

TOWN OF VIEW ROYAL

Urban Forest Strategy

2025

Plan at a Glance

This is the Town of View Royal’s first Urban Forest Strategy (UFS). The UFS establishes a comprehensive, 20-year framework to guide the management of View Royal’s urban forest. The UFS reflects the Town’s commitment to enhancing community climate resilience, supporting the urban forest, enhancing public health and wellbeing, and protecting trees and native biodiversity.

View Royal’s Urban Forest Vision

In 2055, our Town's urban forest is celebrated for its diverse, mature trees and interconnected green spaces. It provides vital habitat for native plants, pollinators, and wildlife, mitigates the impacts of climate change and enhances community resilience, health, and well-being. By protecting the existing urban forest and making space for new trees, we have enhanced and expanded our urban forest and strengthened our sense of place. We are stewards of our environment, and the trees we plant today will benefit our community for generations.

Acknowledgements

Land Acknowledgement

The Town of View Royal acknowledges with respect that it is on the unceded traditional territories of the Lekwungen peoples, known today as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, and that their historic connections to these lands continue to this day.

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to all those who contributed to shaping the Town of View Royal’s Urban Forest Strategy. The Strategy was developed with the support of Diamond Head Consulting.

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Urban Forest Value

\$10 M

Value of our urban forest

\$184,000

Urban forest program budget

Tree Inventory

1,200

boulevard trees inventoried

33%/25%

inventoried trees are maple / red maple

Canopy Cover

29%

Urban canopy cover (2023)

59%

of urban canopy is on private land

Survey Results

85%

Were concerned about tree loss

80%

Want canopy cover to increase

Strategic Framework



19 Core Actions

Are essential to program performance and no net loss of canopy cover.

14 Strategies

- **1.1** Ensure **planting standards** support long-term tree growth
- **1.2** Ensure **land use planning** supports the urban forest
- **1.3** Ensure rates of **tree planting** support net new outcomes
- **1.4** Consider **equity and community needs** through program decision-making.
- **2.1** Improve urban forest **governance**
- **2.2** Prioritize program **monitoring** and **reporting**
- **2.3** **Sustainably resource** urban forest management and the implementation of this Strategy.
- **3.1** Use **best practices** and industry benchmarks in the Town’s maintenance regime
- **3.2** Maintain forested areas to a reasonable **standard of care**
- **4.1** Enhance **regulatory tools** and **processes** to achieve the right balance between tree protection and community growth.
- **4.2** Support the **resilience** of both View Royal as a community and its urban forest.
- **5.1** Build relationships with **Host Nations and Indigenous Peoples** living in View Royal
- **5.2** Build **community knowledge** of and participation in urban forest management
- **5.3** Develop **strategic partnerships**

- ⚠ Update View Royal’s Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw and planting standards to enhance conditions for street trees
- ⚠ Adopt and revise OCP policy supporting the urban forest and UFS that provides enhanced direction on the handling of View Royal’s urban forest
- ⚠ Review View Royal’s Zoning Bylaw to ensure performance criteria contribute to the Town’s canopy cover target.
- ⚠ Municipal tree planting targeting 50 trees per year in parks and boulevards
- ⚠ Establish an adopt-a-tree program
- ⚠ Establish dedicated tree maintenance and planting budgets within parks to increase tree longevity.
- ⚠ Establish an interdepartmental Urban Forestry working group
- ⚠ Establish and maintain a GIS-based boulevard tree inventory
- ⚠ Produce a new urban tree canopy dataset
- ⚠ Produce a State of the Urban Forest report on a five-year interval
- ⚠ Establish a Town arborist or urban forester position within Parks to broadly enhance urban forest outcomes
- ⚠ Access external funding opportunities to support tree planting
- ⚠ Establish a Wildfire Hazard Development Permit Area (DPA)
- ⚠ Review the Town’s Natural Watercourse and Shoreline Areas , and Sensitive Terrestrial Ecosystem DPAs
- ⚠ Develop a Terms of Reference for arborist reports and tree surveys
- ⚠ Explore the potential of a Landscaping Bylaw
- ⚠ Prepare a biannual newsletter to communicate key urban forestry messages, updates, and progress on UFS implementation
- ⚠ Continue to offer View Royal’s Resident Tree Planting Program and expand it if demand outpaces current program capacity
- ⚠ Actively participate in and support initiatives that utilize the Capital Regional District’s (CRD) network of urban forestry professionals

Glossary

3-30-300 Rule

A guidelines for urban forestry to ensure equitable access to greenspace. The rule states that at least 3 trees should be visible from each home, each neighbourhood should have 30 per cent (or more) canopy cover, and each home should be within 300 m of a park or other greenspace.

30-20-10 Rule

A diversity standard for urban forests: no more than 30% of trees should come from one family, 20% from one genus, or 10% from one species. This helps reduce the risk of pests and diseases wiping out large portions of the tree population.

Asset Management (Natural Assets)

The practice of managing trees, forests, and other natural features as part of a municipality's infrastructure system, recognizing them as assets that provide services like stormwater control and climate resilience.

Biodiversity

The variety of living things in an ecosystem, including plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms, and their relationships with each other. Higher biodiversity makes ecosystems healthier and more resilient.

Canopy Cover

The percentage of land area covered by the leaves or needles of trees when viewed from above. It is a common way to measure the extent of an urban forest.

Community Wildfire Resilience Plan

A municipal plan that identifies wildfire risks and actions to reduce them, such as vegetation management, emergency preparedness, and public education.

DBH (Diameter at Breast Height)

A standard way to measure tree size: the diameter of a tree's trunk measured at 1.3 metres (about chest height) above the ground.

Ecosystem Services

The environmental, social and economic benefits that natural systems provide, such as shade, clean air, stormwater management, flood control, habitat for wildlife, and improved human health.

Evapotranspiration

The combined processes of evaporation and transpiration by which water moves from the land and vegetation into the atmosphere. It is a key part of the water cycle and affects how much moisture is available for trees and ecosystems

FiresSmart

A provincial program in British Columbia that helps communities and property owners reduce the risk of wildfire through landscaping, building practices, and education.

GIS (Geographic Information System)

A digital mapping system used to collect, manage, and analyze spatial data. In urban forestry, it is used to map trees, canopy cover, and ecological features.

Greenfield Development

Construction on land that has not been previously built on, often natural or agricultural land.

i-Tree

A software tool used for urban forestry analysis and benefits assessments. It can be used to calculate the environmental and economic value of trees, such as air quality improvements, carbon storage, and stormwater management.

Invasive Species

Plants, animals, or insects that are not native to an area and spread quickly, often harming native species and ecosystems. Common examples in View Royal include English ivy and Scotch broom.

Urban Forest

All trees, vegetation, and forested areas within View Royal, including those in parks, along streets, in private yards, and in natural areas.

Urban Heat Island (UHI) Effect

The tendency for urban areas with lots of pavement and buildings to become much hotter than surrounding green areas.

Windthrow

The uprooting or breaking of trees due to strong winds.

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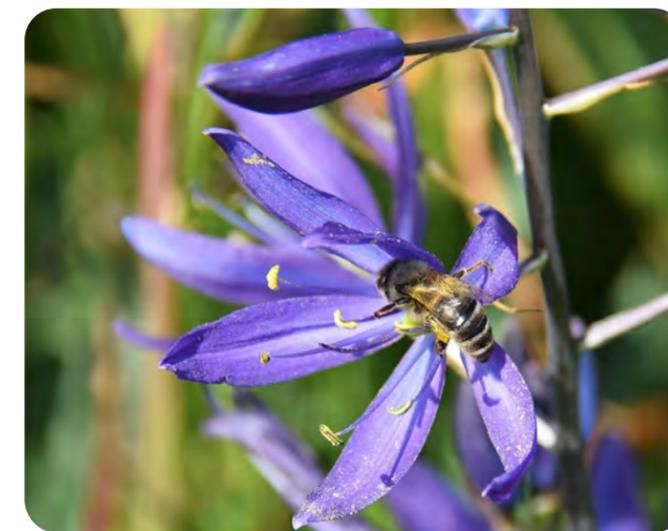
1. Introduction & Overview

1.1 Welcome

View Royal values its trees. Our community consists of a mosaic of urbanized spaces, interwoven with natural landscapes — Douglas-fir forests, Garry oak meadows, and forested shorelines. These are places home to a rich diversity of species. Our natural spaces and features enhance our built environment and provide essential spaces for recreation, leisure and ecological health.

The urban forest has long been a priority in View Royal. The 2011 Official Community Plan (OCP) committed to maintaining a healthy urban forest by encouraging the retention of trees and ecological features, expanding tree canopy cover and enhancing biodiversity and habitat. Despite these commitments, new and evolving challenges, such as climate change, urban intensification, and declining forest health, threaten the quality and extent of the urban forest.

To address these growing threats and to enhance community resilience, a renewed approach is needed — one that strengthens our management of the urban forest and supports its long-term sustainability to secure benefits to the community.



Left and above: Camas flowers in Garry oak meadows (Lotus Johnson)

1.2 Plan Purpose

The Urban Forest Strategy (UFS) sets a clear, coordinated direction for managing View Royal's urban forest over the next 20 years. Its goal is to ensure the continued delivery of ecological, social, and health benefits provided by the urban forest.

Effective urban forest management is inherently interdisciplinary, involving multiple departments and interested parties in the community. Planning requires thoughtful integration of diverse interests, values, and technical expertise. This strategy is designed to provide that integration — balancing environmental protection, community needs, and the realities of urban development.

A 20-year horizon allows space for transformative but sustainable urban forest planning, while scheduled five-year reviews will ensure the strategy remains adaptive and responsive to evolving challenges and best practices.

By planning strategically, the Town can:

- Identify and track emerging issues in urban forest management,
- Establish organizational priorities in managing the urban forest,
- Support urban forest monitoring with reliable data and tools,
- Expand and enhance access to urban nature,
- Improve alignment between financial planning and operational needs,
- Inform data-driven policy development and decision-making, and
- Strengthen community outreach, education, and stewardship.

1.3 Structure of the Strategy

The UFS is organized into five sections:

1. **Introduction and Overview:** introduces the context, purpose, and benefits of urban forest management in View Royal.
2. **View Royal's Urban Forest:** summarizes the current condition of the urban forest, including its composition, trends, and pressures.
3. **Our Program:** describes the Town's existing urban forest programs and regulatory framework.
4. **The Path Forward:** Identifies the key challenges and community input that have informed this Strategy, and introduces the strategic framework.
5. **Action and Monitoring Plan:** details the actions, targets, and indicators that will guide implementation over the next 20 years.

1.4 What is the Urban Forest?

View Royal's urban forest includes all trees and forested landscapes within the Town's boundaries—those in public parks, along streets, in private yards, and within natural areas. It encompasses both planted and naturally occurring vegetation, and extends across the urban core to Thetis Lake, and Mill Hill Regional Parks, and the Town's rural edges (Figure 1)¹.

The urban forest is more than trees alone. It includes the living (biotic), non-living (abiotic), and cultural elements that shape our landscapes—soils, understory vegetation, hydrology, and the relationships between people and place. Together, these features form a complex urban ecological system embedded in the urban environment.

1.5 Why is the Urban Forest Important?

Urban forests are an essential part of a livable, resilient and healthy urban environment. The benefits trees provide are often referred to as 'ecosystem services'. Examples of benefits include:

Climate adaptation and mitigation

Trees regulate temperatures through shade and I and reduce storm and flood impacts^{2,3}. They are also important carbon sinks, sequestering and storing atmospheric carbon^{4,5}.

Clean air and water

Leaves intercept or absorb pollutants like carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and particulates⁶. Leaves and root systems also attenuate and filter rainwater and stormwater runoff, improving water quality before it enters our waterways^{7,8}.

Habitat and biodiversity

Urban forests support a wide range of plant, animal, fungal, and microbial life⁹, benefiting both human and animal residents¹⁰.

Improving human health

Exposure to greenery reduces stress, improves work performance, boosts creativity, and aids recovery in hospitals^{11,12,13}. Schools with more trees and shrubs visible from classroom windows have been found to achieve higher test scores and graduation rates¹⁴. Access to parks or natural areas increases physical activity levels¹⁵.

Economic value

Trees stimulate the local economy by attracting people to commercial districts, resulting in increased spending and longer stays¹⁶. Areas with abundant tree cover often have higher property values^{17,18}.

Resources

Trees provide resources for cultural, social, and economic uses, including food, medicines or materials like timber, firewood or bark for weaving.

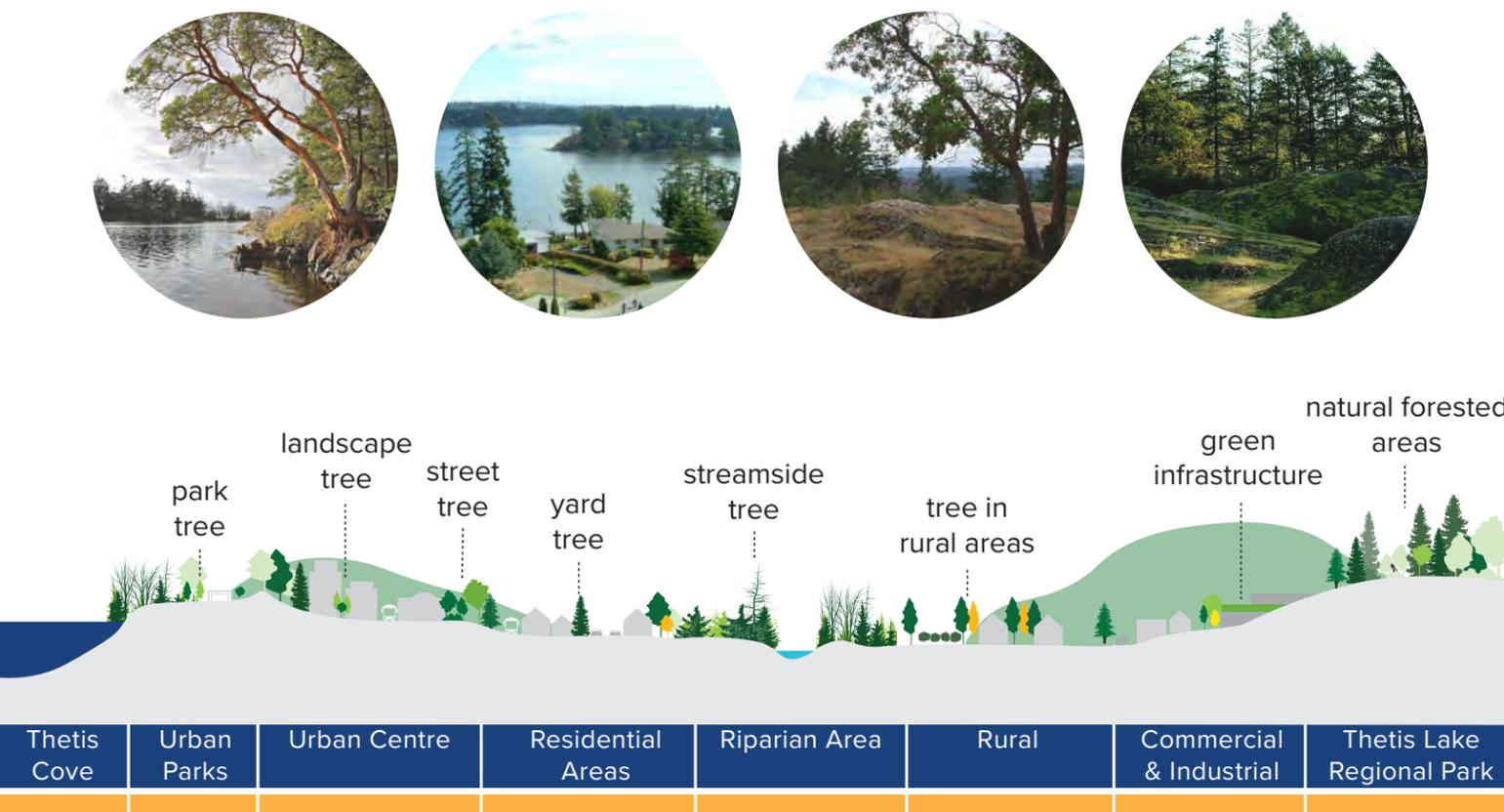


Figure 1. Urban to rural gradient showing the range of tree assets in View Royal



Figure 2. The many benefits provided by View Royal's urban forest

Extreme Heat

The urban forest also plays a critical role in protecting communities from the effects of extreme heat. By providing shade and releasing moisture into the air, they cool their environments. Urban areas with higher tree cover are better able to moderate extreme temperatures, reducing the risk of heat-related illnesses and mortality¹⁹. This benefit was underscored during British Columbia's 2021 heat dome, which caused over 800 fatalities²⁰. A 2022 report to the Chief Coroner of BC identified low canopy cover as a contributing factor to this loss of life.

In contrast, areas with limited tree cover are often dominated by hard surfaces—such as pavement and rooftops—that absorb and retain heat throughout the day, then release it slowly at night, leading to elevated ambient temperatures and prolonged heat exposure. In View Royal, the effects of urban heat can be seen in a land surface temperature map captured on a hot summer day (Figure 2). This map highlights the cooling influence of forested areas like Thetis Lake Regional Park, shown in blue. In some cases, surface temperatures in these areas can be as much as 15°C cooler than the hottest urbanized areas in Town, shown in red.

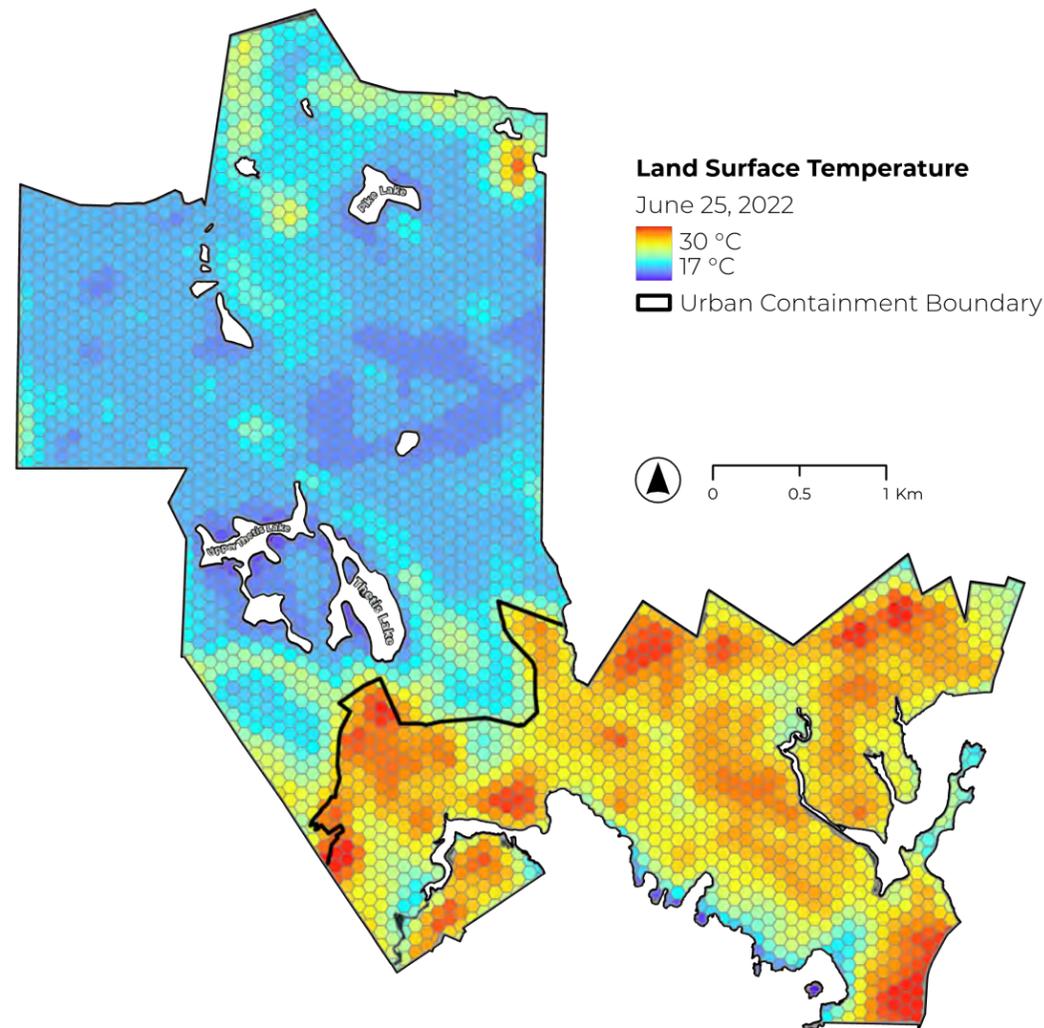
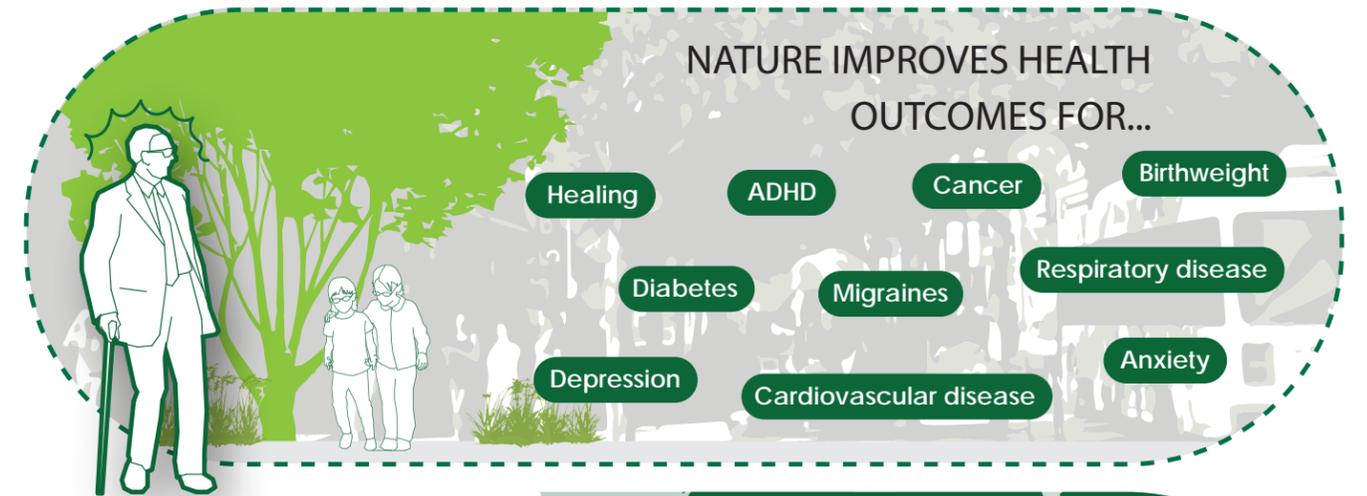
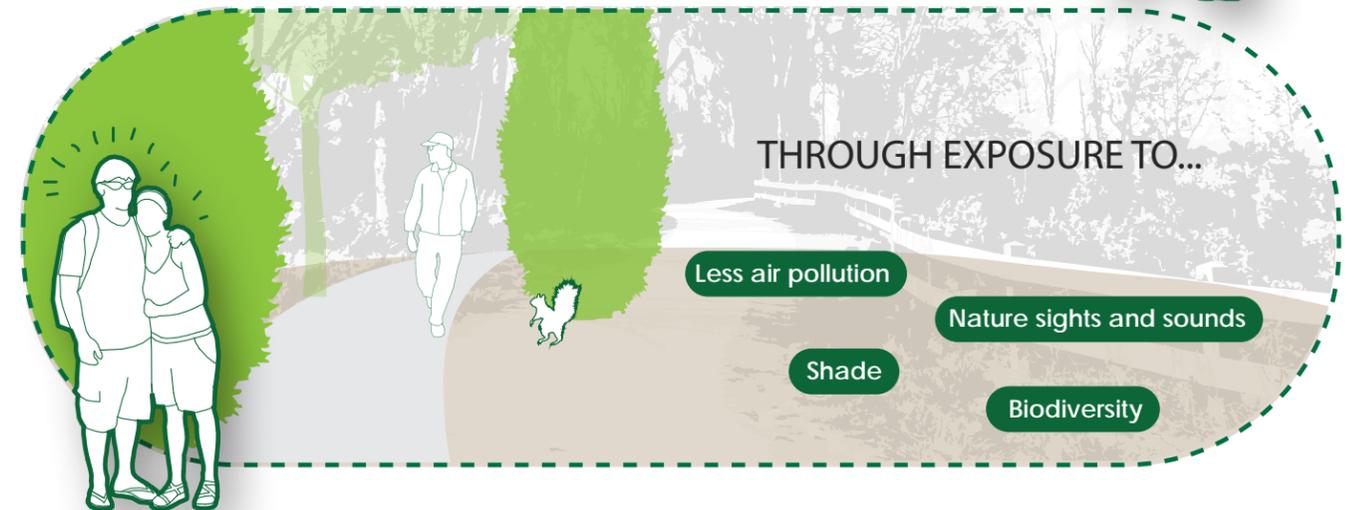
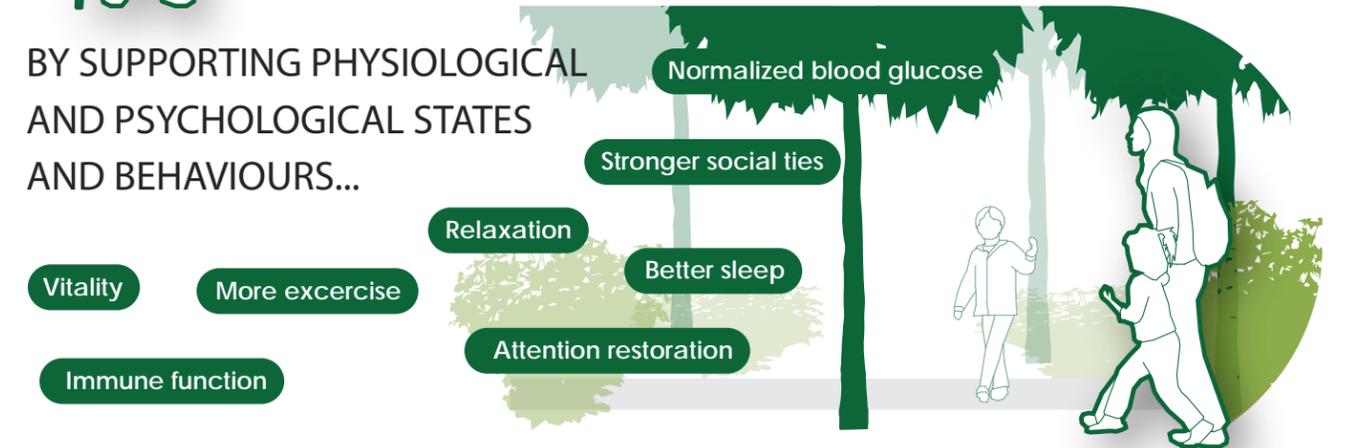


Figure 3. Land surface temperature across the Town during an extreme heat event (06-25-22)



BY SUPPORTING PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES AND BEHAVIOURS...



