

PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

SUBJECT: URBAN FOREST STRATEGY

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the final Urban Forest Strategy as provided in Attachment 1 to the report titled “Urban Forest Strategy” dated April 17, 2025, of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee meeting, be approved.

REPORT

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee, at its meeting held on April 17, 2025, received and adopted the attached report presenting the final Urban Forest Strategy and seeking Council approval of the Strategy.

On behalf of the Parks, Recreation and
Culture Committee,

Councillor P. Calendino
Chair

Councillor J. Wang
Vice Chair

TO: PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE (PRCC)
FROM: DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE
SUBJECT: URBAN FOREST STRATEGY
PURPOSE: To present the final Urban Forest Strategy and seek Committee's recommendation that Council approve the Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the final Urban Forest Strategy as provided in Attachment 1 to the report titled "Urban Forest Strategy", dated April 17, 2025, be approved.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

The Urban Forest Strategy aligns with the following Council adopted policies, plans and strategies: Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016), Climate Action Framework (2020), An Environmentally Sensitive Areas Strategy (1992), and Tree Management Policy for Public Lands and the Burnaby Tree Bylaw (1989, 2007).

2.0 BACKGROUND

The City of Burnaby's urban forest is a cornerstone of the community's green infrastructure, defining the city's identity and delivering essential environmental and social benefits. Recognizing the importance of this natural legacy, the Urban Forest Strategy (the "Strategy") outlines a bold 15-year Action Plan that moves us towards achieving a community-supported vision and increase Burnaby's tree canopy cover from 32% (2022) to 40% by 2075.

The draft Strategy was presented to Council on December 16, 2024, and PRCC on February 6, 2025. Since that time, staff lead efforts as part of the Phase 4 – Confirming to verify that the draft Strategy reflects the community's values and vision for Burnaby's urban forest. The project's second Public Engagement campaign ran from January 22 to February 10, which included a public online survey, two open houses, educational displays at nine City venues, 50 educational signs in parks and kiosks, social media posts, Referral Letters to Host Nations, and presentations to PRCC and Environment Committee. Overall, responses emphasize strong support for the draft Urban Forest Strategy including the Goal areas, Strategies and Action Items identified in the report, as illustrated in Attachment 2, Public Engagement 2 Summary. Comments and suggestions were reviewed and incorporated into the final Urban Forest Strategy.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

The Urban Forest Strategy is an important framework that sets out clear actions with timelines and identifies City leadership and supports reaching the 2075 40% canopy goal. Results from the second round of Public Engagement confirm that the community strongly supports the draft Strategy, with the desire to immediately plant more trees and reduce the time periods to reach the canopy target. The Strategy remains consistent with the draft presented to PRCC on February 6, 2025. Public Engagement Phase 2 feedback has been incorporated, resulting in refinement in key areas without major changes to the overall direction. Notable updates include (in no order):

- Adjusted select Action Plan time periods based on feasibility.
- Updated Territorial Acknowledgment.
- Added graphic summary of goals, strategies, and actions to Executive Summary.
- Elevated Action 12.7 to a Big Move.
- Included infographic summary of Public Engagement Phase 2 in Appendix.
- Clarified 15-year Strategy timeline and 2075 canopy target.
- Added canopy coverage estimate for 2040 (~34%).
- Clarified definitions of natural assets and green infrastructure; added Table 3.1
- Defined annual tree planting targets in Monitoring Plan (Section 7.2).
- Expanded Implementation Plan (Section 7.1) to include additional City departments and clarify roles.
- Added a Glossary (Section 8).

If Council approves the Strategy, staff will initiate an Interdepartmental Urban Forest Strategy Implementation team to discuss the 2025 workplan and begin implementing the Quick Starts outlined in the Action Plan. The Urban Forestry Strategy is a significant milestone for the City; it ensures that Burnaby's urban forest thrives and secures its role as a lasting asset for generations to come. Additional background and feedback are highlighted in the presentation, Attachment 3.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

If the Urban Forest Strategy is approved, updates and a link to the final Strategy will be issued through the City project webpage, social media, and by email sent to the project webpage subscribers. While no further public engagement is planned at this time, the project webpage will continue to provide access for community members to contact the City with questions and comments on the Strategy and its implementation. Future monitoring and check-ins with the public may be considered when the Interdepartmental Urban Forest Strategy Implementation team is underway.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Urban Forest Strategy is an important tool to raise awareness and create a focused, corporate understanding of the value and importance of trees. Urban forestry services are generally funded through operating budgets. Should one-time funding or additional resources be required to initiate specific action items identified in the Strategy, those requests will be brought forward to Council as needed.

The forthcoming PRC Long Range Plan will also help situate urban forestry services within the broader context of all services delivered by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. This will support more strategic resource allocation and consistent service direction. The Urban Forest Strategy provides a strong foundation for understanding service needs and offers a clear roadmap for future service delivery.

Respectfully submitted,

Carmen Gonzalez, Deputy General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Urban Forest Strategy, March 2025

Attachment 2 – Public Engagement 2 Summary

Attachment 3 – Presentation

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Melinda Yong, Park Planner, and reviewed by John Musil, Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture Policy Planning; Andre Isakov, Director, Parks Recreation and Culture Planning; Steve Bruneau, Director Parks, Parks Recreation and Culture; Jason Watt, Chief Building Inspector, Planning and Development; Mehran Malek, Senior Manager GIS and Smart City Initiatives, Corporate Services, Erica Lay, Manager of Climate Action and Energy, Planning and Development.