

The public engagement activities detailed in the approved Public Engagement Strategy have now been completed and have been summarized in the Engagement Summary Phase Two report. Staff will continue to work with the project consultant to update all reporting and webpage content relating to the Urban Forest Management Strategy and final report. The Tree Protection Bylaw updates will continue through to the next stage of engagement, with further reports back to Council in fall 2023.

Council Strategic Plan Goals

The recommendations in this report align with the following Council Strategic Plan Goal(s):

- Strategic Goal 2.1 – Protect, integrate, and enhance our natural assets.
- Strategic Goal 2.2 – Advance climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Strategic Goal 2.3 – Enhance and expand parkland and open spaces.
- Strategic Goal 3.3 – Enhance community wellbeing.
- Strategic Goal 4.3 – Leverage public spaces.

Attachment(s)

1. Urban Forest Management Strategy 2050 report.

Report Author

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Urban Forest Management Strategy Report for Adoption.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Urban Forest Management Strategy 2050 report.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Aug 31, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Wayne Maskall, Manager of Parks, for Julie Pavey-Tomlinson, Director of Environment and Parks - Aug 30, 2023 - 7:46 AM

Devin Jain, Manager of Cultural Services, for Anna Mathewson, General Manager of Community Services - Aug 30, 2023 - 11:34 AM

Tracey Takahashi, Deputy Corporate Officer, for Stephanie Lam, City Clerk and Manager of Legislative Services - Aug 30, 2023 - 1:46 PM

Lindsay Todd, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Aug 30, 2023 - 2:21 PM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Aug 30, 2023 - 4:01 PM

Kate Zanon, General Manager of Community Development, for Tim Savoie, City Manager - Aug 31, 2023 - 1:54 PM