WHILE SPENDING TIME IN NATURE



Figure 4. Health benefits of urban trees adapted from Urban Trees and Human Health: A Scoping Review.⁶⁰

Ecosystem Services

Ecosystem services are the environmental, social, and economic benefits that natural systems provide, including climate regulation, air and water purification, habitat support, and cultural value. Quantifying these services helps demonstrate their importance and guide investment in their protection.

To assess the value of its urban forest, the Town of View Royal used the industry standard i-Tree software suite, which estimates the dollar value of measurable services like carbon storage, air purification, and stormwater interception. While valuable, this approach does not capture harder-to-quantify benefits such as biodiversity, cultural significance, and mental well-being—meaning the true value of the urban forest is much greater than the figures suggest.

Within the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB), View Royal's urban forest is estimated to provide over \$10 million in stored carbon value and more than \$600,000 in annual benefits (Table 1). Community-wide, the urban forest is valued over \$68 million, including \$2.7 million in annual services.

Table 1. Summary of ecosystem service values for View Royal's UCB using i-Tree Canopy (2023)

Ecosystem Service	Service Estimates	Dollar Value (\$)
Carbon & Stormwater		
C Sequestered annually in trees (t/year)	461	\$331,800
C stored in trees (t)	13,135	\$9,446,300
Stormwater Attenuation		
Avoided annual runoff (L/year)	47,648,156	\$112,200
Air Quality		
CO removed annually (kg)	133,109	\$200
NO2 removed annually (kg)	1,347,389	\$400
O3 removed annually (kg)	9,531,455	\$28,300
PM10 (kg)	2,814,651	\$19,400
PM2.5 (kg)	734,974	\$124,500
SO2 removed annually (kg)	516,131	\$100
Total air pollution removed (kg/year)	15,077,709	\$172,900
Total Annual Service Value		\$616,900
Total Non-repeating Service Value		\$10,063,200



Carbon Storage

\$9.4 Million stored
\$330,000 sequestered per year



Flood Mitigation

\$110,000 per year



Air Purification

\$170,000 per year

Urban Forestry Program at a Glance



Tree Giveaway

View Royal's 'Resident Tree Planting Program' has grown significantly in recent years. In response to a surge in demand in 2024, funding increased from \$4,500 to \$26,000 to expand the program.



Tree Bylaw

The Tree Bylaw is administered by the Engineering Department, specifically the Directory of Engineering and the department Clerk. While there is no fee for standard applications, fees apply when trees cannot be replaced or when applicants request expedited processing. Annual administrative costs range from \$20,000 to \$25,000 in total and include contractor support, clerk and staff time.



Invasive Species Management

The Town addresses invasive species management in many ways: within road rights-of-way, management is contracted out at an annual cost of \$10,000. For other municipal owned lands, including parks, a part-time Invasive Species Management Coordinator is supported by an \$18,000 operating budget and oversees these efforts and guides restoration work led by the Greater Victoria Green Team (GVGT). The GVGT receives an additional \$25,000 in annual funding.



Tree Care

Tree care operations are contractor dependent as the Town does not have a public works yard, in-house tree care crews, or a municipal arborist that can be dedicated to tree care. An operating budget of approximately \$75,000 is used for tree consulting, hazard removals, and (clearance) pruning. Tree replacement ranges from \$5,000 to \$30,000 annually.



Work Orders

Annual public service requests related to tree work have averaged around 30 tickets in recent years.

Top to Bottom: Tree giveaway (Town of View Royal), tree bylaw (DHC), invasive species management (VRCA), tree care (Yulya Zolotko), work orders (Canva)

1.6 Urban Forest Program

How does the Town Manage its Trees?

Engineering & Parks Department

The Town's Engineering Department is responsible for managing the urban forest on Town property, including in its parks and along Municipal roads. This includes coordinating tree maintenance and removal activities on Town property, processing tree permits, development review, managing invasive species, and organizing the Town's residential tree-planting program. The Department's Engineering standards also influence the growing conditions provided for trees through their Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw (SDS, No. 985), Zoning Bylaw (ZBL, No. 900), and Official Community Plan (OCP, No. 811). The Town leverages dedicated funding for contracted arboriculture services, including tree pruning and consulting services that support tree and development permit applications. While tree protection is a priority for staff, urban forest management is one of several other responsibilities undertaken by related roles in Engineering and Parks.

Development Services Department

The Town's Development Services Department was previously responsible for processing tree permits associated with development applications which have informally become the responsibility of Engineering and Parks. They continue to process development permits which must comply with the Town's OCP and ZBL, including relevant Development Permit (DP) Areas; these policies moderate the amount of space available for tree planting on private property. New provincial housing policy direction has put emphasis on growth through urban intensification. Development Services is leading the Town's mandate to consider the Municipality's policy frameworks relative to these, and to balance growth with other core planning objectives like complete communities and urban greening.

Department of Protective Services/Fire

In View Royal, the Fire Chief oversees fire services and emergency preparedness, playing a key role in community safety and wildfire prevention. As part of this, the FireSmart program, led by the Municipality's FireSmart coordinator, helps residents reduce wildfire risk through public education, home assessments, and practical steps like fire-resistant landscaping. The Fire Chief supports these efforts to strengthen urban forest and community resilience, securing View Royal's preparedness for wildfire season.

Who else has a hand in urban forest management?

Capital Regional District

While the Town of View Royal is responsible for trees on Municipal property, most of the Town's urban forest canopy is under the management of the Capital Regional District (64%) by way of Mill Hill and Thetis Lake Regional Parks. The District also reports on regional canopy cover change and identifies the location of sensitive ecosystems within its jurisdictional area (which includes View Royal). In general, trees located in regional parks are protected.

Private Landowners

Within the Town's Urban Containment Boundary (UCB), 59% of all canopy cover is located on private property (Figure 5). Landowners influence the urban forest through their decisions to plant, maintain, or remove trees on their property, as well as through the species and locations they choose to plant. They also participate in urban forest stewardship opportunities and play an advocacy role in urban forest management.

Resident Tree Planting Program (2024)

\$26,000
in funding

159
trees planted

6x
more than in 2023

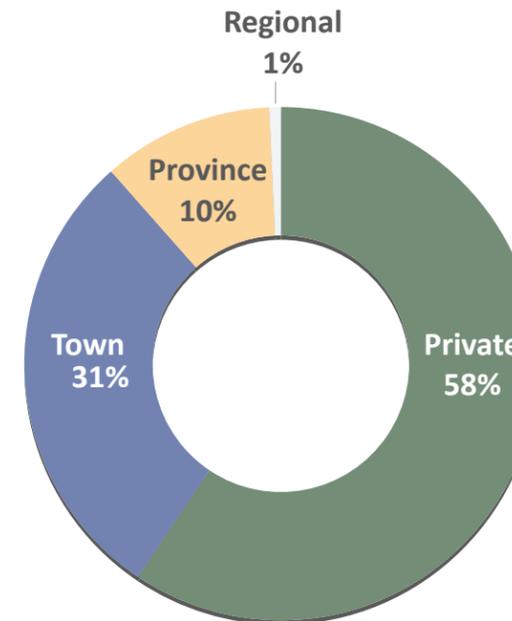
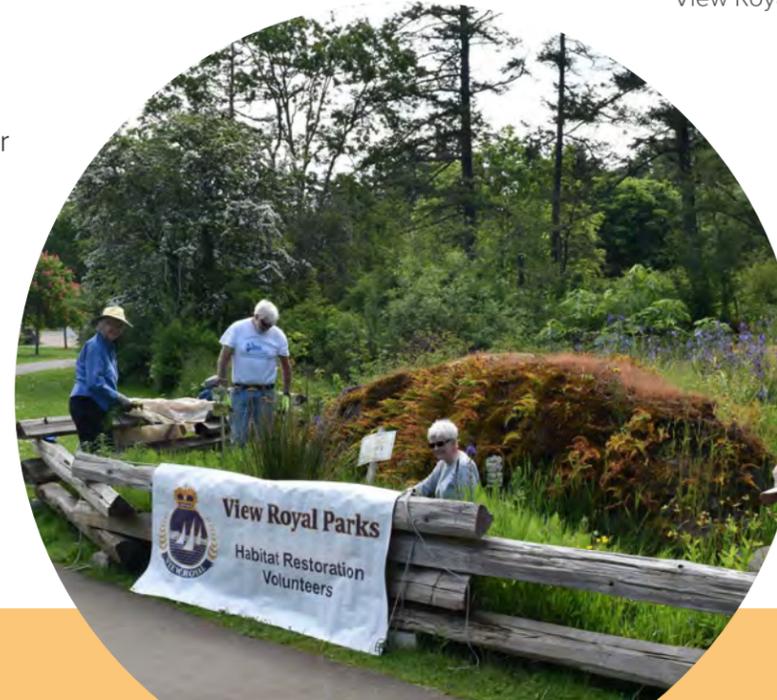


Figure 5. The proportion of canopy cover within the Town's Urban Containment Boundary by ownership type in 2023

Below: View Royal Habitat Restoration Project volunteers (Town of View Royal)



Utility Companies

Hydro, gas and other service providers require tree pruning to maintain reasonable clearance around their assets. Service providers are responsible for providing or procuring these services to support public health and safety and to prevent unplanned service disruption. Presently, pruning services for these providers are not performed in collaboration with Town staff and do not always follow arboricultural best practices.

Additional actors influencing the urban forest include the Province, which regulates riparian areas and the Town's Agricultural Land Reserve. Private arboriculture and landscape companies also plant, maintain, and remove trees on private property.

First Nations

The Town endeavours to engage First Nations on the happenings within View Royal. It is an ongoing and evolving process. The urban forest has been identified to be of significant interest to the Xwesepsum and Songhees Nations and the Town will continue to reach out and engage with its neighbours regarding the state of the urban forest.

Greater Victoria Green Team

The Greater Victoria Green Team has worked in partnership with the Town of View Royal to manage invasive species in its public parks. They host popular monthly and weekly restoration activities that provide volunteers with the opportunity to steward the Town's natural areas. The Municipality contracts a part-time Volunteer Coordinator for at least nine invasive species removal activities per year. The limited financial resources allocated to the project limit its ability to manage invasive species across the Town's many parks, and the Team's ability to maintain and monitor the trees they plant in restoration sites.

1.7 Policy Context

Enabling Legislation

The *Community Charter* and the *Local Government Act* (LGA) are key pieces of legislation that empower municipalities in British Columbia to manage their urban forest. The Community Charter establishes core municipal powers, including authority over trees on public land, environmental protection, and bylaw enforcement. The LGA supports land use planning and development regulation, which influence how urban forests are protected or integrated into growth. Together, they provide the legal foundation for municipalities to plan, protect, and sustain urban forests in alignment with community priorities.

Strategic Plan

The Town of View Royal's 2023–2026 Strategic Plan identifies Council's priorities over the coming four years and serves as a guiding document outlining the municipality's priorities and actions over that period. A significant element in the plan is the development of an Urban Forest Strategy (UFS), which aims to enhance the management, protection, and growth of the town's urban forest. This initiative reflects View Royal's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable development, recognizing the vital role that urban forests play in climate resilience and community well-being.

Official Community Plan

The Community's Official Community Plan (OCP) outlines View Royal's long-term vision for sustainable growth, land use, and environmental stewardship. It emphasizes the protection of natural assets, including the urban forest, through policies that support biodiversity, climate resilience, and community well-being. The plan designates Development Permit Areas (DPAs) to manage development in sensitive ecosystems and commits to enhancing tree canopy cover and regularly updating the Tree Protection Bylaw.

Zoning Bylaw

The Zoning Bylaw (ZBL) regulates development within the Town of View Royal. The ZBL specifies

what types of buildings can occur in each zone, and their associated performance regulations, which often include building height, setbacks and landscaped space requirements. In establishing the rules for form and lot configuration, View Royal's ZBL exerts significant influence over the space available for trees on private property.

Subdivision & Servicing Bylaw

View Royal's Subdivision & Servicing (SDS) bylaw governs land subdivision and infrastructure servicing standards. It includes specifications for boulevard widths and tree planting in public rights-of-way, ensuring that new developments accommodate street trees and support the growth of the urban forest.

Tree Protection Bylaw No. 1069

Adopted in 2022, View Royal's Tree Protection Bylaw regulates the alteration, removal, and replacement of trees within View Royal. It protects significant trees, including many native species and those over 20 cm in diameter, and sets conditions for their removal or alteration. The bylaw also outlines requirements for tree replacement and maintenance, supporting the Town's goals for canopy preservation and climate action.

Parks Master Plan

While not a regulatory document, the Parks Master Plan is a supporting document that informs financial planning and provides strategic direction for the management and enhancement of View Royal's parks and green spaces. It advocates for increased public access to greenspace, improved park connectivity, and the protection of ecological assets.

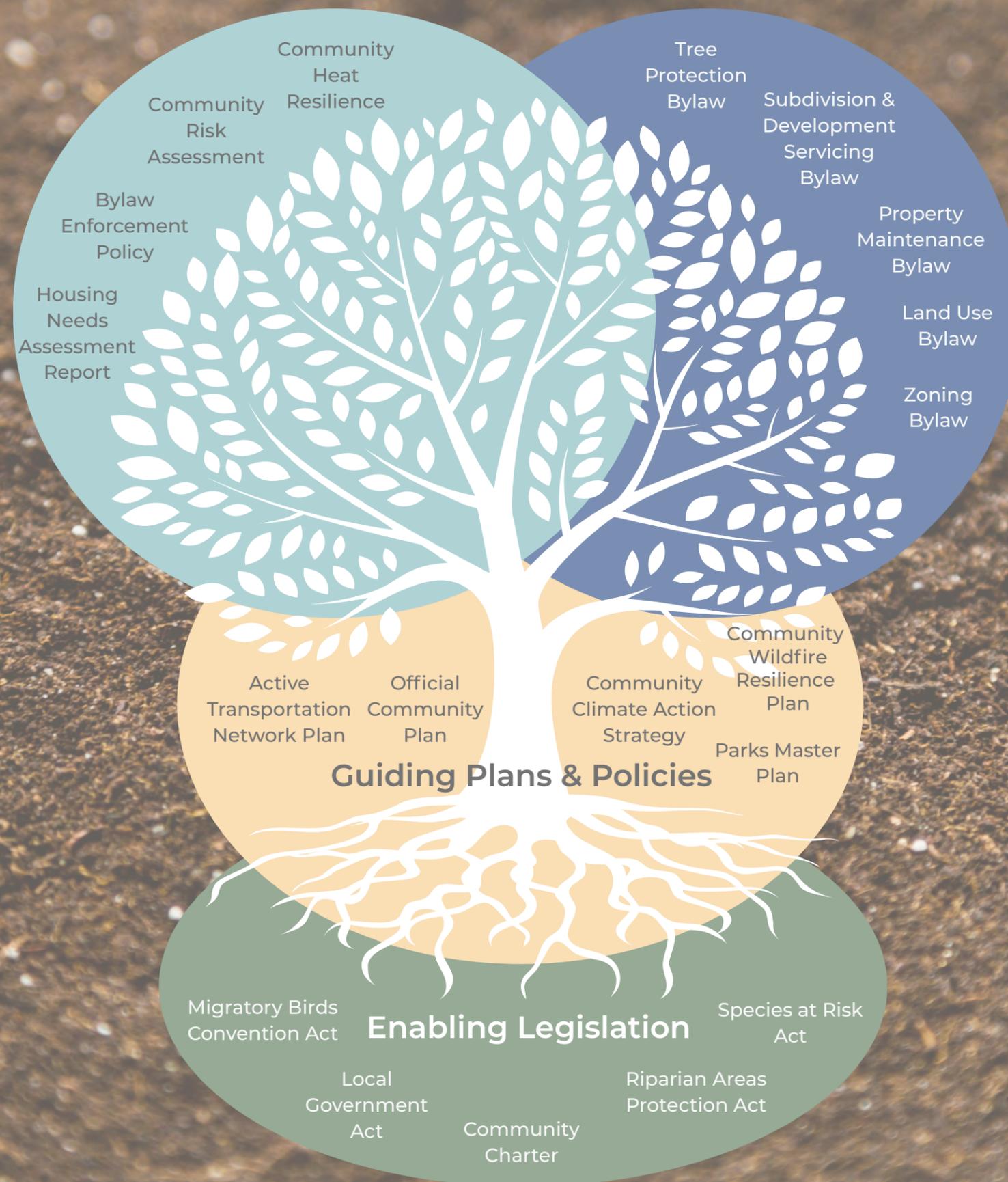
Community Climate Action Strategy (CCAS)

Similarly, the CCAS adopted in 2022 outlines View Royal's approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change. It commits to developing this Urban Forest Strategy and increasing community-wide tree canopy cover to enhance carbon sequestration and resilience to climate impacts.

View Royal's Policy Context

Related Policies & Guidelines

Bylaws





Bill 44, 46, & 47

Bills 44, 46, and 47 represent a major shift in how growth and housing are managed in BC. By mandating higher-density housing, particularly near transit and in low-density neighbourhoods, and by streamlining approval processes, these laws can facilitate considerable acceleration in the pace of urban development. While intended to address the housing crisis, they can also introduce significant risk to the urban forest, especially as infill development puts pressure on private lots where most of the Town's canopy exists. Reduced setbacks, smaller yards, and expanded infrastructure leave less room for trees and often result in the loss of mature canopy with limited replacement.

Without careful thought, this regulatory shift could lead to a rapid and uneven decline in urban tree cover, increasing heat vulnerability, stormwater challenges, and ecological fragmentation—particularly in under-served neighbourhoods. Intentional urban forest planning is more important than ever. As a community, View Royal must assess whether our existing systems, processes and standards are adequate to navigate the period of growth ahead. The UFS is the first step in that process.



1.8 Urban Forest Report Card

Criteria and indicators offer a standard framework for the assessment of municipal urban forest management programs. Such a framework enables municipalities to evaluate performance consistently over time and enables comparison with peer communities who have used the same evaluation approach. View Royal's urban forest program has been assessed against a widely recognized set of urban forest criteria and indicators. These criteria provide a baseline for evaluating progress across various elements of an urban forest management program, including planning, operations, maintenance, monitoring, and partnerships. The evaluation of the Town's program included a thorough review of relevant policies and procedures, supplemented by detailed consultations with Town staff.

Evaluation of View Royal's program was based on a detailed review of the municipal policies and staff interviews. Overall, the Town's urban forest program scored 'Fair'. The primary limitation in advancing View Royal's urban forest program has been the limited resources available to it. All of the program is administered by staff who's primary role includes a range of other core tasks.



Urban Forest Report Card

●●●● 2024 program grade (in colour)
○ Not yet assessed



Category	Indicator	2024 Program Grade
PLAN	Awareness of the urban forest as a community resource	Good
	Tree canopy cover relative to established canopy cover goals	Not yet assessed
	Clear and defensible urban forest assessment and goals	Optimal
	Interdepartmental cooperation in urban forest strategy implementation	Fair
	Municipality-wide urban forest management plan	Optimal
	Municipal green asset management	Fair
	Municipal-wide biodiversity or green network strategy	Fair
	Tracking urban forestry operational carbon footprint and carbon-cycle balance	Poor
	Urban forest funding to implement a strategy	Not yet assessed
	Municipal urban forestry program capacity	Poor
Waste biomass utilization	Not yet assessed	
MANAGE	Equity in planting program delivery	Poor
	Forest Restoration & Native species planting	Fair
	Ecosystem services targeted in tree planting projects and landscaping	Fair
	Selection and procurement of stock in cooperation with nursery industry	Poor
	Streetscape and servicing specifications and standards for planting trees	Fair
	Municipal tree planting and replacement program design, planning, and implementation	Fair
	Development requirements to plant trees on private land	Good
	Age diversity (size class distribution)	Not yet assessed
	Species suitability	Good
Species diversity	Poor	
PROTECT	Regulations for the protection and replacement of private and municipal trees	Good
	Regulations for sensitive ecosystems, soils, or permeability through private development	Good
	Internal protocols guide municipal tree or sensitive ecosystem protection	Not yet assessed
	Standards and specifications supporting tree protection during development	Fair
	Cooperation with utilities on protection and pruning of municipal trees	Poor
MONITOR	Tree inventory	Fair
	Natural areas inventory	Fair
	Maintenance of intensively managed trees	Not yet assessed
	Publicly owned tree species condition assessment	Not yet assessed
	Tree risk management	Not yet assessed
	Emergency response planning	Good
	Pest and disease management	Not yet assessed
	Knowledge of trees on private property	Good
PARTNER	Citizen involvement	Good
	Involvement of large private land and institutional land holders	Fair
	Urban forest research	Poor
	Regional collaboration	Fair



2. View Royal's Urban Forest

2.1 Climate and Ecology

Climate

The Town of View Royal has a temperate coastal climate, shaped by its sheltered location in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains and Vancouver Island^{21,22}. This results in mild, wet winters and warm, dry summers with a mean annual temperature near 10°C and over 1,000 mm of annual precipitation²³. The climate and coastal setting support diverse terrestrial and marine ecosystems, including estuaries, deltas, meadows, and forests^{24,25}. Low snowfall enables a high diversity of overwintering birds, and Portage Inlet lies within a migratory bird sanctuary.

Ecology

View Royal is in the Coastal Douglas-fir Moist Maritime (CDFmm) biogeoclimatic subzone, limited to low-elevation coastal areas around the Salish Sea^{26,27}. Native ecosystems feature century-old Douglas-fir forests with a lush understory of ferns, salal, Oregon grape, and ocean spray, especially in Thetis Lake and Mill Hill Regional Parks²⁸. Nat-

ural landscapes include grassy hilltops, marshes, mudflats, sandbars, streams, rivers, and lakes²⁹. Willows, dogwood, and snowberry are common in CDFmm floodplains, and grand fir and western red cedar are more common in wetter sites.

Invasive Species

Invasive plants like English ivy, Himalayan blackberry, and spurge laurel are widespread in the CDFmm and in View Royal, outcompeting native species and degrading wildlife habitat³⁰. Over 150 invasive species have been introduced to the region since European settlement³¹. As early as 1972, a quarter of species in Garry oak ecosystems were non-native³², with some areas having up to 80% of understory plants from exotic origins³³.



Garry oak meadow (left) and wildflowers found in them (above).

Left to right: Garry oak meadow (Pr2is), camas (Lotus Johnson), white farn lily (Brewbooks), Henderson's shooting star (ErinSF) and yellow montane violet (Andreyz Harkikh)

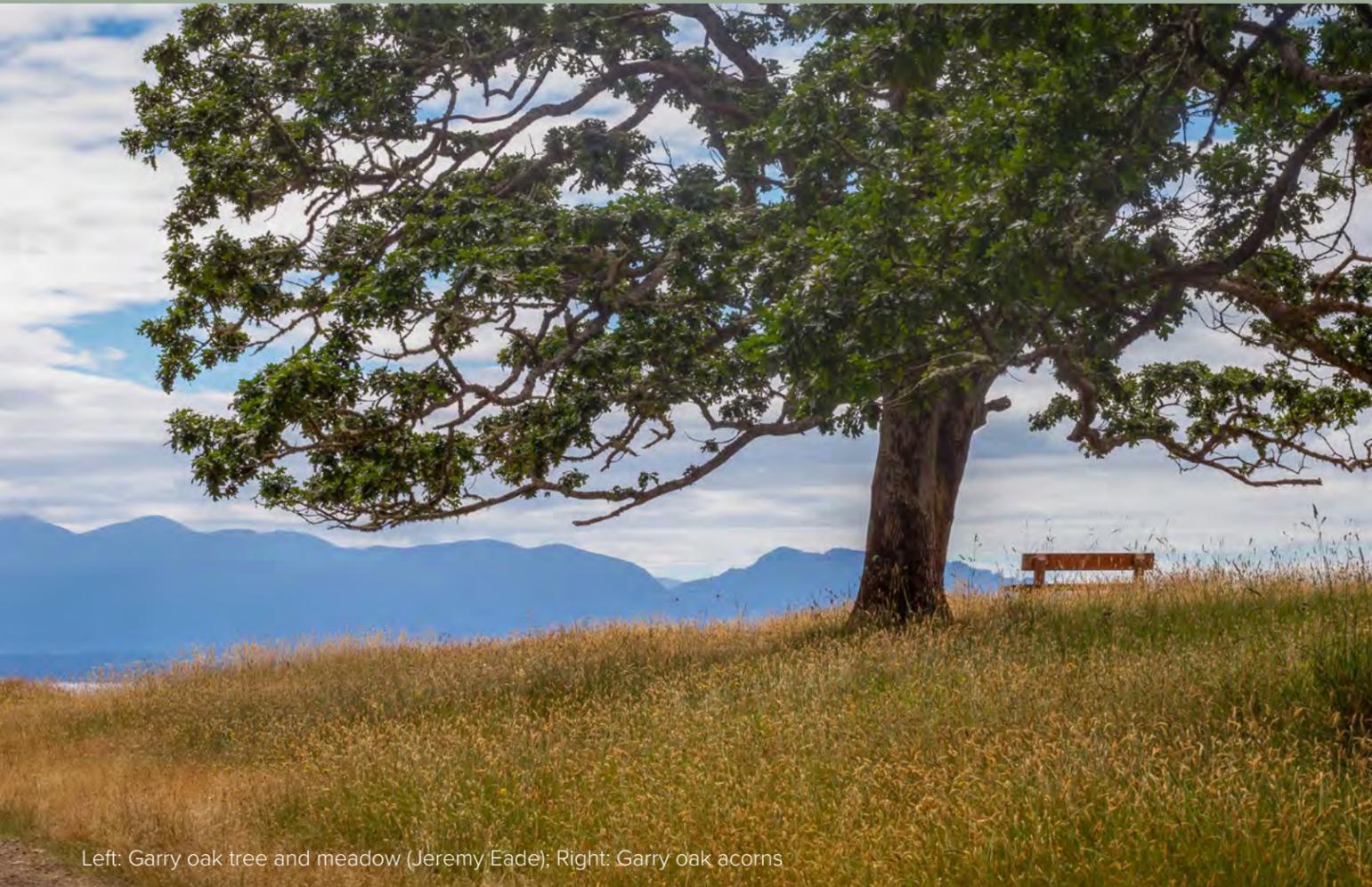
Garry Oak Ecosystems

View Royal is home to many of Canada's rarest species and ecosystems^{34,35}. Garry oak meadows and savannas are home to over 100 native species, including plants and wildlife. Many do not occur anywhere else in Canada and often have threatened or endangered conservation status³⁶.

Garry oak ecosystems were widespread prior to colonization and were intentionally burned by local Host Nations using frequent low-intensity fires for food, such as berries, camas bulbs, and nuts. Over time, these landscapes were converted to farmland and residential uses, and Host Nations were prevented from using traditional land management practices. Fire suppression has led to the transition of some Garry oak meadows into Douglas-fir forests. Work is underway to further recognize the significance of cultural burns for maintaining the most biodiverse ecosystem in Canada³⁷.

View Royal's Garry oak meadows have decreased in area by over 85% since 1800³⁸. This area will likely decrease further since the ecosystem faces encroachment by urban development and Douglas fir forests^{39,40}. Remnants of this ecosystem are often small and interspersed with urban areas which limits the movement and establishment of plants and wildlife.

In 2022, View Royal sold almost ten hectares of land to the Capital Regional District (CRD) to support the creation of Mill Hill Regional Park⁴¹. This decision helps protect the large concentration of species at risk contained within the resident Garry oak ecosystem. View Royal continues to protect rare Garry oak ecosystems through continued community development and is engaged in dialogues to further the community's management of these culturally important landscape features.



Left: Garry oak tree and meadow (Jeremy Eade); Right: Garry oak acorns

INVASIVE PLANTS



SCOTCH BROOM

Area of concern:
Dry open areas

Introduced in 1850 as an ornamental, dense thickets of scotch broom are fire prone and can shade out the numerous rare native flowering plants that normally occur in more open Garry oak meadows.



HIMALAYAN BLACKBERRY

Area of concern:
Parks, roadways, riparian and natural areas

Intentionally introduced to produce edible berries, it is now spread profusely by birds and expands aggressively through vegetative growth. Along streams and rivers, it can increase erosion



ENGLISH IVY

Area of concern:
Natural areas, edges

An ornamental plant that escaped from private gardens into natural areas that can smother native vegetation and reduce the lifespan of trees.

INVASIVE PESTS

Introduced in the 1930s from Europe and Russia, arriving on Vancouver Island in 1970, it now threatens the Garry oak ecosystem where it feeds on young Garry oak buds.

Target(s):
Garry oak
Maples
Apples

WINTER MOTH



Introduced from Europe in the 1960s, it is a growing concern in the Pacific Northwest. The insect pierces and extracts nutrients from Garry oak leaves which can cause the leaves to drop prematurely. Up to 10% of the trees attacked by the pest die from repeated defoliation.

Target(s):
Garry oak
English oak

OAK LEAF PHYLLOXERA



Introduced to North America around 1868, the moth has been found in Garry oak trees and can completely defoliate them. This can kill trees if repeated over multiple years, reducing the establishment of new trees, and impacting the health of older trees, which also affects the species that depend on them.

Target(s):
Hardwoods

SPONGY MOTH



2.2 History and Timeline

Time immemorial

The Xweseptsum and Songhees Nations have stewarded the lands and waters in and around View Royal for thousands of years^{42,43}. Indigenous land management, including burning and food cultivation, made the area's creeks and meadows rich in berries. Streams were used as paths by traditional bark harvesters and led back to food-gathering areas.

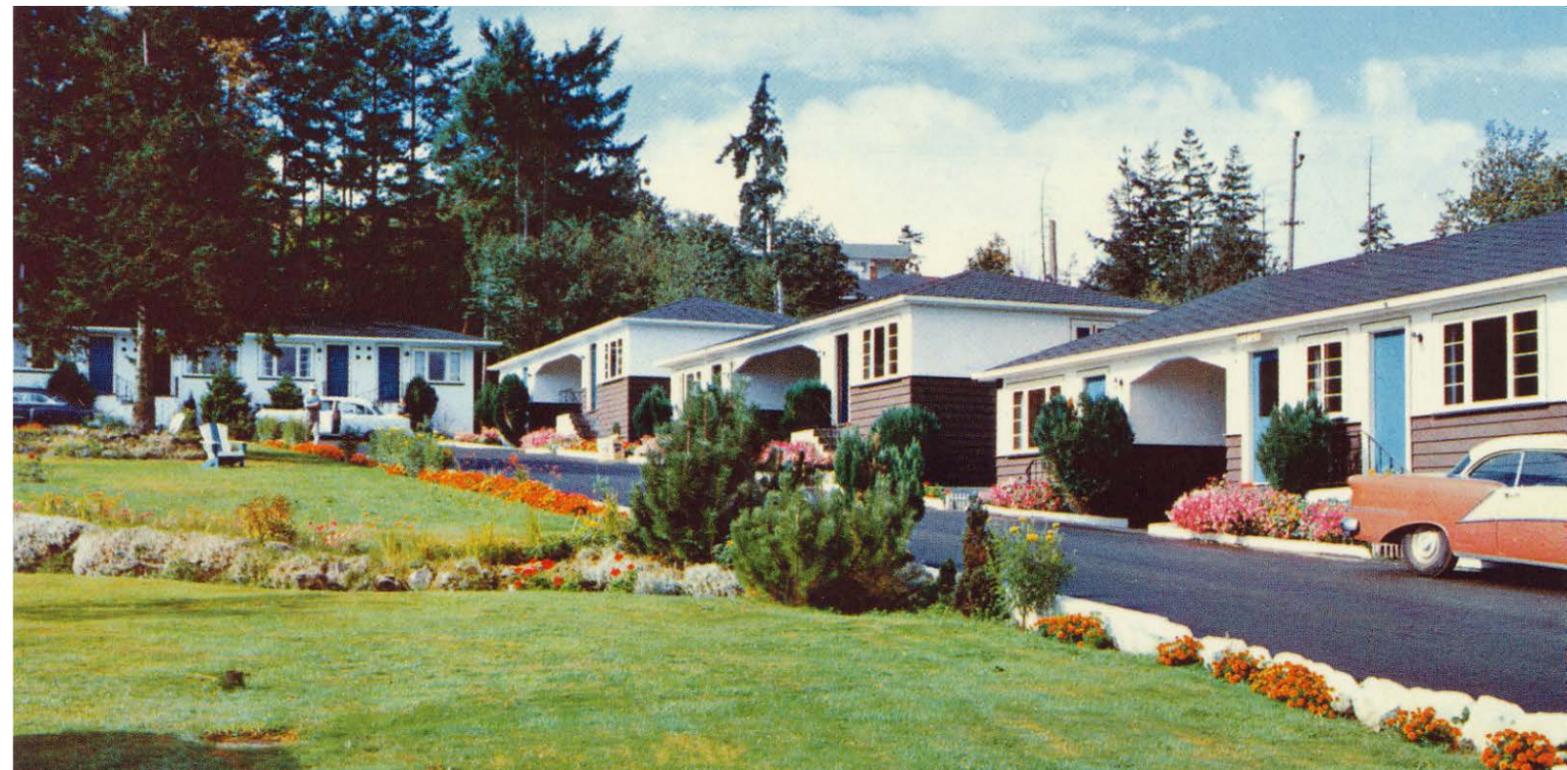
Colonial land management practices have had dramatic impact on Indigenous relationships with this landscape. Urban forest management can serve as an outlet to integrate Indigenous values, perspectives, and thousands of years of land management knowledge back into the management of these lands. The Town is working to further dialogues with local Nations, and will explore opportunities to support reconciliation and culturally sensitive management practices through implementation of this Strategy.

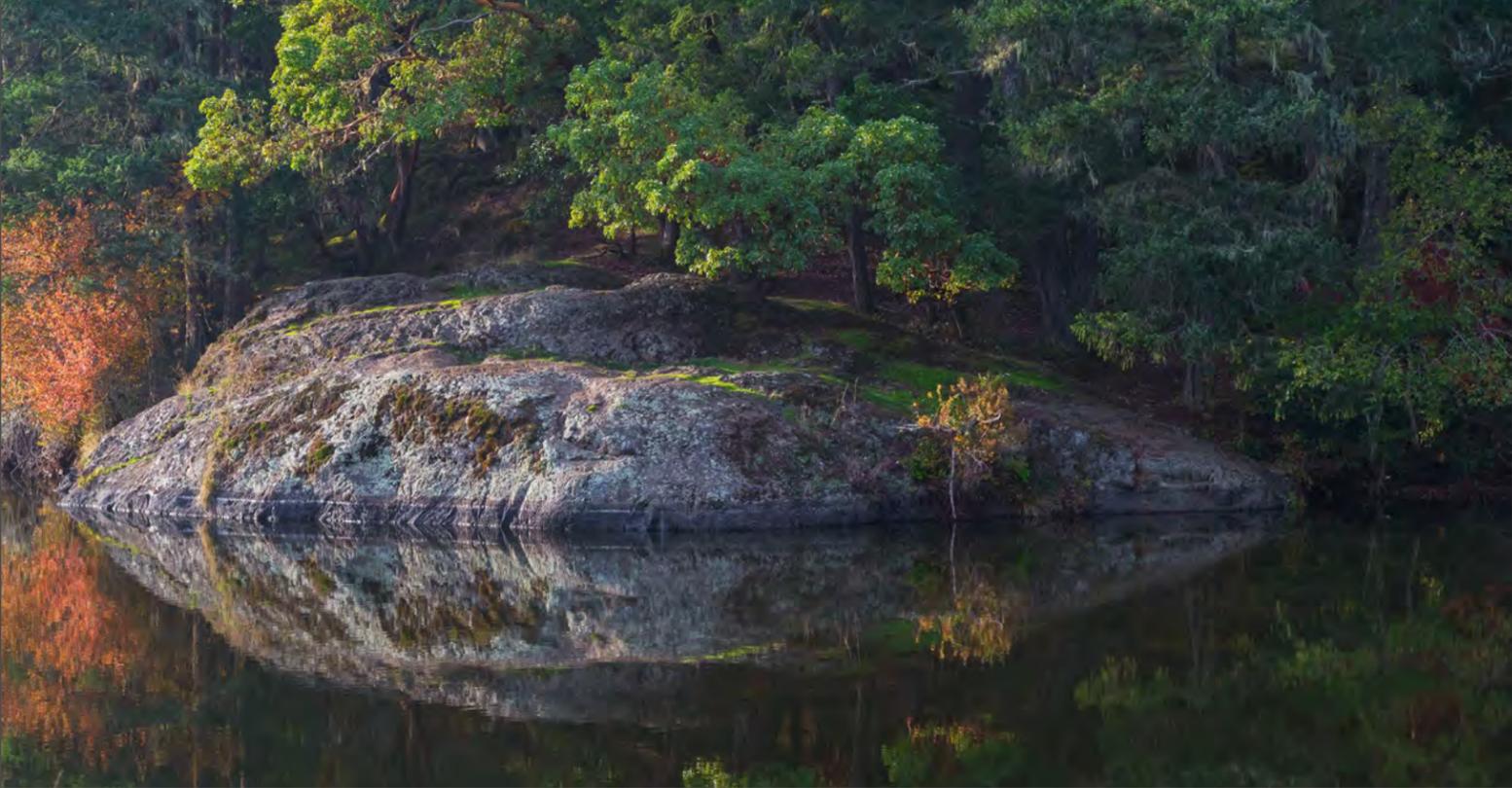
European Arrival

Captain James Douglas arrived at Clover Point in what is now the City of Victoria in the 19th

century^{44,45}. The Puget Sound Agricultural Company, a subsidiary of the Hudson's Bay Company, began farming along Esquimalt Harbour shortly after Douglas's arrival, transitioning the fur trading economy to an agricultural economy^{46,47}. For much of its history, View Royal's agricultural community fuelled the growth of urban centres like Victoria and Vancouver.

Urban development in the 1930s around Esquimalt Harbour and Portage Inlet was initially accompanied by market gardens and nurseries in its lowlands until the aftermath of WWII^{48,49}. New residents introduced new and exotic trees and plants, featuring familiar foliage, flowers, and fruits from their places of origin. While some early settlers retained Garry oak meadows on their property, View Royal's growth began in earnest in the 1960s and 1970s, reducing the abundance of native trees and ecosystems within the community. In its transition from an agricultural community to an attractive getaway destination, View Royal has more than doubled its initial population since that time^{50,51}.

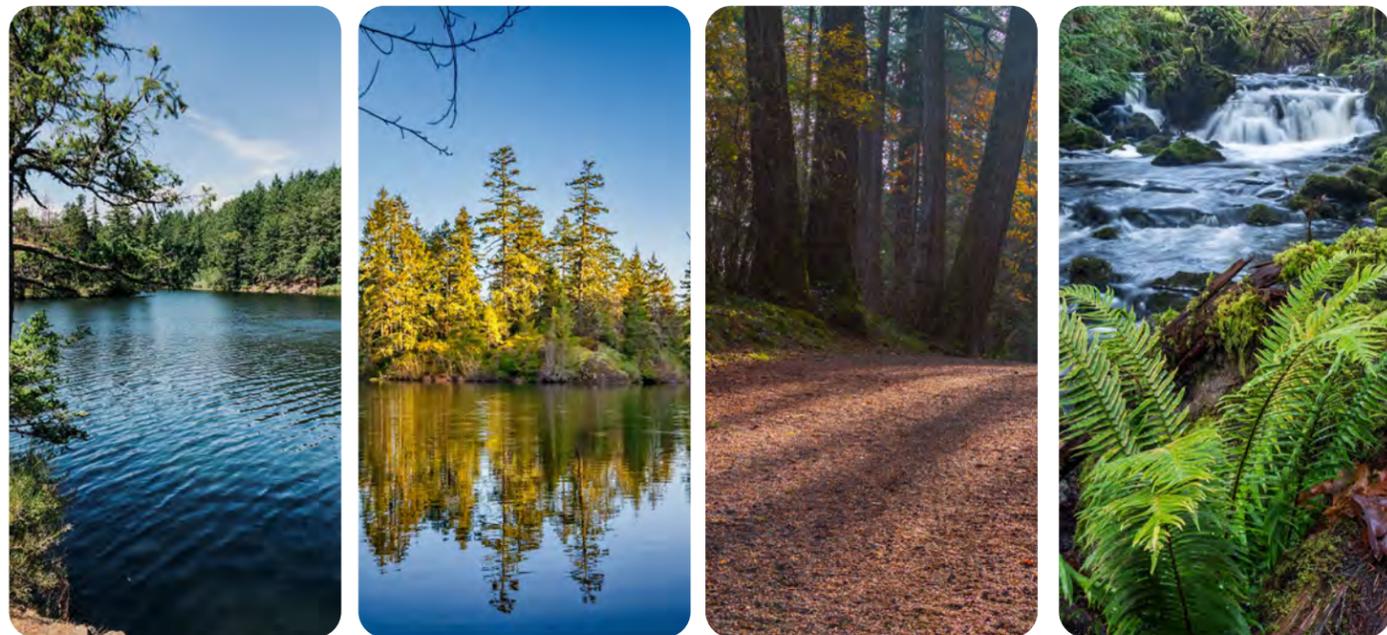




Native forests in Thetis Lake Regional Park (Emily Norton)

In 1993, Thetis Lake Regional Park was created to protect 921 ha of native forests and freshwater lakes within View Royal's municipal area, but outside of its Urban Containment Boundary⁵². Today, the Park is managed by the CRD, and supports a wide range of recreational opportunities such as cross-country skiing, swimming, running, and cycling.

Despite dramatic change, View Royal's native forests and waters continue to be a critical part of our community fabric. Without our trees and forests, View Royal would feel like a very different place than the one we have come to know and love.



Thetis Lake Regional Park (Left to Right): Larisa Kurzemnieks, Benedek, Emily Norton, Dave Mantel)

2.3 The Urban Forest Today

Canopy Cover

A tree's canopy cover is the area occupied by leaves or needles when viewed from above (Figure 6). In BC and across Canada, canopy cover is increasingly being used to monitor the growth or decline of community urban forests over time. Canopy cover can be summarized by different spatial areas, often including neighbourhoods, land uses, or ownership types. This type of analyses supports insight into how the urban forest is distributed across the community, and can help shape the development of policy and land use regulations toward achieving a defined canopy cover target.

View Royal's canopy cover in 2019 and 2023 were measured using 2019 LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data, as well as 2019 and 2023 high-resolution imagery. Canopy layer processing was supported by machine learning methods.

While some canopy analyses below are provided Townwide for context, most focus on its Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) which the Town has a greater ability to influence.

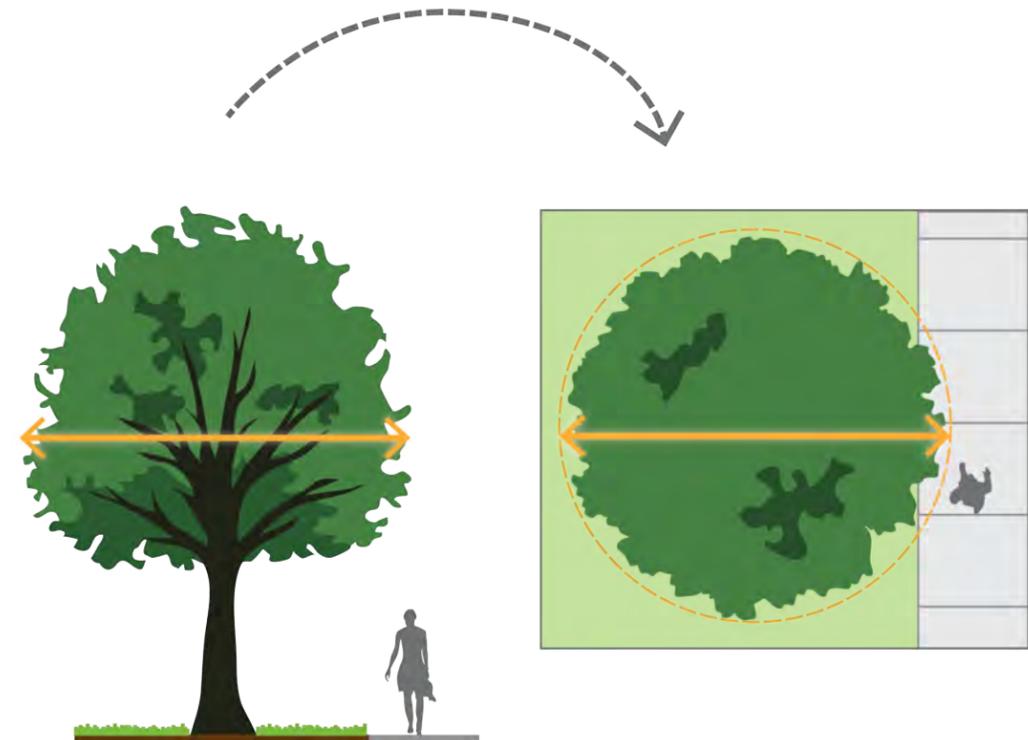


Figure 6. Canopy cover refers to the leafy upper part of trees when viewed from above (right)

View Royal's Canopy Cover

29%*

*162 ha in 2023 *within the Urban Containment Boundary.*

Community-wide

In 2023, canopy cover within the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) was 29% (162 ha), down from 31% in 2019. This section explores canopy patterns within the following spatial units:

- **Neighbourhood:** Trends in canopy cover across View Royal’s neighbourhoods
- **Land ownership:** Patterns of canopy cover across land ownership.
- **Land use:** Variation in canopy cover across different land uses.

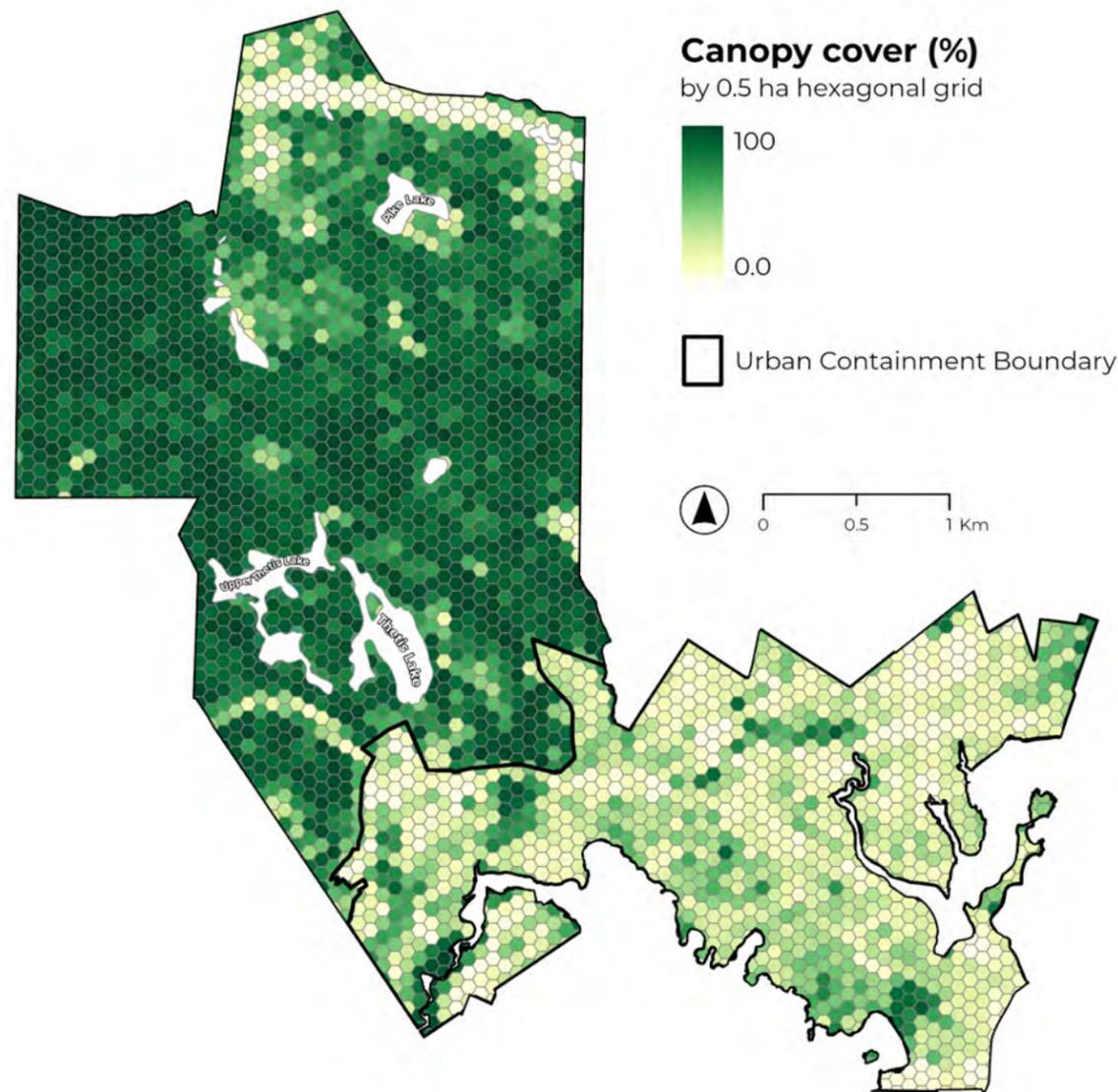


Figure 7. Town-wide canopy cover in 2023 with the UCB

By Neighbourhood

Canopy cover varies widely, from 79% in Thetis—due to extensive parkland—to 23% in Craigflower and Helmcken, which are more urbanized and have fewer trees (Figure 8). Thetis (79%) and Atkins (47%) maintain high cover due to nearby Regional Parks. Harbour also shows relatively high canopy (39%) due to larger, older residential lots that support mature trees. In contrast, Craigflower and Helmcken, developed more recently with more intensive land use, show lower canopy.

From 2019 to 2023, canopy declined in all neighbourhoods within the UCB. Most saw reductions of 3–5%, but the Hospital neighbourhood experienced an 11% drop. Since most canopy cover lies outside the UCB in CRD-managed regional parks, small losses within the UCB significantly affect urban tree canopy—especially in residential areas where the loss is more noticeable and impactful to the public.⁵³

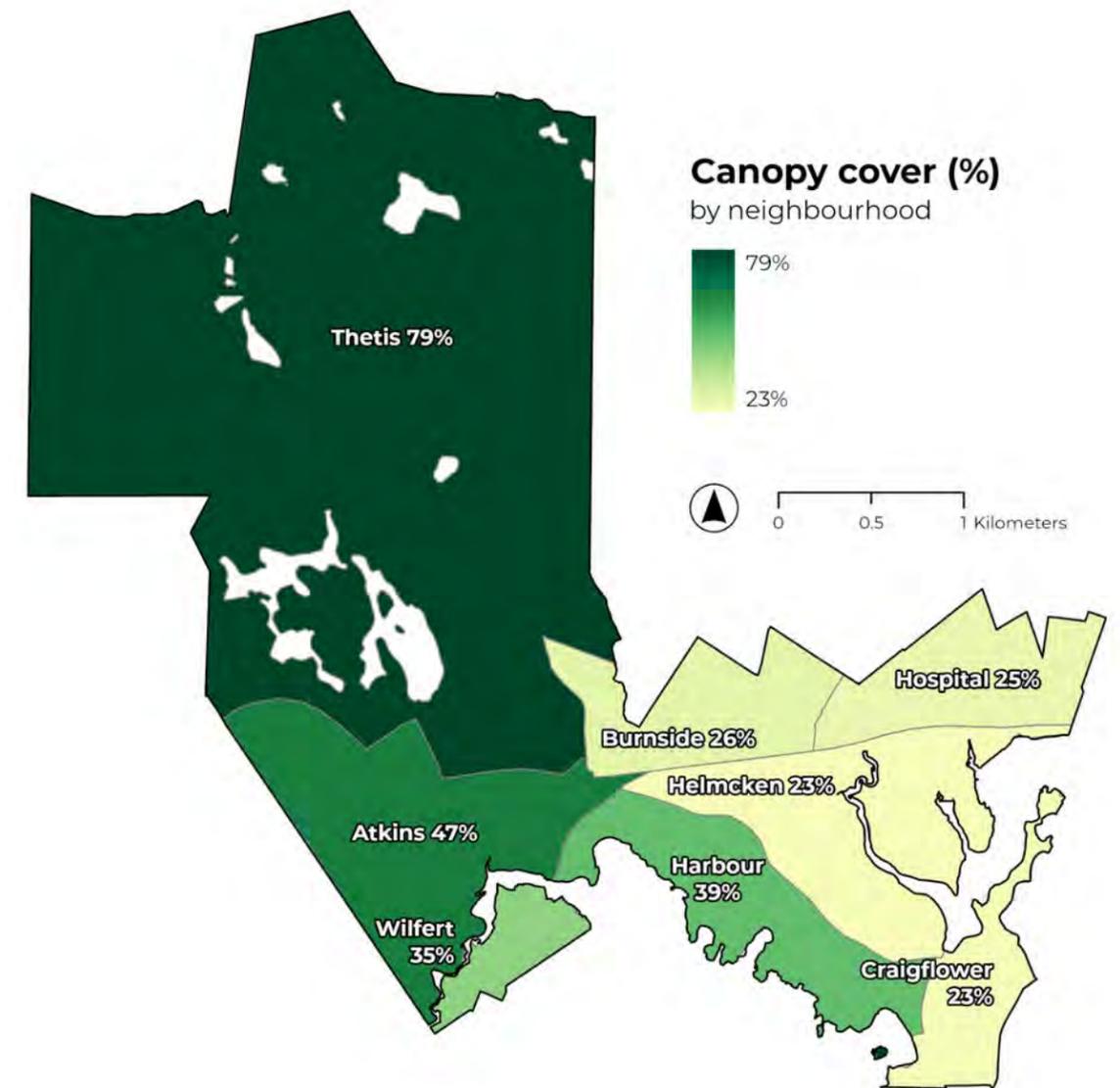


Figure 8. Canopy cover by neighbourhood in 2023

Canopy Trends

View Royal has a community-wide canopy cover above that of many peer communities (60%), and slightly lower than average canopy cover (29%) within the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) (Figure 9). High canopy coverage across the community is largely attributed to the extensive tree cover

in Thetis Lake Regional Park and Mill Hill Regional Park (Figure 7). Within the UCB, the low canopy cover is due to urban land uses such as roads and housing, as well as commercial and institutional uses.

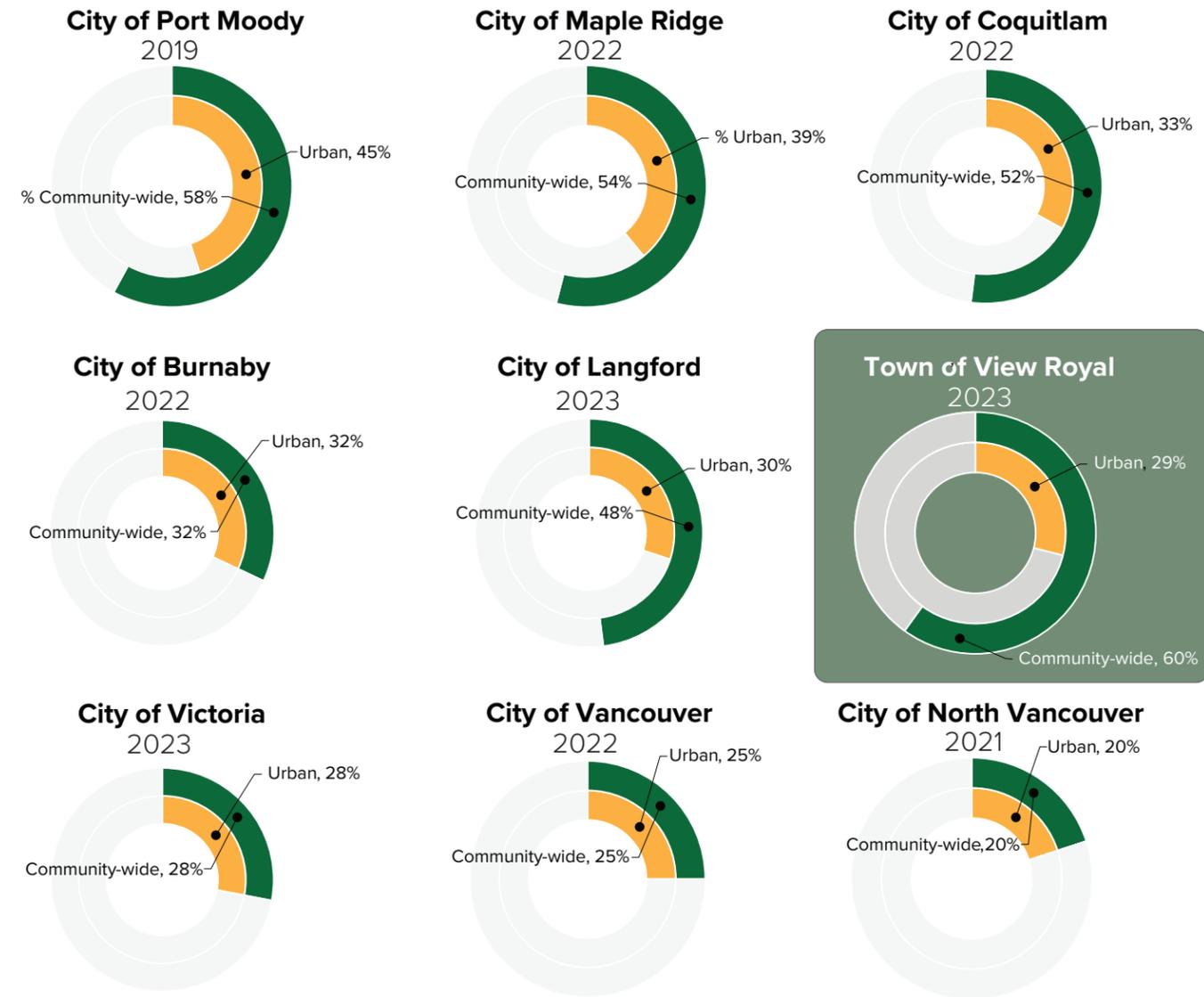


Figure 9. Citywide and UCB canopy cover comparison with municipalities in the region

3-30-300 Rule

The 3-30-300 rule has been proposed as an intuitive target that can be used by municipalities to increase access to the benefits that the urban forest provides⁶¹. It states that each building should have at least three trees within view, that canopy cover in temperate climates should be at least 30%, and that all residents should have access to greenspace within 300m of their homes.

Canopy Change

Most canopy cover loss in View Royal between 2019 and 2023 has occurred within the UCB, which does not include Thetis Lake Regional Park. Its canopy cover declined from 31% in 2019 to 29% in 2023 (Figure 10). This amounts to a compounding annualized rate of loss of roughly 1.1% over that period. Loss was generally consistent across neighbourhoods, ranging from 3–5%, and was typically localized, tied to specific large development projects rather than community-wide changes.

The Hospital neighbourhood experienced a sharper decline (11%) due to significant recent developments. Greenfield development in Mixed Residential areas saw even higher losses (22%). Together, large greenfield projects and smaller infill developments have contributed to notable canopy loss within the UCB over the past two decades.

As View Royal is now largely built out within the UCB, future growth—including 585 mandated housing units for over 3,200 new residents (a 25% increase over 25 years, or 0.9% annually)—will rely

on urban intensification. This represents an acceleration from the past five years, during which canopy cover fell by 2%. Without intervention, increasing development may further erode canopy cover.

Tree removal to support the achievement of View Royal’s housing target will occur, but development and canopy retention are not mutually exclusive. Careful design, policy interventions, and strong urban forest management will be required to preserve or restore canopy cover. The Town will need to prioritize not only tree protection but also initiatives that support tree canopy within new development following construction.

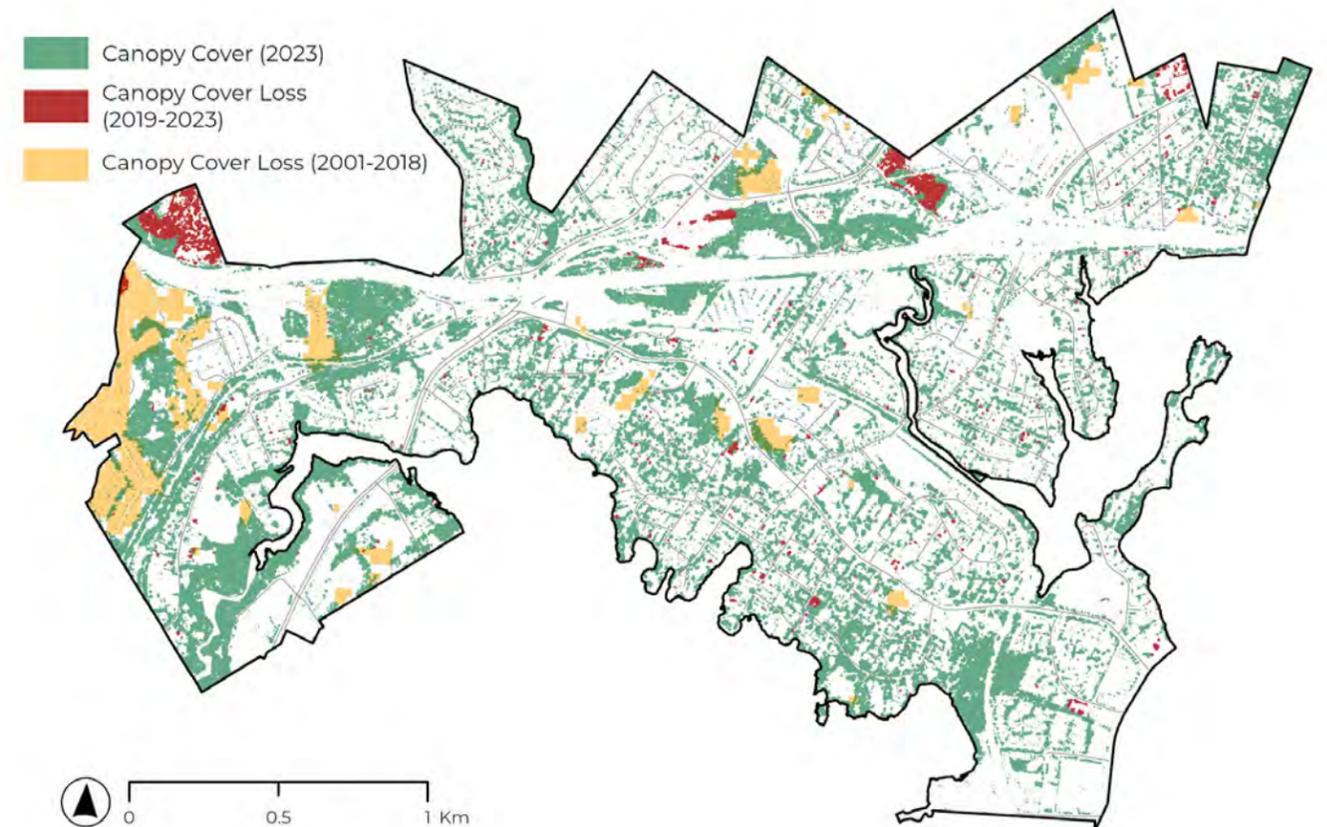


Figure 10. Canopy cover loss within the Urban Containment Boundary from 2001 - 2023

By Ownership

More than half of View Royal’s total canopy cover is in Thetis Lake and Mill Hill Regional Parks, managed by the Capital Regional District (CRD). These protected parks will continue providing sizable canopy contributions to View Royal’s urban forest in years to come. Within the UCB, over 58% of all canopy cover is located on private property, which is an ownership that makes up 59% of the Town’s land base (Figure 11). This statistic highlights the critical role of private landowners in shaping the Town’s canopy future, whether through loss or regeneration.

Municipal lands support above-average canopy cover. Though they make up 28% of the UCB land area, they account for 31% of its canopy cover—driven largely by the Town’s Parks system. Provincial lands, including the Trans-Canada Highway, Victoria General Hospital (VGH), and schools, cover a notable portion of the Town but feature low canopy cover. Although the Town has limited influence over these lands, they represent important opportunities for future canopy expansion, especially in settings where trees offer proven public benefits.

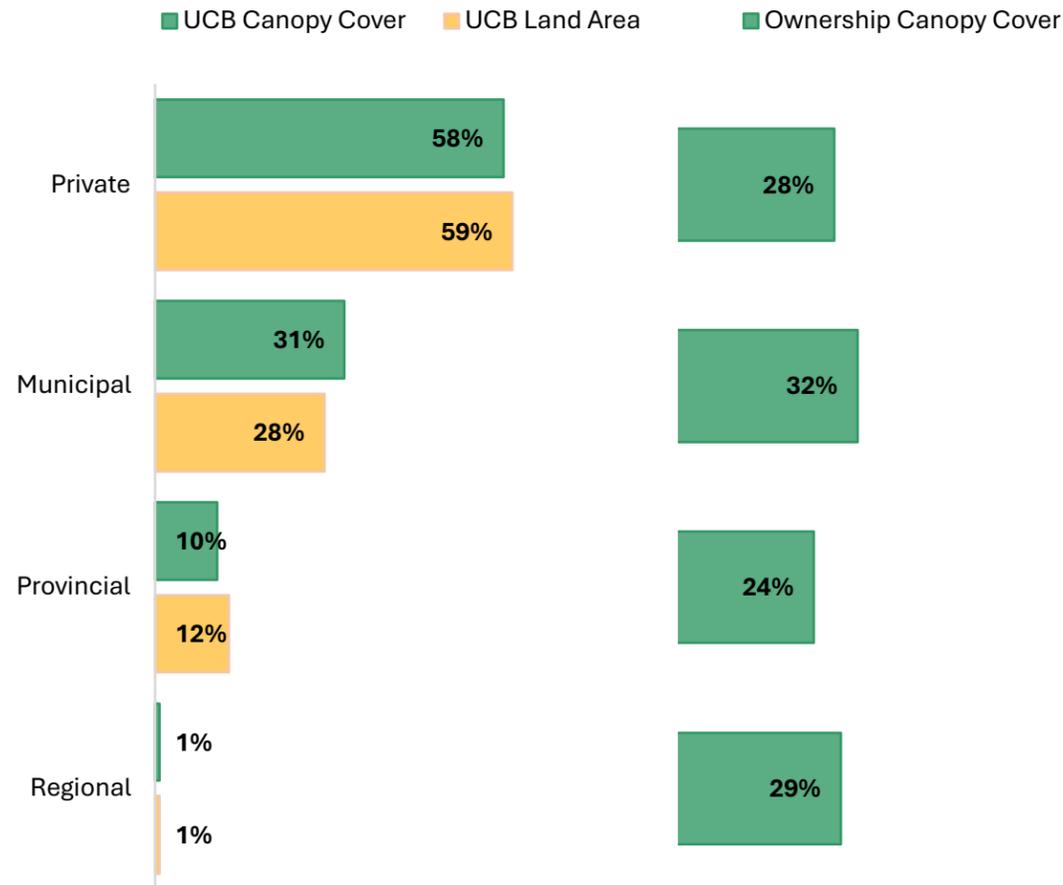


Figure 11. Proportion of View Royal’s urban (UCB) canopy cover and land area by ownership type (left), and canopy cover within that ownership type (right) in 2023

By Land Use

View Royal’s Official Community Plan (OCP) provides a high-level vision for growth, shaping land use and development patterns that affect tree retention and planting potential. The UCB’s largest land uses—residential, parks, road rights-of-way (ROWs), large-lot and mixed residential, and community facilities—also host most of the Town’s canopy cover (Figure 12). Residential areas make up 24% of the UCB and hold an equal share (24%) of canopy. Parks, while only 9% of the land, contribute 19% of canopy. ROWs, with lower average canopy (19%), still provide 16% of the total due to their extensive reach.

Higher-density land uses such as Intensive and Neighbourhood Mixed Use provide just 4% of total canopy cover, reflecting their smaller land footprint. Commercial areas, often dominated by surface parking, average 13% canopy cover and contribute just 2% to the total. Analyzing canopy by land use helps identify where policy changes or development regulations could most effectively increase future canopy across the Town.

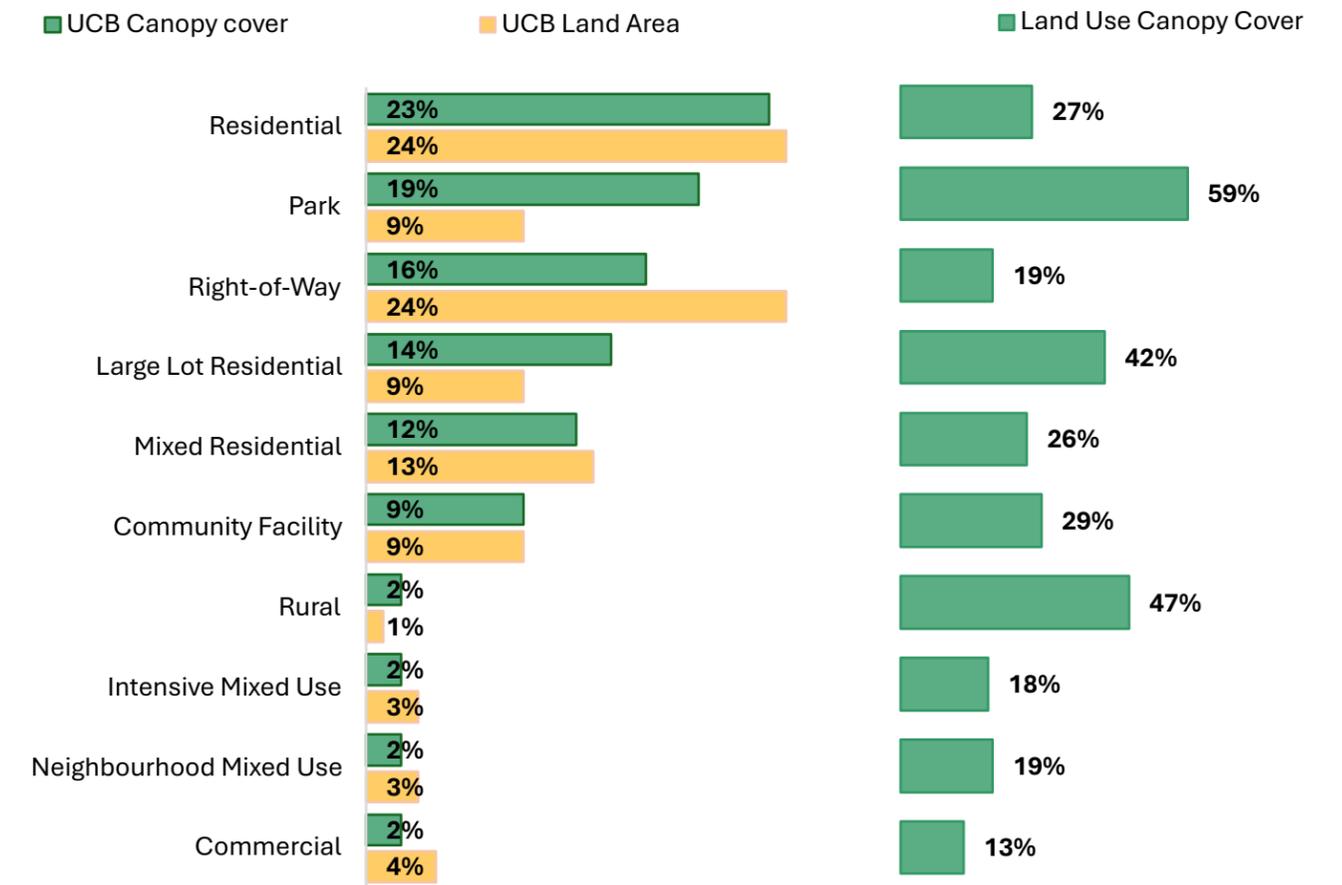


Figure 12. Proportion of View Royal’s urban (UCB) canopy cover and land area by land use (left), and canopy cover within that land use (right) in 2023

Urban Heat

Reducing the urban heat island (UHI) effect is a particularly important ecosystem service, yet it is difficult to assign a fiscal value to because its impacts extend across human health, biodiversity, and infrastructure. Urban trees help mitigate the UHI effect by providing shade and through transpiration. In contrast, impervious surfaces such as roads and buildings — which dominate in urbanized neighbourhoods with limited canopy — absorb heat during the day and release it gradually overnight.

In View Royal, some neighbourhoods experience higher land surface temperatures than others. Figure 13 highlights the Town’s Low Canopy Hotspots: areas with both limited tree cover and elevated surface temperatures. These hotspots are often associated with large expanses of surface parking (e.g., in commercial or institutional areas) or with newer, denser residential subdivisions where smaller lot sizes limit available space for tree planting.

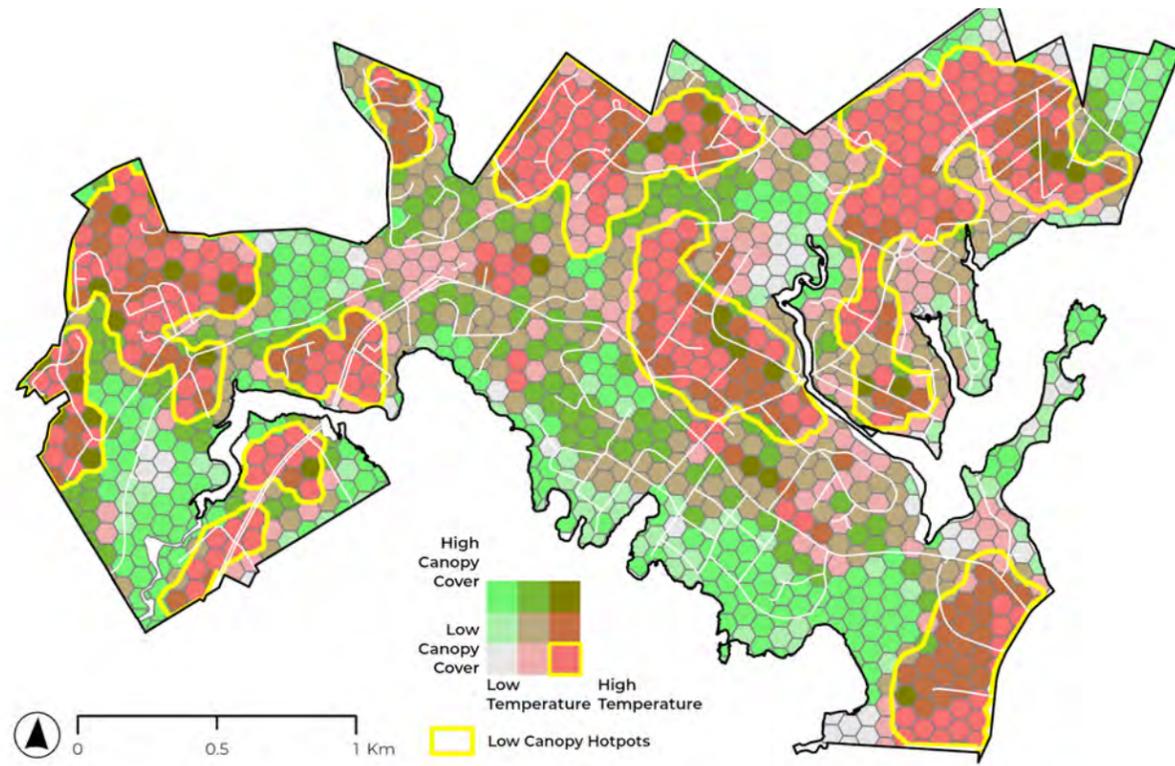


Figure 13. Low Canopy Hotspot (LCH) mapping within View Royal

Below: Mill Stream Creek (John Newcomb)

Street Tree Inventory

The Town of View Royal maintains an inventory of more than 1,200 municipal boulevard trees (i.e., trees located within the Town’s right-of-ways/roads), including the location and genera of those trees. View Royal’s inventory encompasses 35 genera and 46 species, of which roughly one in three trees are presently maple (Figure 14). Most are red maple specifically (25%), and cherries and plums (9%), dogwoods (8%), and oaks (8%) are also common.

While the inventoried boulevard trees only represent a small proportion of all trees in View Royal, the dominance of maples is common within North American municipalities and is likely reflective of the broader planted tree population. Overuse of a single genus, and certainly a single species, is typically thought to reduce the resilience of a tree population through increasing exposure to singular

pests, disease, and/or stressors. Eastern Canada has seen the consequences of limited urban tree diversity through the fallout of emerald ash borer and Dutch elm disease before it. By prioritizing diversification of planting stock, communities can build passive resilience by decreasing the representation of any single species or genus, and therefore the impact of the pests and diseases that they may host.

The value of a current and quality public tree inventory system cannot be overstated. Real insights into the condition, composition, and health of the Town’s trees are invaluable to operational planning and would help shape a data-driven approach to urban forest management.

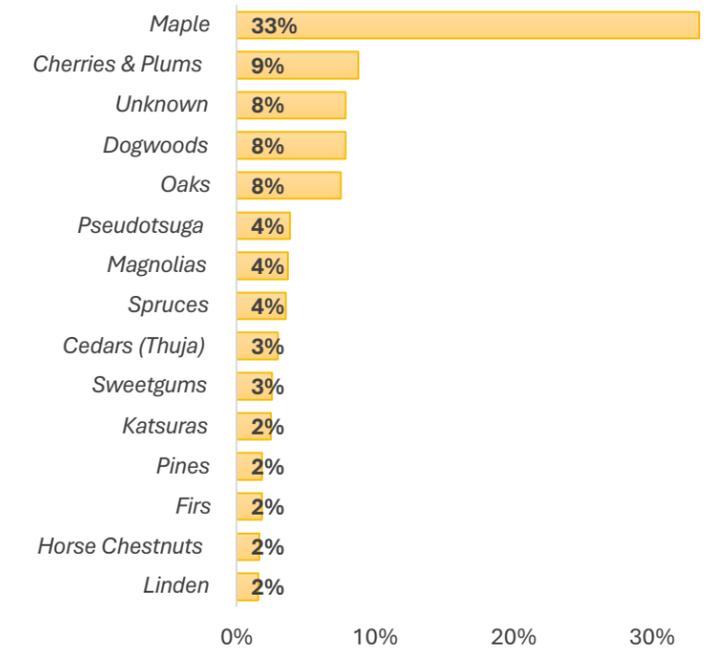


Figure 14. The relative proportion of genera included in the Town’s inventory of street trees (1222)

30-20-10 Rule

The 30-20-10 rule is a species diversity recommendation that is used to help increase the resilience of the urban forest⁶². It states that no family should compose more than 30% of the urban forest, that no genus more than 20%, and that no species should occupy more than 10%. This helps build resilience to pests and diseases which often target individual species or genera, or a small subset of them.

Forested Areas

View Royal is home to native forest ecosystems unique to Canada, including the Coastal Douglas-fir and Garry oak meadow ecosystems. Thetis and Mill Hill Regional Parks alone contain more than half of the community's urban forest canopy, underscoring the critical role of forested areas in maintaining the Town's canopy cover. View Royal's forested areas presently face various pressures, including the spread of invasive plants, climate change, and development.

View Royal is situated within the Coastal Douglas-fir Moist Maritime Biogeoclimatic subzone (CDFmm). The CDFmm is a unique set of ecosystems that occur in south-east Vancouver Island, portions of the Gulf Islands, and pockets along the south coast and mainland of British Columbia. Vancouver Island's rain shadow, which supports a Mediterranean-like climate allows for a rich flora and fauna to thrive.

The CDFmm's namesake tree is the coastal Douglas-fir, which is the dominant species in much of View Royal's forests. Douglas-fir tolerates a variety of site conditions and can be found in association with most native tree and understory species present in View Royal. Understory plants like Oregon-grape, oceanspray, salal, snowberry, honeysuckle, saskatoonberry, sword fern, bracken, and bald hip rose, along with mosses, lichens, mushrooms, give colour and life to these forests. The Town's largest, and likely oldest, trees tend to be found on sites with deeper soil horizon or where water is abundant (e.g., riparian zones), and on sites afforded the long-term protections offered by parks and protected land uses (e.g., Thetis Lake and Mill Hill Regional Parks, and Knockan Hill Park). It is important to recognize that the CDFmm includes far more than just Douglas-fir forests. In

addition to those forests, the zone includes endangered Garry oak ecosystems, wetlands, and shorelines— all of which can be found in View Royal.

Most of View Royal's forested areas are mature, primarily coniferous forests that have regenerated after historical land clearings in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Figure 15). However, some early successional stands are also present. Early successional forests often consist of deciduous species such as red alder, cottonwood, and big leaf maple, typically found in more recently disturbed areas, riparian zones, or on marginal lands previously used for agriculture or industry.

View Royal's forested areas face significant challenges as the climate deviates from historical norms. Three of the last five years have seen record-breaking wildfires^{54,55,56} and temperatures in British Columbia^{57,58,59}. Remote sensing analysis conducted as part of this background review has identified more than 4,800 open grown or overstory trees exhibiting signs of decline or dieback in their crowns, an increase of 1120 (30%) since 2019. These trees are predominantly located in Thetis Lake Regional Park. Native species like western red cedar, western hemlock, and grand fir are struggling with the drier summers caused by climate change. The Park is managed by the CRD, so the Town does not have direct control over its management. However, increased fuel loading due to the decline of trees in the Park could increase the risk of wildfire in Town.

Incursions from invasive species are present to some degree in most of View Royal's forested parks and natural areas. English Ivy is a prolific understory plant in some locations, such as in Portage Park, however the efforts of View Royal's

Invasive Species Coordinator and community volunteers have helped keep their tendrils off of overstory trees and the forest floor. Invasive blackberries, scotch broom, periwinkle, and several other common offenders to southeastern Vancouver Island were also confirmed present during spring 2024 field observations. Endangered ecosystems, such as those associated with Garry oak, should be prioritized in a monitoring a program to support early detection and treatment.

Where development creates new forest edges, or otherwise interfaces with existing ones, processes should ensure the integrity of that edge is preserved during construction and after development. A Registered Professional Forester can assess the risk of windthrow and recommend measures to address that risk.

Tree failures caused by wind, or windthrow, can occur when new forest edges are created, potentially damaging forest values of parks and riparian areas. The likelihood of windthrow depends on the stand and individual trees' natural ability to withstand winds, the site's position on the landscape and its exposure to storm winds, and how well the trees' roots are anchored in the soil. Clearings made for development can create new forest edges, which may expose previously sheltered trees and are not well adapted to that environment, thus increasing the likelihood of tree failure. In View Royal, some parks like Nursery Hill Park feature poorly adapted trees that have recently been exposed to stronger winds along a new edge.

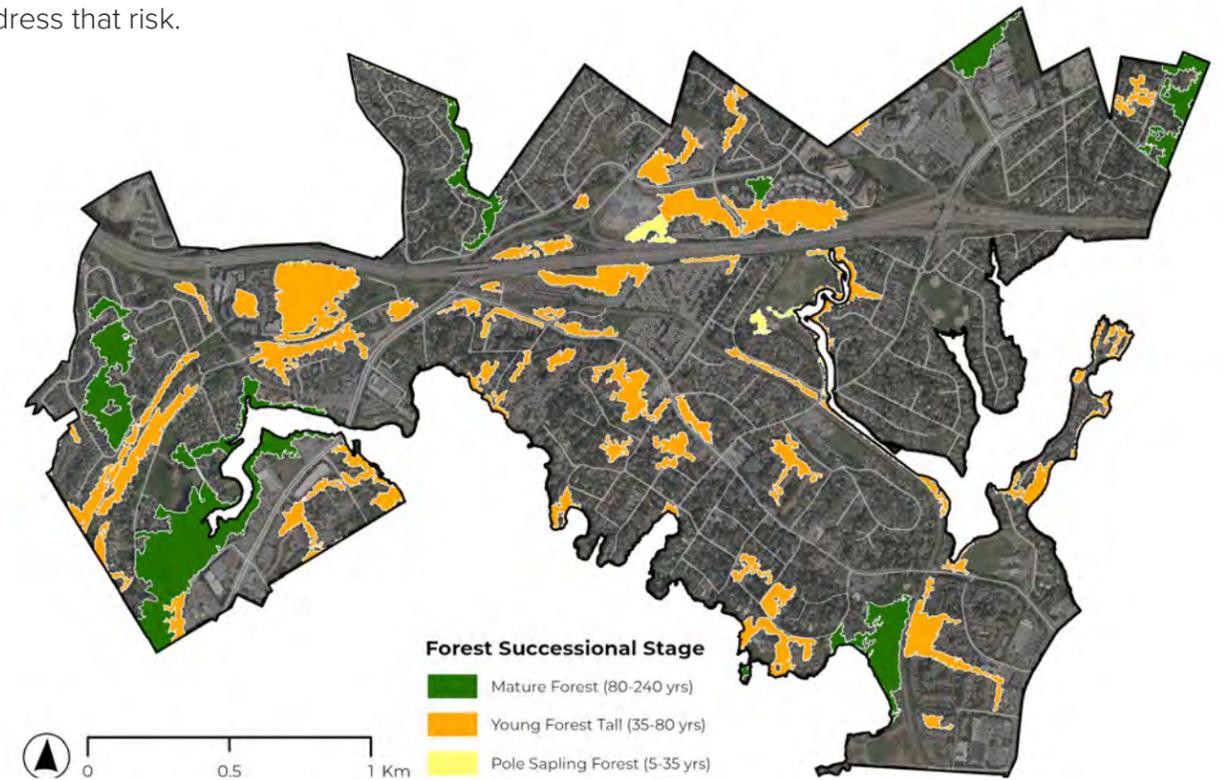


Figure 15. Successional stage of View Royal's urban forested areas (right)

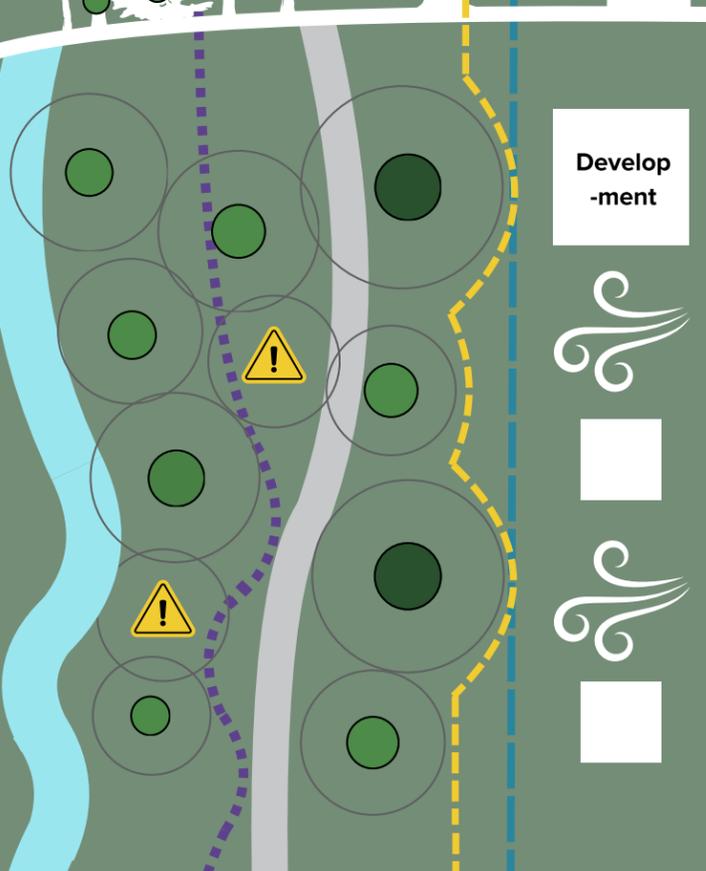


ESTABLISHING A WINDFIRM FOREST EDGE

Under BC's Riparian Areas Protection Regulation, a QEP must be contacted when works may impact vegetation within an identified riparian setback (typically 30m for fish-bearing streams) to ensure site works don't pose elevated risk to the stream feature - this generally involves windthrow hazard assessment.



Typical direction of strong winds



Anchor trees
Large, structurally sound, dominant trees that have developed structural adaptations like good rooting systems, large buttress roots, and strong taper. These adaptations result from growing above other trees in the stand, which exposes anchor trees to wind throughout their life. Retention and protection of anchor trees helps maintain the most stable forest edge available, and reduces the overall likelihood of windthrow.

Moderately windfirm trees
Moderately windfirm trees are not well adapted to exposure and may fail if exposed to strong winds at a new forest edge. They have always grown in a closed forest stand and may need several years to adapt to the new conditions. The stability of the stand depends on these trees being sheltered by the strong anchor trees.

Danger/Potential danger trees
Trees with defects or structural qualities that mean they pose a current hazard or would be expected to pose a hazard once the new edge is created. These trees have significant structural defects, such as decay or major injury, weak rooting, or very slender stems. Trees in this category are often the smaller trees that may have never faced strong winds and are likely to fail if exposed. Removing these trees prior to development helps mitigate the risk of windthrow.

New forest edge
This is a boundary drawn by a forester to delineate where a fortified new edge would exist adjacent a proposed development considering anchor and moderately windfirm trees.

Root protection zone
The root protection zone is also delineated by a forester to identify the line beyond which no site works should occur toward protecting the root zones of anchor and moderately windfirm trees.

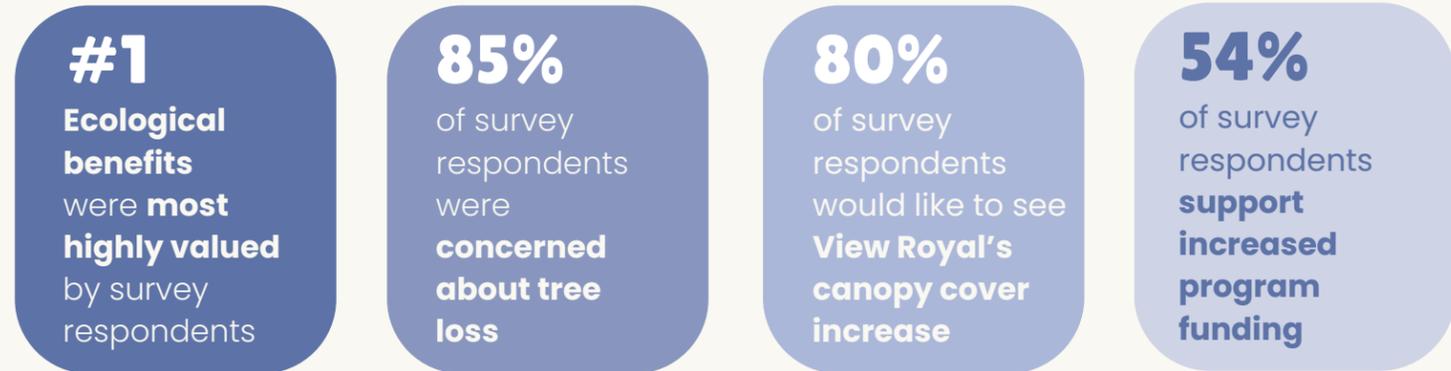
Riparian Setback



Windthrow (Flystock)

View Royal's Urban Forest Vision

Survey respondents were asked to describe their vision of the urban forest. The most common words in their responses were trees (115 mentions), urban (35), and forest (28).



120 Online Survey Respondents



Fall 2024

Summer 2025

Fall 2025

Background Review

Draft Strategy

Final Strategy

Engagement Phase 1

Community Vision & Values

Engagement Phase 2

Feedback on Draft Strategy

3. Looking Ahead

3.1 Where we are going

The UFS is meant to guide the management of View Royal's urban forest in the face of a changing community and climate. Using data sets from BC Stats, the Canadian Census, and the Town's 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report, the Town is expected to see an approximate population increase of 9,500 people between 2025 and 2050; to a population of more than 22,000 people within the life of this plan. New residents demand more homes and infrastructure, leading to increasingly tight urban spaces. At the same time climate change will bring with it conditions, including storms and extreme heat, different from those we and our urban forest have known in the past.

View Royal's Urban Forest Strategy takes guidance from the Town's Official Community Plan, and proposes strategies and actions meant to further the sustainable management of the urban forest in light of the range of threats it faces. In the pages following, we reflect both on the strengths and challenges experienced by the Town's urban forest management program, and the insights gleaned through community engagement, so that we can weave these issues, opportunities, and critical insights into a comprehensive management framework.

Below: Official Plan open house (Town of View Royal)



3.2 What We Heard

Two phases of public engagement will inform the development of this UFS. The first phase included an online survey open throughout October 2024. It focused on identifying community values and preferences for urban forest management to shape the draft UFS' vision, principles, and objectives. The second phase of engagement began in June 2025 and included the opportunity to review the draft UFS, and identify priority actions for its implementation.

One-hundred-and-twenty (120) respondents participated in the phase 1 online survey. They indicated three benefits they would like the UFS to prioritize:

- 1. Ecological:** Such as habitat for native (local) plants and animals,
- 2. Environmental:** Including stormwater management, air purification, and wind protection, and
- 3. Climate resilience:** Like cooling, flood protection, carbon capture and carbon storage.

Eighty-five (85%) of respondents were concerned about tree loss, 80% would like to see an increase in Town-wide canopy cover, and over 75% believe that the protection of native trees, habitats, and biodiversity are high priorities. Over half of respondents (54%) are willing to support the Town increasing funding to its urban forest program to improve service levels.

Thirty-six (36) respondents completed the Phase 2 online survey. Respondents identified Goal 4. Protect as the top priority, followed by Goal 1. Plan. Each strategy received at least 70% support, and each action received at least 75% support. Additionally, 88% of respondents are willing to pay to support the community's urban forest through avenues such as property tax.

Strengths & Opportunities



This Strategy outlines a vision and actionable goals for managing the urban forest through 2045. Its goals are reinforced by the Town's other strategic policy documents, including its Strategic and Official Community Plans, and reflect an institutional awareness of the urban forest's importance.

Biodiversity



View Royal's urban forest is home to the endangered Garry oak ecosystem which is among Canada's most biodiverse and threatened plant communities. These meadows, once maintained by Indigenous cultural burning practices, now face pressure from urban development and Douglas-fir encroachment due to fire suppression. Efforts like the Town's land transfer to Mill Hill Regional Park in 2022 support the protection of species at risk highlight its ongoing commitment to conservation.

Municipal Woodland Park Network



View Royal's large park system ranges from Community Parks, such as Edwards Park and Robin Hill Park, to Natural Greenspace, Linear Parks like Portage Inlet Linear Park, and Regional Parks such as Eagle Creek Park.

The Town of View Royal has the opportunity to strengthen relationships with the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt Nation) and Songhees Nation, whose ancestors have stewarded the area for thousands of years. Despite the significant loss of access to traditional territories, View Royal's native forests and waterways remain critical to Host Nations' cultural practices. The Town is committed to enhancing dialogue with Host Nations and recognizes urban forest management as an opportunity to integrate Indigenous values, traditional knowledge, and culturally sensitive practices (see Strategy 5.1 in Section 5).

Programs like the Resident Tree Planting Program and the Greater Victoria Green Team foster strong community stewardship of the urban forest, enhancing public involvement and support for tree-related initiatives.

Existing regulations safeguard trees on both public and private lands, and most of the Town's urban forest is protected within Thetis Lake and Mill Hill Regional Parks. These areas act as vital reservoirs of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Challenges

Urbanization



As with most Canadian communities, growth in View Royal over the past two decades has resulted in net loss of the community's canopy cover. The losses that have contributed to this exchange will continue to amplify as the community looks forward to more than 2,800 new housing units and thousands more residents over the next 20 years. Processes and planning must adapt and diverge from historic patterns of growth and design if View Royal would like to maintain or increase its urban forest, rather than face continued loss.

Climate & Extreme Weather



The impacts of climate change are being felt more with each passing year; extreme heat, drought, and wildfire. Additional challenges include flooding risks from sea level rise and increased rainfall. These pressures will not subside, and in fact, climate change may manifest as a source of underlying stress, that will erode the resilience of the urban trees to resist a number of other urban stressors. Management practices can help adapt to climate change, but it is now something we must plan for, rather than hope to avoid.

Reconciliation



Urban forest management responsibilities are divided among various departments, generally assigned to staff as a small part of their larger role within the municipality. This lack of dedicated capacity and very limited program funds restricts program capacity at present and would not facilitate meaningful implementation of this plan.

Stewardship



The Town has a partial street tree inventory that would benefit from being updated and completed with key attributes. Current datasets like a complete inventory support data-driven decision-making and support program monitoring efforts.

Protection

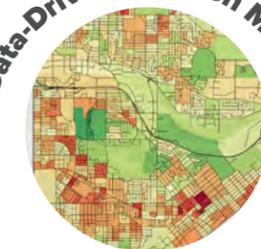


View Royal's forests are increasingly challenged by the range of threats faced. Remote sensing has detected a 30% increase in declining trees since 2019, especially in Thetis Lake Regional Park. Invasive plants such as English ivy, Himalayan blackberry, Scotch broom, and periwinkle are widespread, despite management efforts.

Program Capacity



Data-Driven Decision Making



Woodland Health & Invasive Species



BY THE 2080s, PROJECTED CHANGES* TO:



TEMPERATURES

More extreme heat events with days above 25°C tripling. Milder winters. Summer extremes of 38°C (1-in-20 hottest day).



EVAPOTRANSPIRATION

Increased rates of evaporation and transpiration from waterbodies, soil and plants.



PRECIPITATION

Heavier rainfalls and more rain except in summer. Longer droughts and decreasing snowpack.



SNOWMELT

Faster snowmelt. Earlier peak spring flows and flooding. Lower late-summer flows.



GROWING SEASONS

Longer and warmer growing season, increasing by 83 days.



VARIABILITY

More frequent and unseasonal extreme weather

* Projected changes based on modeling for the Capital Regional District using the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Representative Concentration Pathway 8.5 scenario (RCP8.5), which represents a high emissions pathway with limited mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions by the end of this century (or "Business as Usual").

WILL LIKELY CAUSE



SPECIES DISTRIBUTION SHIFTS

Forest species may shift northward and upslope as heat and moisture conditions exceed their tolerances.



LESS MOISTURE AVAILABILITY

Evapotranspiration will increase relative to precipitation, limiting water available to trees reducing growth, potentially leading to decline.



LONGER FIRES SEASONS AND LARGER FIRES

Fires may occur more often and burn larger areas because of hotter drier summers and vegetation.



MORE PESTS AND INVASIVE SPECIES

Some pests could reproduce more rapidly and more often. Water stressed trees and ecosystems are more vulnerable to attack and invasion.

CO₂



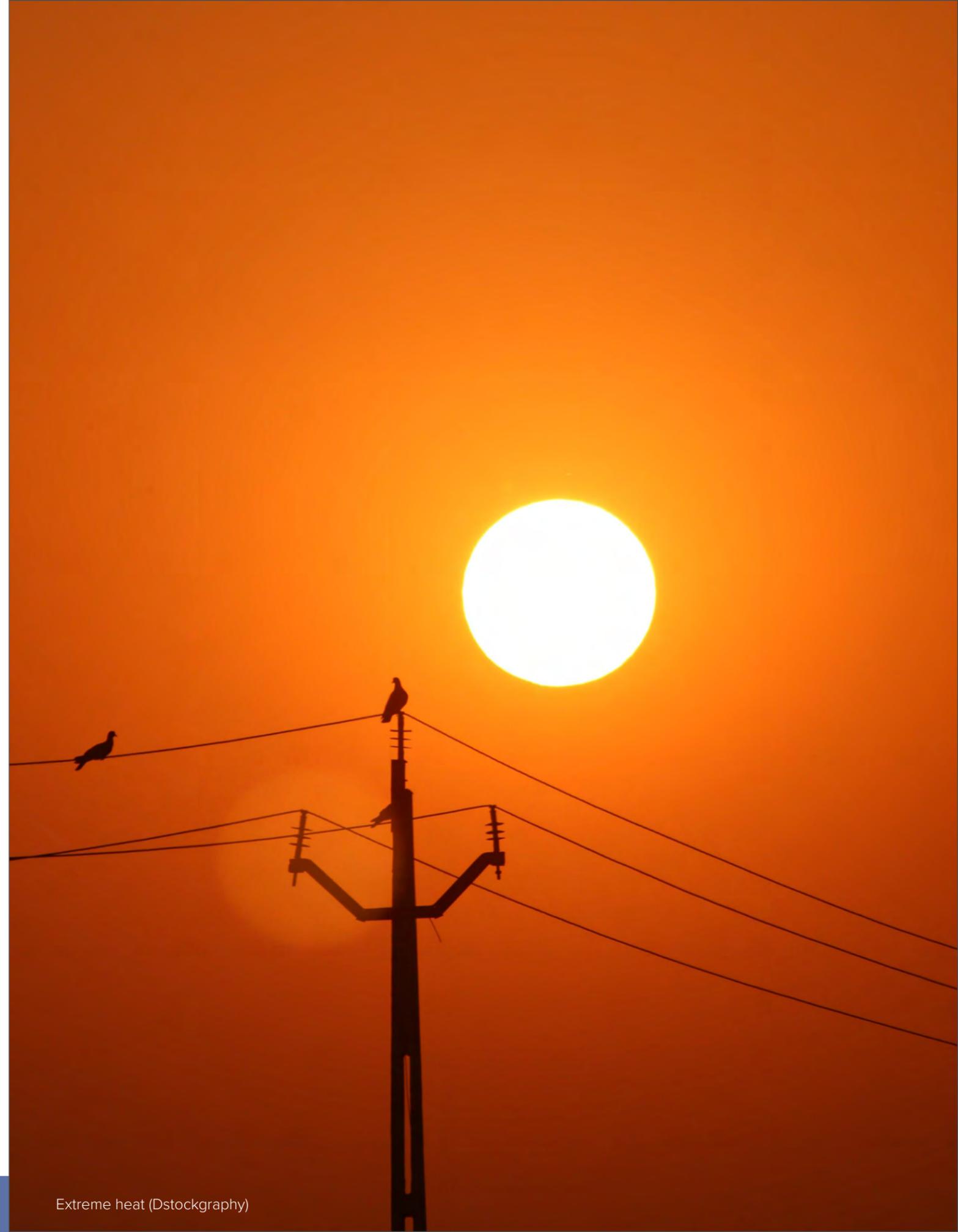
LONGER, WARMER GROWING SEASONS

Longer growing seasons may support more growth, species diversity and potentially more carbon sequestration where growing conditions are suitable.



MORE EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

Extrem heat, precipitation, freezing rain, heavy wet snow, flooding, landslides, windstorms and other events may happen more often leading to more tree stress and damage.



4. Strategic Framework

The Town of View Royal’s urban forest strategic framework is grounded by a community-based vision and guided by five overarching goals. The **urban forest vision** reflects our community’s urban forest aspirations for 2045:

In 2055, our Town’s urban forest is celebrated for its diverse, mature trees and interconnected green spaces. It provides vital habitat for native plants, pollinators, and wildlife, mitigates the impacts of climate change and enhances community resilience, health, and well-being. By protecting the existing urban forest and making space for new trees, we have enhanced and expanded our urban forest and strengthened our sense of place. We are stewards of our environment, and the trees we plant today will benefit our community for generations.

The five goals of the strategy work together to provide a clear and cohesive roadmap for managing View Royal’s urban forest. Each goal is supported by specific strategies and actions that offer targeted guidance for implementation. Progress will be measured through defined indicators and sustained by cross-departmental coordination and partnerships with external stakeholders.

Several ‘quick start’ actions will enable View Royal to begin rapidly working towards positive urban forest outcomes within the early stages of the Strategy’s life. In parallel, ‘priority actions’ will require more time and resourcing to implement but will have the most significant impact on the success of View Royal’s urban forest program.

Ultimately, the strategic framework will allow the Town of View Royal to ensure that its urban forest continues to meaningfully contribute to the community’s livability, identity, and resilience for generations to come.

Strategic Framework



Goal 1. Plan

- 1.1 Ensure planting standards support long-term tree growth
- 1.2 Ensure land use planning supports the urban forest
- 1.3 Ensure rates of tree planting support net new outcomes
- 1.4 Consider equity and community need through program decision-making

Goal 2. Manage

- 2.1 Improve urban forest governance
- 2.2 Prioritize program monitoring and reporting
- 2.3 Sustainably resource urban forest management and the implementation of this Strategy.

Goal 3. Maintain

- 3.1 Use best practices and industry benchmarks in the Town’s maintenance regime
- 3.2 Maintain forested areas to a reasonable standard of care

Goal 4. Protect

- 4.1 Enhance regulatory tools and processes to achieve the right balance between tree protection and community growth.
- 4.2 Support the resilience of both View Royal as a community and its urban forest.

Goal 5. Partner

- 5.1 Build relationships with Host Nations and Indigenous Peoples living in View Royal
- 5.2 Build community knowledge of and participation in urban forest management
- 5.3 Develop strategic partnerships

5. Action Plan

Goal 1. Planning and design processes facilitate the growth of the urban forest.

Strategy 1.1. Ensure planting standards are supporting long-term tree growth.

The best tree outcomes are often decided well in advance of the tree being planted. In constrained urban growing environments it is often the case that the qualities of planting sites dictate the success and longevity of the trees planted within them. Planting area, stock selection, soil qualities and volumes, spacing, irrigation and a range of other considerations all influence which trees are likely to survive on a site. By incorporating arboricultural best practices into development regulation and planting processes, trees planted are expected to have longer life-cycles and provide more benefits.

KEY INDICATOR(S):

M3. Average DBH of boulevard trees at time of removal

BASELINE (2025):

Unknown

TARGET (2045):

>20 cm

Action 1. Ensure trees entering the boulevard inventory are inspected to verify compliance with stock and establishment standards prior to their acceptance by the Town.

Action 2. Update View Royal’s Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw and standard details to enhance tree planting conditions in right-of-ways, including minimum soil volume, irrigation, boulevard width and soil depth requirements.

Action 3. Review tender specifications and warranty inspection standards for contracted tree planting.

Action 4. Review the Town’s details for boulevards, tree planting, tree protection, and tree pits. Ensure design is aligned with best practices, and would support full tree life-cycles.

Action 5. Spatially define the areas across the Town where the use of native vegetation is to be prioritized given biodiversity preservation objectives within or adjacent to those areas (e.g. shoreline parks, park natural areas, and ESA buffers).



Poor planting practices (above) and land clearing (right) can be mitigated through thoughtful land use planning, planting standards and design (Diamond Head Consulting)

Strategy 1.2. Ensure land use planning is supporting the urban forest.

Nearly 60% of View Royal’s urban land base is under private ownership. Land use planning policy and tools such as the OCP and zoning regulation play a significant role in shaping our community’s urban forest through determining the amount of space available for tree planting on private property. This is significant because the planting opportunities, or lack thereof, created during development are likely to persist for decades.

Updates to land use planning policy and regulations can help ensure that as the Town grows to meet housing and infrastructure needs, it is also supporting urban forest goals. Maintaining, and certainly growing the urban forest canopy, will not be attainable otherwise.

KEY INDICATOR(S):

M4. Urban core canopy cover

BASELINE (2023):

29%

TARGET (2045):

30%

Action 6. Adopt OCP policy supporting the urban forest and UFS that provides enhanced direction on the handling of View Royal’s urban forest within the community’s guide to growth.

Action 7. Review View Royal’s Zoning Bylaw to ensure performance criteria, including surface parking, landscaped open space, setbacks, and lot coverage, are supporting consistent inclusion of trees on development sites.



Canopy Cover Pathways

A growing number of communities have adopted a canopy cover target as a measurable indicator of their urban forest and urban greening aspirations. The establishment of an informed canopy cover target is a nuanced process, and gives consideration to the unique contexts relevant to each community.

While the OCP has committed to an increase in canopy cover, the community has yet to adopt a formalized target to better define this goal. The Town of View Royal currently has 29% urban canopy cover. View Royal has chosen to use an urban (i.e., UCB) canopy cover target in recognition that the vast majority of the community's rural area exists as protected parkland, and therefore does not face the same type of pressures as those in the heart of the community.

Through the development of this document, the Town has prepared three canopy cover scenarios (Figure 17): canopy growth, canopy net neutrality, and status quo (described in more detail adjacent).

While the document uses possible canopy cover pathways to frame future program trajectories, it is important to recognize that a full range of program actions, beyond just the act of planting of trees, benefits the sustainability of an urban forest management program, supports community resilience to climate change, and elongates tree life-cycles. Activities like cyclical pruning, tree watering, community outreach, planning and development processes, and program monitoring each are every bit as important to growing View Royal's urban forest canopy as is the act of planting trees itself.

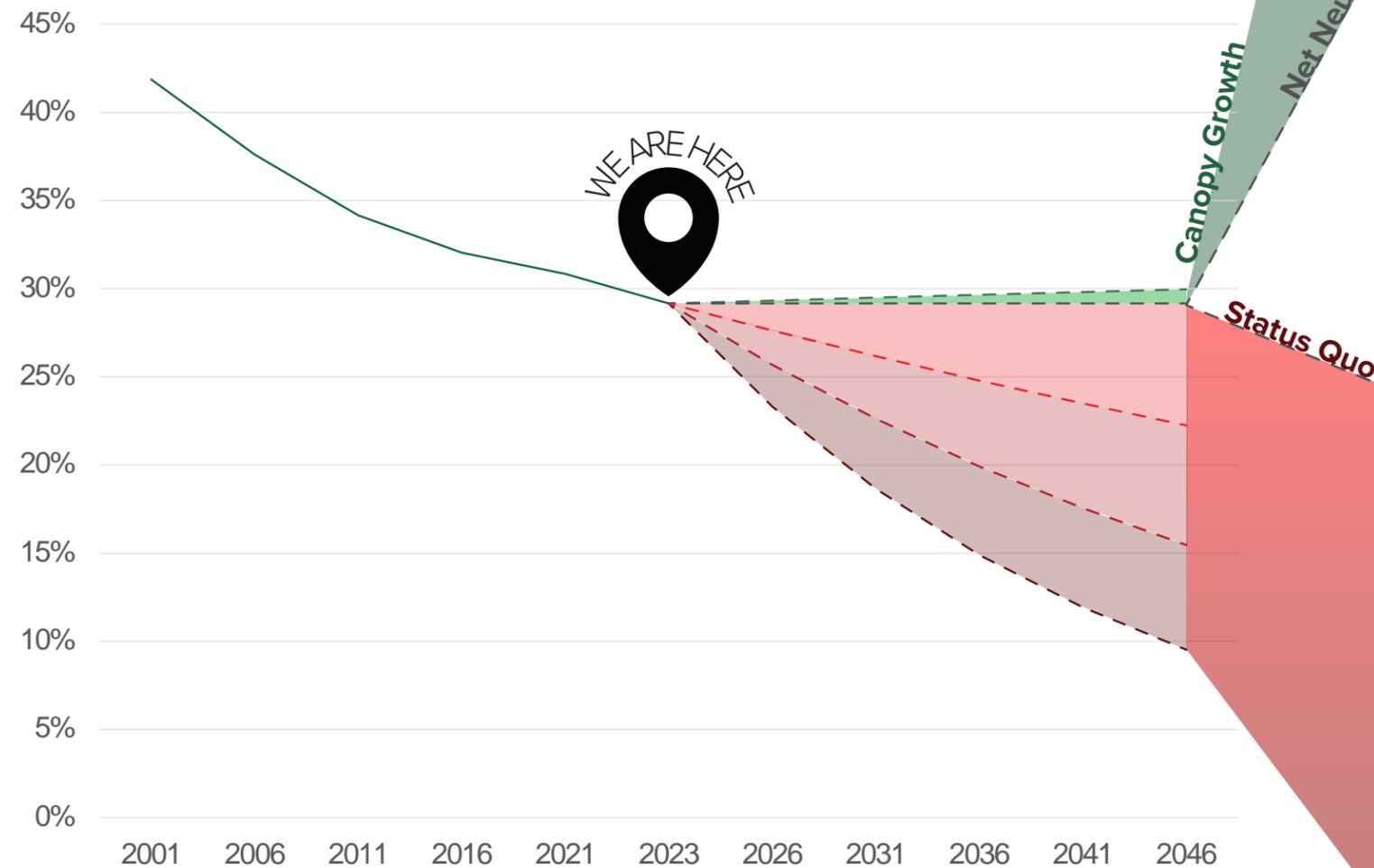


Figure 17. View Royal canopy cover pathways: Canopy growth, net neutral, and status quo.

Under a “canopy growth” scenario, View Royal’s canopy would increase to at least 30% (+1%) over the coming two decades. Trends beginning over the past two decades would be reversed despite historic rates of loss and projected future population growth. New processes, resources, and procedures would build resilience to climate change and other developing forest health concerns. Rates of tree planting would not only offset loss, but would be sufficient to increase canopy cover. To achieve this, the existing gap between available program resources and demand would need to be considerably narrowed, and iterative evaluation may be necessary to ensure program development in accordance with the UFS remains adequately resourced.

The “canopy growth” scenario would demand substantial, but gradual implementation of this Strategy over the coming two decades. Achieving net canopy growth involves far more than just planting trees, and dollars spent toward this ends are dollars saved on tree removal, reactive management, and disaster relief.

🌳 ~730 trees planted/replaced annually within the Town (est. 100 on municipal property, 2000 by 2045)
 💰 \$250,000 - \$500,000 (2045) 👤 15,000 - 25,000 Residents

Under a “net neutral” scenario, View Royal’s canopy would remain at its current coverage (29%) over the coming two decades. Trends beginning over the past two decades would be reversed, to the extent that canopy loss is not continued despite forecasted growth. To achieve this, the existing gap between available program resources and demand would need to be narrowed, and particular attention paid to View Royal’s development processes, so as to ensure tree protection and replacement requirements are not net-negative.

The “net neutral” scenario would demand at least partial implementation of this Strategy over the coming two decades. Actions marked as core (🚨) may be enough to realize this pathway. The emphasis under net neutral is endorsing the minimum programming that may be necessary to avoid continued loss in the face of anticipated growth.

🌳 ~430 trees planted/replaced annually within the Town (est. 50 on municipal property, 1000 by 2045)
 💰 \$150,000 - \$250,000 (2045) 👤 15,000 - 25,000 Residents

Under a “status quo” scenario, there would be no changes to the Community’s existing program, structure, or meaningful change in level of resourcing. Trends beginning over the past two decades would be expected to continue over the next two decades, while at the same time pressures associated with climate change other forest health concerns would continue to amplify. The existing gap between available program resources and demand may widen. Under such a scenario, continued canopy loss would be assured, with the degree of loss moderated both by the magnitude of growth experienced over coming decades and by policy interventions the Town may explore to mitigate loss. Capital spending associated with severe weather and climate change may be expected to rise, where preventative measures and proactive planning are out of reach, given available resources.

The “status quo” scenario is illustrative, meant to identify the likely outcomes if programming moving forward remains unchanged from that of the past two decades. In practice, nothing in this Strategy would need to be acted on in order to realize a status quo scenario.

🌳 ~ rates of canopy loss reflective of 20-year average
 💰 No assumed budgetary commitments 👤 15,000 - 25,000 Residents

Strategy 1.3. Ensure rates of tree planting are supporting net new outcomes.

If View Royal desires to maintain its urban forest canopy over the coming two decades, more than 8,600 new and replacement trees will need to be planted over the coming two decades (roughly 430 trees per year). This number is even higher, at 14,600 new and replacement trees (roughly 430 trees per year) if the Town wishes to grow its canopy cover to 30% (Figure 17). The Town can endeavour to plant trees itself however this is not a initiative the Municipality will be able to rise to alone. Given how much of View Royal falls on private property, residents, businesses and community members will play a significant role in the Town's urban forest change (positive or regressive) moving forward.

To support the maintenance of tree canopy or to ensure future canopy growth, the Town of View Royal will need to increase rates of tree planting from those observed historically, while at the same time offsetting canopy loss on private property. Tree planting plans can support the Town with assessing suitable planting sites that consider program budgets, practical constraints, and program objectives such as reducing urban hotspots (Figure 13).

KEY INDICATOR(S):

M5. Net new public trees planted

BASELINE (2025):

Net negative (2001-2023)

TARGET (2025-2045):

730 (1% growth); 50 - 100 on municipal property

Action 8. Prepare five-year tree planting plans to direct short-term tree planting programming toward the Town maintaining the desired net new tree planting.

Action 9.  Municipal tree planting targeting 50 - 100 trees per year between parks and boulevards and desired canopy cover pathways.

Action 10. Leverage restoration and afforestation to grow urban forest canopy within forested areas and in naturalization sites.

Action 11.  Establish an adopt-a-tree program where the Town will plant trees in under-utilized boulevard or park space in exchange for resident-led care through establishment.

Case Study: Burnaby's Tree4Free Program

Burnaby's Tree4Free program offers residents a chance to help grow the city's urban forest by having a free boulevard tree planted in front of their property. While the city handles the planting and general maintenance, the program encourages residents to take an active stewardship role by watering the young trees—especially during dry periods—using green watering bags provided by the city. This partnership between the city and the community helps ensure that new trees thrive, contributing to a healthier, greener Burnaby.

Strategy 1.4. Consider equity and community need through program decision-making.

View Royal's canopy cover is distributed unevenly across the community. Non-uniformity in the Town's canopy distribution is fairly typical in a growing urban community, but it means that the benefits associated with trees vary in their provision from one corner of the community to the next. By being strategic with program investment, incentives, and regulation, View Royal can encourage canopy growth in the parts of the community where it is lowest, at present.

Often, the negative impacts associated an uneven urban forest distribution disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations within a community. The impacts of heat, associated with the urban heat island effect (and low canopy cover), is more acutely felt where the costs of air conditioning are out of reach, or amongst elderly populations, children, or newcomer members of the community. There are processes View Royal can initiate to ensure its urban forest remains accessible to all members of the community, and to ensure programming is reaching all community segments.



Elderly couple enjoying nature's benefits (Nutlegal Photographer)

KEY INDICATOR(S):

M6. Spatial heat disparity

BASELINE (2025):

15°C

TARGET (2045):

10°C

Action 12. Explore opportunities for improving urban forest access and education in areas with concentrations of vulnerable populations.

Action 13. Ensure community engagement and outreach programming is broadly accessible to any interested members of the community. Explore opportunities for improving urban forest access and education in low tree equity areas.

Action 14. Explore requiring dedicated tree corridors, boulevards clear of active transportation facilities or any other community infrastructure, along priority right-of-ways such as: (i) those located in Transit Oriented Development areas and along arterial/collector corridors, or (ii) areas of lower tree equity where there is a lower density of public trees. Identify these locations as a schedule in the OCP, prepare accompanying policy, and consistently require widening dedications within these areas.

Goal 2. Program governance supports the Town in meeting its urban forest aspirations.

Strategy 2.1. Improve urban forest governance to achieve positive urban forest outcomes.

Urban forest governance involves both administrative structures and cultural norms that influence how decisions about urban trees are made and implemented. This includes the adoption of appropriate tools to support urban forest outcomes, as well as interdepartmental and inter-agency coordination among stakeholder organizations. Clear mandates, dedicated funding, and trained personnel are essential components, as is the integration of urban forestry into broader municipal goals such as climate resilience, equity, and public health.

Urban forest governance is shaped by how trees are valued within municipal institutions and the community. This includes the degree to which trees are seen as infrastructure, how engaged residents are in stewardship, and whether diverse community perspectives—especially from historically excluded groups—are incorporated into planning processes. A strong urban forest culture within a municipality supports long-term commitment, intergenerational thinking, and shared responsibility, which are all critical for maintaining and growing healthy, equitable urban forests.



Water bag for young trees in View Royal (DHC)

KEY INDICATOR(S):

M7. Working group meetings

BASELINE (2025):

\$184,000

TARGET (2045):

\$250,000

KEY INDICATOR(S):

M7. Working group meetings

BASELINE (2025):

None

TARGET (2045):

Twice annually

Action 15. Prepare and adopt a Town Tree policy to formalize: green infrastructure within the Town’s broader asset management program, risk management procedures concerning urban forest assets, integrated pest management procedures, public tree protection, replacement, and compensation requirements, and tree protection and inspection requirements with respect to capital works.

Action 16. Establish dedicated tree maintenance and planting budgets within parks. Establish initial budgets based on a life-cycle costing approach.

Action 17. Establish an interdepartmental Urban Forestry working group and meet biannually to review progress on implementation, and to review current challenges and opportunities impacting the Town’s urban forestry program.

Strategy 2.2. Prioritize program monitoring and reporting.

In order to understand how the Town is doing relative to its urban forest ambitions, the Municipality must have the tools at its disposal to track progress and evaluate change. Regular monitoring and data collection provide these insights and are essential in supporting adaptive urban forest management, enabling responsiveness to the ranging pressures faced.

Completing and maintaining a comprehensive street tree inventory will allow the Town to track improvements in urban forest health and prioritize maintenance efforts⁶³. Monitoring change in canopy cover, planting success rates, tree condition, and species diversity can all be used to evaluating the effectiveness of the Town’s management efforts, and for identifying areas of necessary change. View Royal’s success can then be shared in regular reports that support building awareness and developing ongoing support for the program.

KEY INDICATOR(S):

M8. Tree condition rating; M4. Urban core canopy cover

BASELINE (2025):

Unknown; 29%

TARGET (2030):

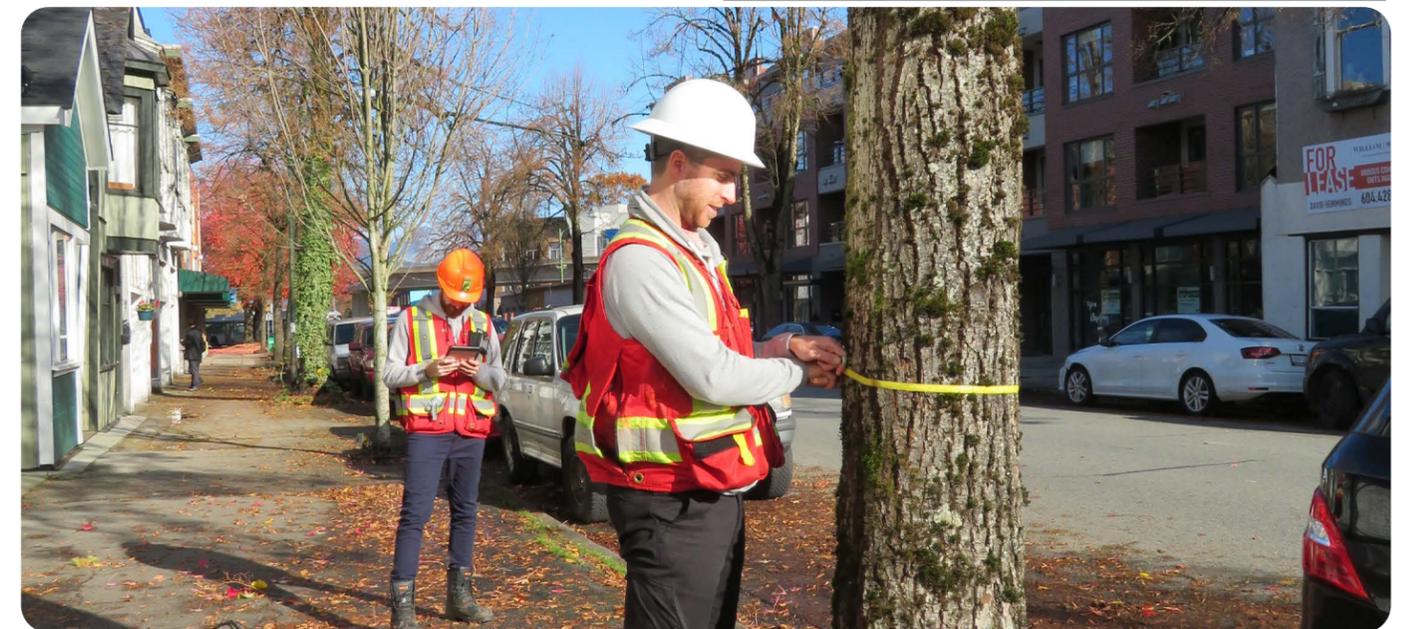
< 10% in ‘Poor’ or worse condition; 30%

Action 18. Undertake a review of the Urban Forest Strategy every five years.

Action 19. Establish and maintain a GIS-based boulevard tree inventory featuring a technical design aligned with industry best practices and update the inventory in-step with a proactive maintenance regimen.

Action 20. Produce a new urban tree canopy dataset, derived from current LiDAR and imagery datasets, on a five-year interval.

Action 21. Produce a State of the Urban Forest report on a five-year interval to report on key program metrics and explore changes in the urban forest since prior reporting.



Collecting tree inventory data (DHC)

UFS Monitoring Approach

The following details View Royal’s approach to monitoring its progress in the implementation of the UFS. Table 2 contains a compilation of the indicators detailed throughout this Action Plan, as well as a small selection of supplementary indicators to further support program monitoring, administration, and decision-making.

The table describes each indicator, as well as the strategy it is most associated with, methods and datasets leveraged in its tracking, the frequency at which measurements will be undertaken, as well as the most current measurement (i.e., Baseline) and the target associated with it. If indicator measures suggest the Town is headed in the wrong direction with respect to one or more indicators through the

life-cycle of this plan, adaptive measures may be identified through the next (five-year) review of the UFS.

Table 2. Monitoring framework to track the implementation of View Royal’s Urban Forest Strategy.

Indicator	Method	Frequency	Baseline	Target
M1. Average DBH of boulevard trees	Inventory	Annual	Not Tracked	20 - 40 cm
M2. Interdepartmental working group meetings.	Calendar	Twice Annual	None	Twice Annual
M3. Average DBH of boulevard trees at time of removal	Inventory	Ongoing	Not Tracked	>20 cm
M4. Urban core canopy cover	LiDAR + Orthoimagery	2 years	29%	30% by 2045
M5. Net new public trees planted	Inventory	Annual	Not Tracked	513
M6. Spatial heat disparity	Thermal + Orthoimagery	5 years	15°C	5°C
M7. Working group meetings	-	Annual	Not Tracked	2
M8. Tree condition rating	Inventory	5 years	Not Tracked	<15% in ‘Poor’ or worse condition
M9. Inventory update cycle	Inventory	Annual	Ad hoc	7 years, iterative
M10. Program budget	Operating	Annual	\$6.50 / capita	\$10 / capita
M11. Cyclical pruning cycle	Inventory	7 years	Reactive	7 years, iterative
M12. Forest stand condition ratings	Inventory	Ongoing	Not Tracked	<20% ‘Poor’ or worse condition
M13. Genus and species diversity	Inventory	5 years	33% maple 25% red maple	< 30% Genera < 20% Species
M14. Program budget	Capital Budget	Annual	\$184,000	\$250,000
M15. Annual volunteer hours	-	Annual	Not Tracked	> 100 hours

Strategy 2.3. Sustainably resource urban forest management and the implementation of this Strategy.

Urban forest management responsibilities are currently dispersed across Municipal Departments. Without dedicated staff, urban forestry competes with other core professional responsibilities, limiting the Town’s ability to manage its trees efficiently. Establishing a full-time urban forestry position will develop critical in-house arboriculture expertise, serving ranging utility in urban forest management efforts.

Existing levels of program funding will not be sufficient to meaningfully implement this UFS, nor to achieve the central objectives of the program described. Creating full-time or seasonal positions funded through partnerships, grants, or youth employment programs can leverage external support to add capacity to realize our urban forest vision.

KEY INDICATOR(S):

M10. Program budget

BASELINE (2025):

~\$6.50 per capita

TARGET (2045):

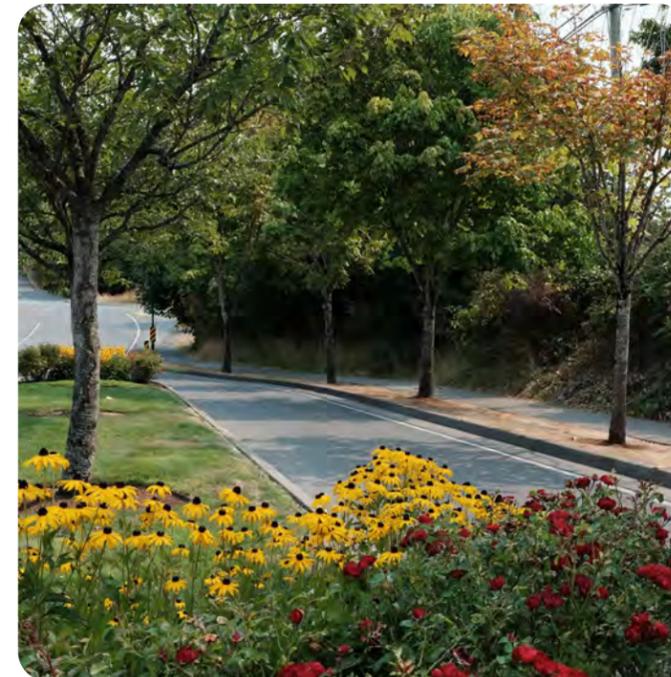
\$10 per capita

Action 22. Access external employment funding, such as Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidies, to employ youth over the summer and explore sustainable funding for student and internship positions that can contribute to a wide range of stewardship, tree inventory, and other projects.

Action 23. Establish a Town arborist or urban forester position within Parks to broadly enhance urban forest outcomes across all program areas and to support ongoing implementation of this Strategy.

Action 24. Transition the Town’s Invasive Species Volunteer Coordinator to a full-time equivalent and expand community outreach, education, and stewardship programming.

Action 25. Access external funding opportunities to support tree planting, such as the Growing Canada’s Community Canopies (GCCC) initiative.



Ornamental boulevard (DHC)

Goal 3. Urban forest maintenance regimen are aligned with industry best practices.

Strategy 3.1. Utilize best practices and industry benchmarks through the Town’s maintenance regimen.

Like any other living thing, trees benefit from care throughout their life-cycle. A thoughtful and proactive maintenance regimen helps to maximize tree health, minimize associated risk, and ensure tree longevity. Younger trees often benefit from watering, structural pruning, and protection through establishment, and mature trees can benefit from pruning, integrated pest management, and various other life-cycle activities. Good care improves tree resilience to pests, diseases, and the impacts of climate change. A proactive maintenance regimen also tends to result in less frequent/intensive responsive maintenance activities and better prognosis for the tree. Tree care can be thought of in much the same way as dental hygiene; if you attend regular checkups and practice good dental care, your costs for service will be spread out across smaller appointments and will probably yield better outcomes than if you just see a dentist when you develop tooth pain.

KEY INDICATOR(S):
M11. Cyclical pruning cycle

BASELINE (2025):
None

TARGET (2045):
Seven years

Action 26. Expand the Town’s watering program to water newly planted trees weekly in the growing season for a period of 3 to 5 years after planting.

Action 27. Transition to a seven-year cyclical pruning cycle for all inventoried boulevard trees.

Strategy 3.2. Maintain forested areas to a reasonable standard of care.

View Royal is home to a rich mosaic of ecosystems, including coastal Douglas-fir forests, Garry oak meadows, riparian corridors, and wetlands. These systems support a wide range of native biodiversity, from sensitive plant communities to birds, amphibians, and pollinators. The town’s natural areas are not only ecologically significant but also provide valuable services to the community—such as stormwater regulation, climate resilience, recreational opportunities, and a strong sense of place.

A proactive forest management approach is essential to maintaining the health and function of these ecosystems. By planning ahead, the community can reduce wildfire risk, manage invasive species, and support native habitat restoration. Integrating biodiversity thinking into forest management planning helps ensure that ecological integrity is preserved while also adapting to climate change and urban development pressures. Strategic, long-term planning allows View Royal to protect its natural heritage while building a more resilient and sustainable future.

KEY INDICATOR(S):
M12. Forest stand condition ratings

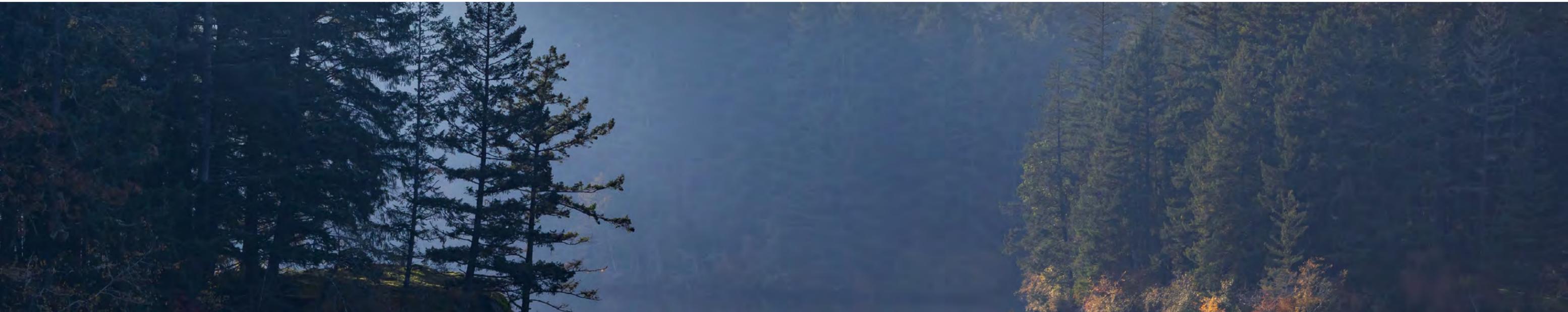
BASELINE (2025):
Unknown

TARGET (2030):
<20% of stands ‘poor’ or worse condition

Action 28. Prepare forest management plans for flagship parks including Nursery Hill Park, Kelvin Grove/Wilfert Park, Eagle Creek, Robin Hill, Portage Park, to define long-term objectives for forest management and identify short-term management actions to achieve objectives. Ensure current assessments of forest health underpin forest management planning efforts.

Action 29. Prepare a biodiversity strategy to guide the management of View Royal’s natural ecosystems, including rare ecosystems and species (e.g. Garry oak ecosystems), habitat hubs and corridors, their protection, invasive species management, access and recreational usage.

Thetis Lake Regional Park (Emily Norton)



Goal 4. View Royal protects its urban forest.

Strategy 4.1. Enhance regulatory tools and process are achieving the right balance between tree protection and community growth.

Large mature trees offer significant contributions to View Royal's canopy cover and generate substantial community benefits. Given the decades it requires for new trees to achieve the size and stature of a mature tree, their retention is a critical element in the Town achieving its urban forest management goals.

View Royal can strengthen its urban forest by adopting tools that prioritize the protection of trees, native soils, and sensitive ecosystems throughout the development process. Policies that require careful site assessment, promote thoughtful design, and incentivize conservation can help preserve ecological function, support climate resilience, and ensure long-term community benefits. Clear standards and accountability measures also reinforce a culture of stewardship and responsible land use.



Horticultural boulevard planting in View Royal (DHC)

Action 30. Establish a Wildfire Hazard Development Permit Area (DPA), including accompanying wildfire risk mapping as guided by View Royal's Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan.

Action 31. Require development proposals that would involve modification of an existing forest edge, or the creation of new forest edge, to be supported by a wind firm assessment prepared by a qualified professional.

Action 32. Review the Town's Natural Watercourse and Shoreline Areas DPA, as well as the Sensitive Terrestrial Ecosystem DPA to ensure mapping and associated requirements are aligned with the Town's broader vision for its urban forest management and natural systems.

Action 33. Develop a Terms of Reference for arborist reports and tree surveys, including specifying survey requirements and the conditions under which letters of assurance and/or arborist supervision will be imposed.

Action 34. Formalize a process for bonusing (e.g., height, floor area) where trees, or native soils, are voluntarily protected through development, or where proposed site configuration will support greater tree planting than would be supported by meeting minimum requirements (e.g., landscaped area, expanded setbacks, lot coverage, etc.). Include policy supporting this bonusing in the Town's OCP.

Action 35. Update contract language to require hold-backs related to tree protection where private contractors are working around public trees during capital projects.

Action 36. Review the Town's Tree Protection Bylaw to ensure alignment with broader community objectives for canopy growth.

Action 37. Explore the potential of a Landscaping Bylaw (s.527 of the LGA) toward improving consideration for the urban forest through development processes.

Strategy 4.2. Support the resilience of both View Royal as a community and its urban forest.

Inventoried street trees only represent a small portion of View Royal's urban forest. However, the over-reliance on maples identified through the inventory is consistent with trends across North America. Urban forests that are composed of a small number of species tend to be less resilient to stressors like climate change, pests, and diseases⁶⁴. Emerald ash borer and Dutch elm disease have each contributed to the widespread decline of ash and elms due to their overuse in Northeast and Central North America.

Developing tree species selection requirements and/or recommendations for public and private land could improve the resilience of the urban forest by diversifying the species that compose it. The 30-20-10 Rule is a commonly used guideline to ensure that no tree species, genus, or family occupies more than 10%, 20%, and 30% of the urban forest, respectively.

Action 38. Manage the diversity of public trees by limiting the continued planting of overrepresented species on public land. Aim for the Town's tree inventory to include no more than 20% of any single genus and no more than 10% of any single species.

KEY INDICATOR(S):

M13. Genus and species diversity

BASELINE (2025):

33% maple; 25% red maple

TARGET (2045):

<20% any one genera, <10% any one species

Action 39. Consider sourcing climate-adapted native seed stock for use in the Town's native ecosystems.

Action 40. Adjust terms of reference for landscape plan submissions for large developments to include planting stock selection that achieves a minimum diversity of 3-5 individual species well-suited to the site.

Action 41. Support implementation of the actions contained to View Royal's Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Action 42. Adopt FireSmart principals in landscape management, programming, and treatments to build the resilience of municipal buildings and Town assets.

Edwards Park Viewpoint (Kevin Light Photo)



Case Study: July 2020 Mill Hill Fire and Community Wildfire Preparedness

In July 2020, a wildfire ignited in Mill Hill Regional Park, situated between Langford and View Royal. The fire was first reported around 5 p.m. on July 21 and rapidly expanded to nearly two hectares. Fire officials determined the blaze was likely human-caused, possibly due to a discarded cigarette or an unattended campfire, as no weather-related factors like lightning were present.

Firefighting efforts involved crews from Langford, View Royal, Colwood, Esquimalt, and the B.C. Wildfire Service, totaling around 70 personnel. The challenging terrain required extensive hose deployment, and aerial support from helicopters and air tankers was crucial in containing the fire. By July 29, the fire was officially declared extinguished, with no structures damaged.

This incident underscores the importance of fire safety, the threat it poses to View Royal as a Community, and the resources these events can consume in response.

Review View Royal's Community Wildfire Resilience Plan, schedule a free Firesmart Home Assessment, and learn the ways the Municipality is managing wildfire risk with your help through [View Royal's FireSmart webpage](#).



Goal 5. Sustainable urban forest management is achieved through partnership and community investment.

Strategy 5.1. Build relationships with host Nations and Indigenous Peoples living in View Royal to integrate Indigenous perspectives with urban forest management.

Expanding government-to-government relationships with Esquimalt and Songhees Nations is vital to building a more inclusive and respectful approach to urban forest management in View Royal. These partnerships can help identify shared priorities, foster mutual learning, and ensure Indigenous values, rights, and Traditional Knowledge are meaningfully reflected in how forested areas are cared for and protected.

Collaborative efforts to identify culturally significant species, climate-resilient planting opportunities, and high-priority forested areas can support both ecological and cultural objectives. Integrating Indigenous perspectives into urban forestry planning strengthens reconciliation efforts and contributes to more holistic, place-based stewardship.

Action 43. Expand government-to-government relationships with Esquimalt and Songhees Nations to better understand how Indigenous values and interests might be reflected in urban forest management practices, where high priority forested stands exist within View Royal, and identify opportunities to integrate Traditional Knowledge and land management practices into forested areas management.

Forest path in Thetis Lake Regional Park (Emily Norton)

Strategy 5.2. Build community knowledge of and participation in urban forest management.

Encouraging community participation and knowledge sharing is key to the long-term success of urban forestry in View Royal. Making information accessible through diverse communication channels ensures residents across all demographics can stay informed and engaged. Public access to urban forestry data, along with tools for reporting local concerns, fosters transparency and strengthens the relationship between the Town and its residents.

Programs that support direct involvement, such as tree planting opportunities, deepen public connection to the urban forest and encourage shared stewardship. Regular updates and educational materials help build community understanding, promote best practices, and maintain momentum as the Town's urban forest strategy is implemented.

KEY INDICATOR(S):

M15. Annual volunteer hours

BASELINE (2025):

Not tracked

TARGET (2030):

>100 hours

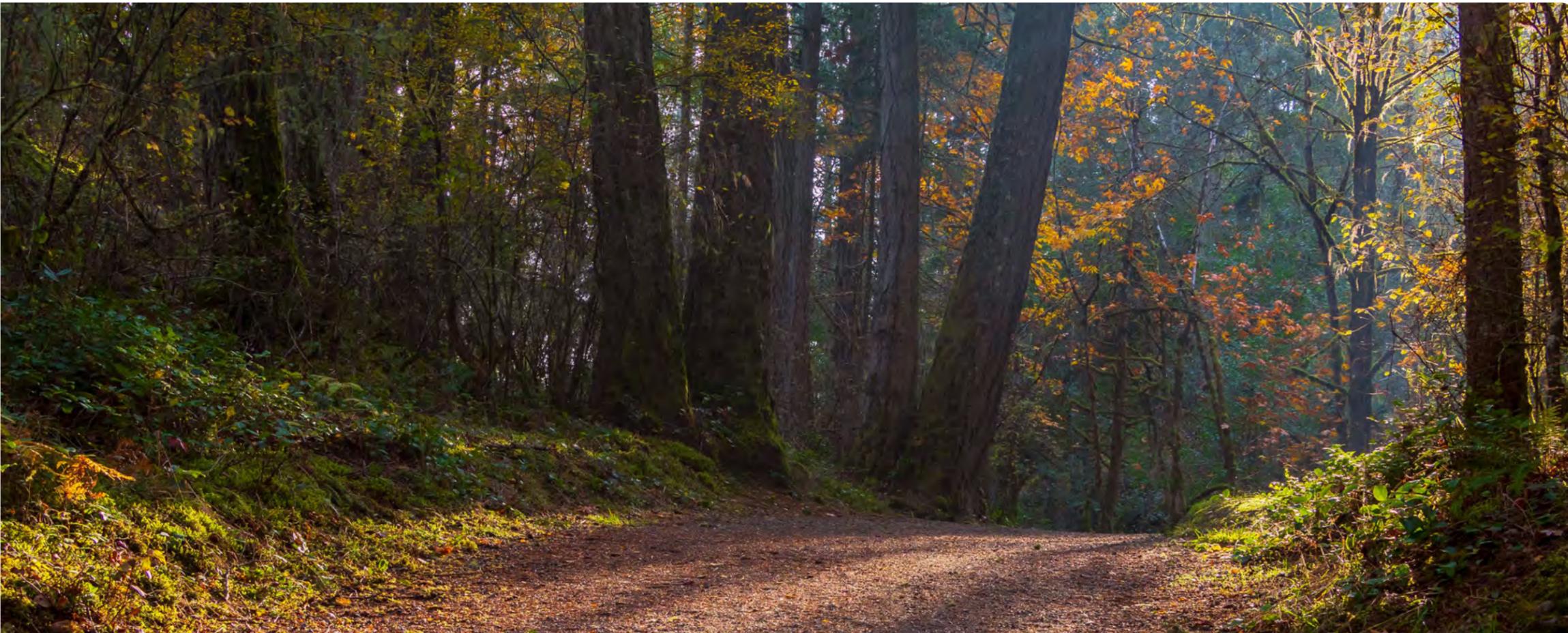
Action 44. Ensure important urban forestry communications use a diversity of print and digital avenues to reach all segments of View Royal's population.

Action 45. Make urban forestry data, including tree canopy mapping and inventory datasets, publicly available.

Action 46.  Prepare a biannual newsletter to communicate key urban forestry messages, updates, and progress on UFS implementation.

Action 47.  Continue to offer View Royal's Resident Tree Planting Program and expand it if demand outpaces current program capacity. Add non-invasive non-native tree species to the planting list for areas of the town that are not connected to natural ecosystems.

Action 48. As demand justifies, further build on the successful partnerships and programming delivered through arrangements with the Greater Victoria Green Team (GVGT).





Strategy 5.3. Develop strategic partnerships to support the urban forest.

A wide range of actors are involved in the management of the Town’s urban forest. Community members, utility companies, educational institutions, and various governmental and non-governmental organizations manage trees on their property. Coordination between these actors can improve outcomes for trees and forests.

Community and inter-agency partnerships play a vital role in supporting a healthy and resilient urban forest. By working collaboratively with service providers, educational institutions, and regional networks, View Royal can align goals, reduce conflicts, and strengthen the effectiveness of urban forest initiatives. These relationships help ensure that infrastructure planning, land management, and tree protection efforts are better coordinated and mutually supportive.

Engaging youth, professionals, and researchers through education and knowledge-sharing fosters long-term stewardship and builds capacity within the field. Partnerships also create opportunities for innovation, shared learning, and the development of consistent best practices across jurisdictions—enhancing the collective impact of urban forestry efforts.

Action 49. Work with utility providers to define preferred and minimum planting setbacks from infrastructure assets and to identify acceptable solutions (e.g., utility sleeves, root barriers, vertical setbacks) supported in meeting minimum setbacks to reduce undue harm to trees.

Action 50. Explore partnership opportunities with the Greater Victoria School District (GVSD), including Shoreline Community Middle School, Eagle View Elementary School, and View Royal Elementary School to engage youth in educational programs that promote urban forest awareness and foster student interest in urban forestry.

Action 51.  Actively participate in and support initiatives that utilize the Capital Regional District’s (CRD) network of urban forestry professionals, including municipal staff, nurseries, consultants, and academics. Focus on sharing knowledge and collaborating to address key challenges.

Action 52. Explore partnering with Royal Roads University, the University of Victoria and other post-secondary institutions to support research and workforce development in View Royal’s urban forest.

Left: Walking through Portage Park (Kevin Light Photography)
Below: Child enjoying the outdoors (Zhukov Vlad)



6. Implementation Plan

Action	Department Lead(s)	Monitoring Measure	Est. Cost (Freq.)	Timeline
Goal 1. Planning and design processes facilitate the growth of the urban forest.				
Strategy 1.1. Ensure planting standards are supporting long-term tree growth.				
Action 1. Ensure trees entering the boulevard inventory are inspected to verify compliance with stock and establishment standards prior to their acceptance by the Town.	Engineering	M8. Tree condition rating	\$ (AN)	Short-Term
Action 2. Update View Royal's Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw and standard details to enhance tree planting conditions in right-of-ways, including minimum soil volume, irrigation, boulevard width and soil depth requirements.	Engineering, Development Services		\$ - \$\$\$ (OT)	Short-Term
Action 3. Review tender specifications and warranty inspection standards for contracted tree planting.	Engineering		\$ (OT)	Immediate
Action 4. Review the Town's details for boulevards, tree planting, tree protection, and tree pits. Ensure design is aligned with best practices, and would support full tree life-cycles.	Engineering	M3. Average DBH of boulevard trees at time of removal	\$ (OT)	Short-Term
Action 5. Spatially define the areas across the Town where the use of native vegetation is to be prioritized given biodiversity preservation objectives within or adjacent to those areas (e.g. shoreline parks, park natural areas, and ESA buffers).	Engineering, Development Services		\$ (OT)	Short-Term
Strategy 1.2. Ensure land use planning is supporting the urban forest.				
Action 6. Adopt OCP policy supporting the urban forest and UFS that provides enhanced direction on the handling of View Royal's urban forest within the community's guide to growth.	Development Services	M6. Spatial heat disparity	\$ (OT)	Short-Term
Action 7. Review View Royal's Zoning Bylaw to ensure performance criteria, including surface parking, landscaped open space, setbacks, and lot coverage, are supporting consistent inclusion of trees on development sites.	Development Services	M6. Spatial heat disparity	\$ (OT)	Short-Term
Strategy 1.3. Ensure rates of tree planting are supporting net new outcomes.				
Action 8. Prepare five-year tree planting plans to direct short-term tree planting programming toward the Town maintaining the desired net new tree planting.	Engineering		\$\$\$ (PR)	Mid-Term
Action 9. Municipal tree planting targeting 50 - 100 trees per year between parks and boulevards and desired canopy cover pathways.	Engineering	M5. Net new public trees planted	\$\$	Immediate
Action 10. Leverage restoration and afforestation to grow urban forest canopy within forested areas and in naturalization sites.	Engineering	M4. Urban core canopy cover	\$ - \$\$\$\$ (AN)	Long-Term
Action 11. Establish an adopt-a-tree program where the Town will plant trees in underutilized boulevard or park space in exchange for resident-led care through establishment.	Engineering	M5. Net new public trees planted	\$ - \$\$\$ (AN)	Short-Term
Strategy 1.4. Consider equity and community need through program decision-making.				
			\$ - Staff time or <\$5,000 \$\$ - \$5,000 - \$10,000 \$\$\$ - \$10,000 - \$25,000 \$\$\$\$ - >\$25,000 AN - Annual/Ongoing OT - One-time PR - Periodic	Immediate - 2026 Short-Term - 2026 - 2030 Mid-Term - 2030 - 2040 Long-Term - Beyond 2040

Action	Department Lead(s)	Monitoring Measure	Est. Cost (Freq.)	Timeline
Action 12. Explore opportunities for improving urban forest access and education in areas with concentrations of vulnerable populations.	Engineering	M4. Urban core canopy cover	\$ (AN)	Short-Term
Action 13. Ensure community engagement and outreach programming is broadly accessible to any interested members of the community. Explore opportunities for improving urban forest access and education in low tree equity areas.	Corporate Administration		\$ (AN)	Immediate
Action 14. Explore requiring dedicated tree corridors, boulevards clear of active transportation facilities or any other community infrastructure, along priority right-of-ways such as: (i) those located in Transit Oriented Development areas and along arterial/collector corridors, or (ii) areas of lower tree equity where there is a lower density of public trees. Identify these locations as a schedule in the OCP, prepare accompanying policy, and consistently require widening dedications within these areas.	Development Services, Engineering		\$ (OT)	Mid-Term
Goal 2. Program governance supports the Town in meeting its urban forest aspirations.				
Strategy 2.1. Improve urban forest governance to achieve positive urban forest outcomes.				
Action 15. Prepare and adopt a Town Tree policy to formalize: green infrastructure within the Town's broader asset management program, risk management procedures concerning urban forest assets, integrated pest management procedures, public tree protection, replacement, and compensation requirements, and tree protection and inspection requirements with respect to capital works.	Engineering		\$\$-\$\$\$ (OT)	Mid-Term
Action 16.  Establish dedicated tree maintenance and planting budgets within parks. Establish initial budgets based on a life-cycle costing approach.	Engineering, Finance and Technology	M10. Program budget	\$\$\$\$ (AN)	Immediate
Action 17.  Establish an interdepartmental Urban Forestry working group and meet biannually to review progress on implementation, and to review current challenges and opportunities impacting the Town's urban forestry program.	Chaired by Engineering, full representation from Internal departments	M2. Interdepartmental working group meetings.	\$ (AN)	Immediate
Strategy 2.2. Prioritize program monitoring and reporting.				
Action 18. Undertake a review of the Urban Forest Strategy every five years.	Engineering		\$\$-\$\$ (PR)	Mid-Term
Action 19.  Establish and maintain a GIS-based boulevard tree inventory featuring a technical design aligned with industry best practices and update the inventory in-step with a proactive maintenance regimen.	Engineering	M9. Inventory update cycle	\$* (AN) * moderated by size of boulevard tree population. Presently, relatively small.	Short-Term
Action 20.  Produce a new urban tree canopy dataset, derived from current LiDAR and imagery datasets, on a five-year interval.	Engineering	M4. Urban core canopy cover	\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$* (PR) * potential cost efficiencies through aligning LiDAR acquisition with neighbouring municipalities/regional districts undertaking similar work.	Mid-Term
			\$ - Staff time or <\$5,000 \$\$ - \$5,000 - \$10,000 \$\$\$ - \$10,000 - \$25,000 \$\$\$\$ - >\$25,000 AN - Annual/Ongoing OT - One-time PR - Periodic	Immediate - 2026 Short-Term - 2026 - 2030 Mid-Term - 2030 - 2040 Long-Term - Beyond 2040

Action	Department Lead(s)	Monitoring Measure	Est. Cost (Freq.)	Timeline
Action 21. Produce a State of the Urban Forest report on a five-year interval to report on key program metrics and explore changes in the urban forest since prior reporting.	Engineering		\$\$\$ (PR)	Mid-Term
Strategy 2.3. Sustainably resource urban forest management and the implementation of this Strategy.				
Action 22. Access external employment funding, such as Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidies, to employ youth over the summer and explore sustainable funding for student and internship positions that can contribute to a wide range of stewardship, tree inventory, and other projects.	Engineering, Finance and Technology		\$ (PR)	Immediate
Action 23. Establish a Town arborist or urban forester position within Parks to broadly enhance urban forest outcomes across all program areas and to support ongoing implementation of this Strategy.	Engineering, Finance and Technology		\$\$\$\$* (AN) * Investment here would bring capacity in-house that could reduce costs across multiple other implementation areas.	Immediate
Action 24. Transition the Town's Invasive Species Volunteer Coordinator to a full-time equivalent and expand community outreach, education, and stewardship programming.	Engineering, Finance and Technology		\$\$\$\$ (AN)	Immediate
Action 25. Access external funding opportunities to support tree planting, such as the Growing Canada's Community Canopies (GCCC) initiative.	Engineering, Finance and Technology		\$ (PR)	Immediate
Goal 3. Urban forest maintenance regimen are aligned with industry best practices.				
Strategy 3.1. Utilize best practices and industry benchmarks through the Town's maintenance regimen.				
Action 26. Expand the Town's watering program to water newly planted trees weekly in the growing season for a period of 3 to 5 years after planting.	Engineering		\$ - \$\$ (AN)	Mid-Term
Action 27. Transition to a seven-year cyclical pruning cycle for all inventoried boulevard trees.	Engineering	M11. Cyclical pruning cycle	\$\$\$\$ (AN)	Short-Term
Strategy 3.2. Maintain forested areas to a reasonable standard of care.				
Action 28. Prepare forest management plans for flagship parks including Nursery Hill Park, Kelvin Grove/Wilfert Park, Eagle Creek, Robin Hill, Portage Park, to define long-term objectives for forest management and identify short-term management actions to achieve objectives. Ensure current assessments of forest health underpin forest management planning efforts.	Engineering	M12. Forest stand condition ratings	\$\$\$ (PR)	Long-Term
Action 29. Prepare a biodiversity strategy to guide the management of View Royal's natural ecosystems, including rare ecosystems and species (e.g. Garry oak ecosystems), habitat hubs and corridors, their protection, invasive species management, access and recreational usage.	Engineering, Development Services		\$\$\$\$ (OT)	Mid-Term
Goal 4. View Royal protects its urban forest.				
Strategy 4.1. Enhance regulatory tools and process are achieving the right balance between tree protection and community growth.				
Action 30. Establish a Wildfire Hazard Development Permit Area (DPA), including accompanying wildfire risk mapping as guided by View Royal's Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan.	Development Services, Protective Services		\$\$ (OT)	Short-Term
			\$ - Staff time or <\$5,000 \$\$ - \$5,000 - \$10,000 \$\$\$ - \$10,000 - \$25,000 \$\$\$\$ - >\$25,000 AN - Annual/Ongoing OT - One-time PR - Periodic	Immediate - 2026 Short-Term - 2026 - 2030 Mid-Term - 2030 - 2040 Long-Term - Beyond 2040

Action	Department Lead(s)	Monitoring Measure	Est. Cost (Freq.)	Timeline
Action 31. Require development proposals that would involve modification of an existing forest edge, or the creation of new forest edge, to be supported by a wind firm assessment prepared by a qualified professional.	Development Services		\$ - \$\$* (OT) * scoping of terms of reference.	Short-Term
Action 32.  Review the Town's Natural Watercourse and Shoreline Areas DPA, as well as the Sensitive Terrestrial Ecosystem DPA to ensure mapping and associated requirements are aligned with the Town's broader vision for its urban forest management and natural systems.	Development Services		\$\$ - \$\$\$\$* (OT) * often, work would be completed as part of a larger biodiversity strategy.	Short-Term
Action 33.  Develop a Terms of Reference for arborist reports and tree surveys, including specifying survey requirements and the conditions under which letters of assurance and/or arborist supervision will be imposed.	Development Services, Engineering		\$ - \$\$* (OT) * scoping of terms of reference.	Immediate
Action 34. Formalize a process for bonusing (e.g., height, floor area) where trees, or native soils, are voluntarily protected through development, or where proposed site configuration will support greater tree planting than would be supported by meeting minimum requirements (e.g., landscaped area, expanded setbacks, lot coverage, etc.). Include policy supporting this bonusing in the Town's OCP.	Development Services		\$(OT)	Short-Term
Action 35. Update contract language to require hold-backs related to tree protection where private contractors are working around public trees during capital projects.	Engineering		\$(OT)	Short-Term
Action 36. Review the Town's Tree Protection Bylaw to ensure alignment with broader community objectives for canopy growth.	Engineering, Development Services		\$ - \$\$\$ (OT)	Short-Term
Action 37.  Explore the potential of a Landscaping Bylaw (s.527 of the LGA) toward improving consideration for the urban forest through development processes.	Development Services		\$ - \$\$\$ (OT)	Short-Term
Action 38. Manage the diversity of public trees by limiting the continued planting of overrepresented species on public land. Aim for the Town's tree inventory to include no more than 20% of any single genus and no more than 10% of any single species.	Engineering, Development Services	M13. Genus and species diversity	\$(AN)	Short-Term
Strategy 4.2. Support the resilience of both View Royal as a community and its urban forest.				
Action 39. Consider sourcing climate-adapted native seed stock for use in the Town's native ecosystems.	Engineering		\$(AN)	Mid-Term
Action 40. Adjust terms of reference for landscape plan submissions for large developments to include planting stock selection that achieves a minimum diversity of 3-5 individual species well-suited to the site.	Development Services		\$(OT)	Short-Term
Action 41. Support implementation of the actions contained to View Royal's Community Wildfire Protection Plan.	Protective Services		\$ - \$\$\$\$ (AN)	Short-Term
Action 42. Adopt FireSmart principals in landscape management, programming, and treatments to build the resilience of municipal buildings and Town assets.	Engineering, Protective Services		\$ - \$\$ (OT)	Short-Term
			\$ - Staff time or <\$5,000 \$\$ - \$5,000 - \$10,000 \$\$\$ - \$10,000 - \$25,000 \$\$\$\$ - >\$25,000 AN - Annual/Ongoing OT - One-time PR - Periodic	Immediate - 2026 Short-Term - 2026 - 2030 Mid-Term - 2030 - 2040 Long-Term - Beyond 2040

Action	Department Lead(s)	Monitoring Measure	Est. Cost (Freq.)	Timeline
Goal 5. Sustainable urban forest management is achieved through partnership and community investment.				
Strategy 5.1. Build relationships with host Nations and Indigenous Peoples living in View Royal to integrate Indigenous perspectives with urban forest management.				
Action 43. Expand government-to-government relationships with Esquimalt and Songhees Nations to better understand how Indigenous values and interests might be reflected in urban forest management practices, where high priority forested stands exist within View Royal, and identify opportunities to integrate Traditional Knowledge and land management practices into forested areas management.	Office of the Mayor & CAO, Corporate Administration, Engineering		\$ - \$\$\$\$ (AN)	Immediate
Strategy 5.2. Build community knowledge of and participation in urban forest management.				
Action 44. Ensure important urban forestry communications use a diversity of print and digital avenues to reach all segments of View Royal's population.	Corporate Administration, Engineering		\$ (AN)	Short-Term
Action 45. Make urban forestry data, including tree canopy mapping and inventory datasets, publicly available.	Corporate Administration, Engineering		\$ (AN)	Mid-Term
Action 46.  Prepare a biannual newsletter to communicate key urban forestry messages, updates, and progress on UFS implementation.	Corporate Administration, Engineering		\$ (AN)	Short-Term
Action 47.  Continue to offer View Royal's Resident Tree Planting Program and expand it if demand outpaces current program capacity. Add non-invasive non-native tree species to the planting list for areas of the town that are not connected to natural ecosystems.	Engineering		\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$ (AN)	Immediate
Action 48. As demand justifies, further build on the successful partnerships and programming delivered through arrangements with the Greater Victoria Green Team (GVGT).	Engineering		\$\$ - \$\$\$\$ (AN)	Short-Term
Strategy 5.3. Develop strategic partnerships to support the urban forest.				
Action 49. Work with utility providers to define preferred and minimum planting setbacks from infrastructure assets and to identify acceptable solutions (e.g., utility sleeves, root barriers, vertical setbacks) supported in meeting minimum setbacks to reduce undue harm to trees.	Engineering		\$ (PR)	Short-Term
Action 50. Explore partnership opportunities with the Greater Victoria School District (GVSD), including Shoreline Community Middle School, Eagle View Elementary School, and View Royal Elementary School to engage youth in educational programs that promote urban forest awareness and foster student interest in urban forestry.	Engineering, Corporate Administration		\$ (AN)	Mid-Term
Action 51.  Actively participate in and support initiatives that utilize the Capital Regional District's (CRD) network of urban forestry professionals, including municipal staff, nurseries, consultants, and academics. Focus on sharing knowledge and collaborating to address key challenges.	Engineering		\$ (AN)	Short-Term
Action 52. Explore partnering with Royal Roads University, the University of Victoria and other post-secondary institutions to support research and workforce development in View Royal's urban forest.	Engineering		\$ (AN)	Long-Term
			\$ - Staff time or <\$5,000 \$\$ - \$5,000 - \$10,000 \$\$\$ - \$10,000 - \$25,000 \$\$\$\$ - >\$25,000 AN - Annual/Ongoing OT - One-time PR - Periodic	Immediate - 2026 Short-Term - 2026 - 2030 Mid-Term - 2030 - 2040 Long-Term - Beyond 2040

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Appendix

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To assess View Royal's urban forestry program, a set of urban forest criteria and indicators have been adapted from the urban forest sustainability model originally proposed by Clark et al. in 1997 and updated by Leff in 2016. This suite of criteria and performance indicators helps assess the program's status using a standardized approach. Each criterion is linked to one of five overarching goals: Plan, Plant, Protect, Manage, Partner.

Our evaluations were based on a detailed review of the Town's policies and staff interviews. Overall, the Town's urban forest program scored 'Fair'. The assessment results are summarized in a 'Report Card' that the Town can use for benchmarking and progress tracking.

Our criteria & indicators table is based on the following resources:

1. Davey Institute / USDA Forest Service: The Sustainable Urban Forest a Step-by-Step Approach (2016). Available online at www.itreetools.org/resources/content/Sustainable_Urban_Forest_Guide_14Nov2016.pdf
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A current (2025) evaluation of View Royal's urban forest management program, scoring "poor", "fair", "good", or "optimal" under each identified assessment criteria, are highlighted on the pages following.

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
PLAN						
Davey 2016 C6*	Awareness of the urban forest as a community resource	<i>The urban forest is recognized as vital to the community's environmental, social, and economic well-being.</i>	General ambivalence or negative attitudes about trees, which are perceived as neutral at best or as the source of problems. Actions harmful to trees may be taken deliberately.	Trees are widely acknowledged as providing environmental, social, and economic services but are not widely integrated in corporate strategies and policies.	Trees are widely acknowledged as providing environmental, social, and economic services and urban forest objectives are integrated into other corporate strategies and policies.	Urban forest recognized as vital to the community's environmental, social, and economic well-being. Widespread public and political support and advocacy for trees, resulting in strong policies and plans that advance the viability and sustainability of the entire urban forest.
Davey 2016 C1 target*	Interdepartmental and Municipal agency cooperation on urban forest strategy implementation	<i>Ensure all relevant municipal departments and agencies cooperate to advance goals related to urban forest issues and opportunities.</i>	Little cooperation and conflicting among departments and/or agencies often leading to poor outcomes for trees.	Common goals but limited cooperation among departments and/or agencies and mixed outcomes for trees.	Municipal departments, affected agencies and urban forest managers recognize potential conflicts and reach out to each other on an	Formal interdepartmental working agreements or protocols for all projects that could impact municipal trees.

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
					informal but regular basis.	
Davey 2016 R2 target*	Clear and defensible urban forest canopy assessment and goals	<i>Urban forest policy and practice is driven by comprehensive goals municipality-wide and at the neighbourhood or land use scale informed by accurate, high-resolution assessments of existing and potential canopy cover.</i>	No assessment or goals.	Low-resolution and/or point-based sampling of canopy cover using aerial photographs or satellite imagery – and limited or no goal setting.	Complete, detailed, and spatially explicit, high-resolution Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) assessment based on enhanced data (such as LiDAR) – accompanied by a comprehensive set of goals by land use and other parameters.	The City has a complete, detailed, and spatially explicit high-resolution Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) assessment accompanied by a comprehensive set of goals, all utilized effectively to drive urban forest policy and practice municipality-wide and at neighbourhood or smaller management level.
Davey 2016 T1	Relative tree canopy cover	<i>Achieve desired degree of tree cover, based on potential or according to goals set for entire municipality and for each neighbourhood or land use.</i>	The existing canopy cover for entire municipality is <50% of the desired canopy	The existing canopy is 50%-75% of desired	The existing canopy is >75%-100% of desired.	The existing canopy is >75%-100% of desired - at the individual neighborhood level

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
						as well as overall municipality
Davey 2016 R4	Municipality-wide urban forest management plan	<i>Develop and implement a comprehensive urban forest management plan for public and private property.</i>	No plan	Existing plan limited in scope and implementation	Recent comprehensive plan developed and implemented for publicly owned forest resources, including trees managed intensively (or individually) and those managed extensively, as a population (e.g., trees in natural areas)	Strategic, multi-tiered plan with built-in adaptive management mechanisms developed and implemented for public and private resources
DHC	Municipal green infrastructure asset management	Integrate green infrastructure assets into the municipal asset management system to support valuing and accounting for natural assets in the City's financial planning to build climate resilient infrastructure.	No recognition of value of natural or human-made elements that provide ecological and hydrological functions (green infrastructure)	Local government recognizes the value of green infrastructure but does not yet have information to include them in an asset management system.	Green infrastructure assets have been partially or fully inventoried and some assets are included in an asset management system, with the intent to ultimately capture all assets in the consolidated	Green infrastructure assets are inventoried and included in an asset management system and on the consolidated financial statement of the municipality.

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
						financial statements of the municipality.
SFI Objective 3	Municipal-wide biodiversity or green network strategy	Acquire and restore publicly-owned natural areas in pursuit of meeting municipal-wide biodiversity and connectivity goals.	No or very limited planning and stewardship of natural areas.	Area specific management plans focused on management, restoration, and protection of natural areas.	Municipal-wide urban forest, parks or natural areas strategy guiding management, restoration, and protection of the existing natural areas network.	Biodiversity strategy or equivalent in effect to manage, restore and existing and acquire future natural areas network throughout the municipality.
Davey 2016 R6 target*	Municipal urban forestry program capacity	Maintain sufficient well-trained personnel and equipment – whether in-house or through contracted or volunteer services – to implement municipality-wide urban forest management plan	Team severely limited by lack of personnel and/or access to adequate equipment. Unable to perform adequate maintenance, let alone implement new goals.	Team limited by lack of staff and/or access to adequate equipment to implement new goals.	Team able to implement many of the goals and objectives of the urban forest management plan.	Team able to implement all of the goals and objectives of the urban forest management plan.
Davey 2016 R5 target*	Urban forest funding to implement a strategy	Maintain adequate funding to implement the urban forest strategy.	Little or no dedicated funding.	Dedicated funding but insufficient to implement the urban forest	Dedicated funding sufficient to partially implement the urban forest strategy and maintain new	Sustained funding to fully implement the urban forest strategy and maintain new

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			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
				strategy or maintain new assets as they are added to the inventory.	assets as they are added to the inventory.	assets as they are added to the inventory.

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			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
GROW						
Davey 2016 R7 target*	City tree planting and replacement program design, planning and implementation	Comprehensive and effective tree selection, planting and establishment program that is driven by canopy cover goals and other considerations according to the UFS.	Tree replacement and establishment is ad hoc.	Some tree planting and replacement occurs, but with limited overall municipality-wide planning and insufficient to meet replacement requirements.	Tree replacement and establishment is directed by needs derived from an opportunities assessment and species selection is guided by site conditions, tree health and climate adaptation considerations.	Tree planting and replacement is guided by strategic priorities and is planned out to make progress towards targets set for canopy cover, diversity, tree health and climate adaptation within the timeframe of the strategy.
DHC	Development requirements to plant trees on private land	Ensure that new trees are required in landscaping for new development or, where space is lacking, there is an equivalent contribution to tree planting in the public realm.	Landscaping requirements do not address trees on private land.	Developments are generally required to plant trees but the outcomes are often in conflict with public trees and other infrastructure due to space limitations and not connected to	Developments are required to plant trees or, where space is not adequate according to soil volume available, provide cash-in-lieu for equivalent tree planting on public land. The requirement is not connected to	Developments are required to provide a minimum density of trees per unit measure or, where space is not adequate according to soil volume available, provide adequate cash-in-lieu for equivalent tree planting on public

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
				meeting canopy cover targets.	meeting canopy cover targets.	land. Planting density is determined based on meeting a municipal-wide canopy cover target.
Davey 2016 R8 target*	Streetscape and servicing specifications and standards for planting trees	Ensure all publicly owned trees are planted into conditions that meet requirements for survival and maximize current and future tree benefits.	No or very few specifications and standards for growing sites.	Specifications and standards exist but are inadequate to meet urban forest goals.	Specifications and standards exist and are adequate to meet urban forest goals but are not always achieved.	All trees planted are in sites with adequate soil quality and quantity, and with sufficient growing space to achieve their genetic potential and life expectancy, and thus provide maximum ecosystem services.
(Davey 2016 R3 target)	Equity in planting program delivery	<i>Ensure that the benefits of urban forests are made available to all, especially to those in greatest need of tree benefits.</i>	Tree planting and outreach are not determined equitably by canopy cover or need for benefits.	Planting and outreach include attention to low-canopy neighborhoods or areas.	Planting and outreach targets low canopy and a high need for tree benefits.	Equitable planting and outreach at the neighbourhood level are guided by strong citizen engagement in identified low-

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
						canopy/high-need areas.
Davey 2016 R14 target*	Forest restoration and native species planting	<i>Encourage the appreciation of climate suitable native vegetation by the community and ensure native species are widely planted to enhance native biodiversity and connectivity</i>	Voluntary use of climate suitable native species on publicly and privately-owned lands.	The use of climate suitable native species is encouraged on a site-appropriate basis in public and private land development projects.	Policies require the use of climate suitable native species and management of invasive species on a site-appropriate basis in public and private land development projects but are not integrated across all policy or guided by a connectivity analysis.	Policies require the use of climate suitable native species and management of invasive species on a site-appropriate basis in public and private land development projects and through tree bylaw.
Davey 2016	Selection and procurement of stock in cooperation with nursery industry	<i>Diversity targets and climate adaptation/mitigation objectives guide tree species selection and nurseries proactively grow stock based on municipal requirements.</i>	Species selection is not guided by diversity targets or climate adaptation/mitigation objectives.	Species selection is guided by diversity and climate adaptation/mitigation but required stock is rarely available from nurseries and acceptable	Species selection is guided by targets for diversity and climate adaptation/mitigation and required stock or acceptable substitutes are usually available from nurseries.	Species selection is guided by targets for diversity and climate adaptation/mitigation and required stock is secured ahead of the planned planting year from contract

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
				substitutes reduce diversity.		or in-house nurseries.
SFI	Ecosystem services targeted in tree planting projects and landscaping	<i>Incorporate ecosystem services objectives into public and private tree planting projects to improve urban tree health and resilience, carbon sequestration, stormwater management and cooling.</i>	Ecosystem services not considered in planting projects or intentionally designed into vegetated landscapes	Ecosystem services, such as stormwater interception, occasionally incorporated into City or private land planting projects and landscape designs.	Guidelines in place for planting projects and landscape designs on public and private land to deliver specific ecosystem services.	Ecosystem services targets are defined for the urban forest and policy requires planting project and landscape designs on public and private land to contribute to meeting targets.

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			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
MANAGE						
Davey 2016 R1 target*	Tree inventory	<i>A current and comprehensive inventory of intensively managed trees to guide management, including data such as age distribution, species mix, tree condition and risk assessment.</i>	No inventory.	Partial inventory of publicly-owned trees in GIS.	Complete inventory of street trees and intensively managed park trees in GIS but inconsistently updated.	The municipal tree inventory is complete, is GIS-based, supported by mapping, and is continuously updated to record growth, work history and tree condition.
Davey 2016 T7 target*	Knowledge of trees on private property	Understand the extent, location, and general condition of privately-owned trees.	No information about privately owned trees.	Aerial, point-based or low-resolution assessment of tree canopy on private property, capturing broad extent.	Detailed Urban Tree Canopy analysis of the urban forest on private land, including extent and location, integrated into a municipality-wide GIS system	The City has an i-Tree Eco analysis of private trees as well as detailed Urban Tree Canopy analysis of the entire urban forest integrated into a municipality-wide GIS system.
Added to bridge gap in Davey	Natural areas inventory	<i>A current and comprehensive inventory of sensitive and modified natural ecosystems and their quality mapped to Provincial standards to</i>	No inventory of natural areas.	Natural areas inventoried in GIS but not recently updated	Natural areas inventoried in GIS and with standard and complete	Natural areas inventoried in GIS and with standard and complete

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			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
		<i>provide standardized ecological information to support decision-making.</i>		and attribute information not to a standard that can support decision-making.	attribute information to support decision-making but not updated in the last 5 years.	attribute information to support decision-making and updated in the last 5 years.
Davey 2016 T2	Age diversity (size class distribution)	<i>Provide for ideal uneven age distribution of all “intensively” (or individually) managed trees – municipality-wide as well as at neighbourhood level</i>	Even-age distribution, or highly skewed toward a single age class (maturity stage) across entire population	Some uneven distribution, but most of the tree population falls into a single age class	Total tree population across municipality approaches an ideal age distribution of 40% juvenile, 30% semi-mature, 20% mature, and 10% senescent	Total population approaches that ideal distribution municipality-wide as well as at the neighborhood level
Davey 2016 T3	Species diversity	<i>Establish a genetically diverse population across the municipality as well as at the neighbourhood scale</i>	Five or fewer species dominate the entire tree population across municipality	No single species represents more than 10% of the total tree population; no genus more than 20%, and no family more than 30%	No single species represents more than 5% of total tree population; no genus more than 10%; and no family more than 15%	At least as diverse as “Good” rating (5/10/15) municipality-wide - and at least as diverse as “fair” (10/20/30) at the neighborhood level
Davey 2016 T4	Species suitability	<i>Establish a tree population suited to the urban environment and adapted to the overall region</i>	Fewer than 50% of all trees are from species considered	>50%-75% of trees are from species suitable for the area	More than 75% of trees are suitable for the area.	Virtually all trees are suitable for the area

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			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
			suitable for the area			
Davey 2016 T5 target	Publicly owned tree species condition	<i>Current and detailed understanding of condition and risk potential of all publicly owned trees that are managed intensively (or individually)</i>	Condition of urban forest is unknown	Sample-based tree inventory indicating tree condition and risk level	Complete tree inventory that includes detailed tree condition ratings	Complete tree inventory that is GIS-based and includes detailed tree condition as well as risk ratings
Davey 2016 R10*	Maintenance of intensively managed trees	<i>Maintain all publicly owned intensively managed trees for optimal health and condition in order to extend longevity and maximize current and future benefits</i>	Intensively managed trees are maintained on a request/reactive basis.	Intensively managed trees are maintained on a request/reactive basis. Limited systematic (block) pruning and/or immature trees are structurally pruned.	All intensively managed trees are systematically maintained on a cycle determined by workload and resource limitations. All immature trees are structurally pruned.	All mature intensively managed trees are maintained on an optimal pruning cycle. All immature trees are structurally pruned.
	Emergency response planning	<i>A response plan guides call-out procedures, resources available and the clean-up response for extreme weather and earthquake.</i>	Response plan not documented or not current.	Response plan is documented and includes call-out procedures, roles and responsibilities but lacks details to prioritize	Response plan includes call-out procedure, roles and responsibilities, and criteria for prioritizing tree hazards and	A comprehensive response plan is in place and a response drill occurs annually.

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
				hazards and clean-up.	removing debris is in place.	
Davey 2016 R12 target* (Updated by DHC to make more relevant/nua nced)	Tree risk management	<i>Comprehensive tree risk management program fully implemented, according to ANSI A300 (Part 9) "Tree Risk Assessment" standards, and supporting industry best management practices.</i>	No coordinated tree risk assessment or risk management program. Response is on a reactive basis only.	Some areas within the city are prioritized for risk assessment and management. Little annual budget is available to develop a more proactive inspection program.	Priority areas of the City are inspected on a regular schedule and operational standards and budgets are in place for responding to and managing tree risks within an appropriate timeframe.	A comprehensive risk management program is in place, with all public lands inspected on defined schedules and operational standards and budgets in place for responding to and managing tree risks within an appropriate timeframe.
DHC made	Pest and Disease Management	<i>An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan guides treatment responses to existing and potential pest, disease and invasive species threats to the urban forest.</i>	No integrated pest management plan and no pest management.	No integrated pest management plan and reactive pest management.	An integrated pest management plan is in place and implemented.	A comprehensive pest management program is in place, with detection, communication, rapid response and IPM practiced.

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
Davey 2016 R13 target*	Waste biomass utilization	<i>A closed system diverts all urban wood and green waste through reuse and recycling.</i>	Wood waste from the urban forest is not utilized.	Wood waste from the urban forest is utilized as mulch or biofuel.	Wood waste from the urban forest is utilized as mulch or biofuel and sometimes high value pieces are milled and stored for later use or sold on to local value-added industries.	Low value wood waste from the urban forest is utilized as mulch or biofuel and all high value pieces are milled and stored for later use or sold on to local value-added industries.
SFI	Tracking of operational carbon footprints and urban forest carbon-cycle balance	<i>Organization will actively track their operational carbon footprints and their community-wide urban forest carbon-cycle balance and work with community partners to minimize greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) emissions while maximizing carbon sequestration and avoided GHG emissions.</i>	Basic CO2/GHG accounting not considered for urban forestry operations	Basic CO2/GHG accounting and carbon cycle assessment and climate action plan undertaken for urban forestry operations and for the entire community with general goals and objectives to minimize community emissions.	Basic CO2/GHG accounting and carbon cycle assessment and climate action plan undertaken with specific goals and objectives for urban forestry and formal policies in place to encourage use of trees and green infrastructure for carbon sequestration and energy conservation in buildings.	Basic CO2/GHG accounting and carbon cycle assessment and climate action plan undertaken for urban forestry operations and for the entire community with specific goals and objectives for urban forestry and formal policies in place to encourage use of trees and

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE				
		OBJECTIVE	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
						green infrastructure for carbon sequestration and energy conservation in buildings, and to maximize urban wood and woody biomass utilization.

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE				
		OBJECTIVE	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
PROTECT						
Davey 2016 R9 target*	Policy or regulations regulating the protection and replacement of private and City trees	<i>Secure the benefits derived from trees on public and private land by enforcement of municipality-wide policies and practices including tree protection.</i>	No or very limited tree protection policy.	Policies in place to protect public trees and employ industry best management practice.	Policies in place to protect public and private trees with enforcement but lack integration with other municipal policy to enable effective tree retention.	Urban forest strategy and integrated municipal-wide policies that guide the protection of trees on public and private land, and ensure they are consistently applied and enforced.
SFI Objective 3 and 4	Policy or regulations for conservation of sensitive ecosystems, soils, or permeability on private property through development	<i>Secure the benefits derived from environmentally sensitive areas by enforcement of municipality-wide policies in pursuit of meeting biodiversity and connectivity goals.</i>	No or very limited natural areas protection policy.	Policies in place to protect privately-owned natural areas without enforcement.	Development Permit Areas in place to protect privately-owned natural areas with enforcement but lack integration with other municipal policy to enable effective tree retention.	Biodiversity strategy or equivalent and integrated municipal-wide policies that guide privately-owned natural area protection and ensure they are consistently applied.

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
SFI Objective 3	Internal protocols guide City tree or sensitive ecosystem protection	<i>Ensure all relevant municipal departments follow consistent tree or ecosystem protection protocols for capital design and construction activities.</i>	No protocols guiding City tree or ecosystem protection for capital design and construction activities.	Informal and inconsistent processes followed for City tree or ecosystem protection for capital design and construction activities.	Established protocols for City tree or ecosystem protection for capital design and construction activities but outcomes are inconsistent or sometimes unachievable.	Established protocols for City tree or ecosystem protection for capital design and construction activities are consistently followed and outcomes are successful.
Davey 2016 C3 target*	Standards of tree protection and tree care observed during development or by local arborists and tree care companies	<i>Consulting arborists and tree care companies understand city-wide urban forest goals and objectives and adhere to high professional standards.</i>	Limited understanding or support for tree protection requirements.	General understanding or support for tree protection requirements but large variation in the quality of information and services provided.	General understanding or support for tree protection requirements and generally consistent quality of information and services provided.	Advocacy for tree protection requirements, engagement with City staff on improving processes and standards, and generally consistent quality of information and services provided to high professional standards.
Davey 2016 C2 target*	Cooperation with utilities on	<i>All 3rd party utilities employ best management practices and</i>	Utilities take actions impacting	Utilities inconsistently	Utilities employ best management	Utilities employ best management

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
	protection (and pruning) of City trees	<i>cooperate with the City to advance goals and objectives related to urban forest issues and opportunities.</i>	urban forest with no municipal coordination or consideration of the urban forest resource.	employ best management practices, rarely recognizing potential municipal conflicts or reaching out to urban forest managers and vice versa.	practices, recognize potential municipal conflicts, and reach out to urban forest managers on an ad hoc basis – and vice versa.	practices, recognize potential municipal conflicts, and consistently reach out to urban forest managers and vice versa.

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
PARTNER						
Davey 2016 C5 target*	Citizen involvement and neighbourhood action	<i>Citizens and groups participate and collaborate at the neighbourhood level with the municipality and/or its partnering NGOs in urban forest management activities to advance municipality-wide plans</i>	Little or no citizen involvement or neighborhood action.	Community groups are active and willing to partner in urban forest management, but involvement and opportunities are ad hoc.	Several active neighborhood groups engaged across the community, with actions coordinated or led by municipality and/or its partnering NGOs.	Proactive outreach and coordination efforts by the City and NGO partners result in widespread citizen involvement and collaboration among active neighbourhood groups engaged in urban forest management
Davey 2016 C4 target*	Involvement of large private land and institutional land holders (e.g., schools)	<i>Large private landholders to embrace and advance city-wide urban forest goals and objectives by implementing specific resource management plans.</i>	Large private landholders are generally uninformed about urban forest issues and opportunities.	Landholders manage their tree resource but are not engaged in meeting municipality-wide urban forest goals.	Landholders develop comprehensive tree management plans (including funding strategies) that advance municipality-wide urban forest goals.	As described in “Good” rating, plus active community engagement and access to the property’s forest resource.
	Urban forest research	<i>Research is active and ongoing towards improving our understanding of the urban forest</i>	No urban forest research.	Isolated academic research occurs in	The municipality supports and has input on academic	The urban forest is a living laboratory - in collaboration

Primary source <i>*modified by DHC from original</i>	Assessment Criteria	OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS FOR URBAN FORESTRY PERFORMANCE			
			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	OPTIMAL
		<i>resource, the benefits it produces, and the impacts of planning, policy, design and management initiatives.</i>		the municipality’s urban forest.	research occurring in its urban forest and knowledge transfer occurs.	with public, private, NGO and academic institutions - integrating research and innovation into managing urban forest health, distribution, and abundance.
Davey 2016 C7 target	Regional collaboration	<i>There is cooperation and interaction on urban forest plans among neighbouring municipalities within the region, and/or within regional agencies.</i>	Municipalities have no interaction with each other or the broader region for planning or coordination on urban forestry.	Some neighboring municipalities and regional agencies share similar policies and plans related to trees and urban forest.	Some urban forest planning and cooperation across municipalities and regional agencies.	Widespread regional cooperation resulting in development and implementation of regional urban forest strategy.



Town of View Royal Urban Forestry Operating & Financial Plan



February 2026



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3559 Commercial Street
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Executive Summary

The Town of View Royal's Urban Forest Strategy (UFS) establishes a 20-year framework for managing, protecting, and growing the community's urban forest. It defines long-term goals, operational standards, and monitoring commitments intended to strengthen tree health, expand canopy cover, and improve climate resilience across the Town. Central to the UFS is the establishment of an urban canopy cover target. Council has expressed interest in understanding the operational and financial implications of three potential targets: 30%, 35%, and 40% urban canopy cover by 2045.

This Operations and Financial Plan translates those strategic ambitions into program design, staffing requirements, planting rates, and lifecycle costs. It clarifies what each canopy pathway would require in practical terms, including the number of trees that must be planted annually, the maintenance systems required to sustain them, and the long-term financial commitments associated with managing a larger municipal tree inventory.

Canopy Cover Is One Indicator of Program Success

Canopy cover is an accessible and measurable indicator of urban forest performance. It allows the Town to track overall tree presence over time and to align tree management with climate and sustainability objectives. However, canopy cover alone does not define the strength or sustainability of an urban forest program. Long-term outcomes depend equally on maintenance practices, tree health, biodiversity, risk management, staffing capacity, data systems, and stable funding.

A community may increase canopy cover in the short term through planting alone, but without sustained investment in maintenance and program administration, canopy gains will not be durable. For this reason, the UFS and this Plan recommend scaling the broader urban forest program in tandem with any canopy target. Dedicated staffing, enhanced operational funding, structured pruning cycles, and expanded private planting programs are essential conditions for sustainable canopy growth over the next two decades.

Current Program Context

View Royal currently maintains approximately 29% urban canopy cover. The Town's annual urban forestry program budget is approximately \$343,000 and includes lifecycle management, administrative oversight distributed across several roles, and recurring initiatives such as the Resident Tree Program and invasive species management.

There is currently no dedicated Town Arborist. Tree-related responsibilities are absorbed across departments, and most technical services are delivered through contractors. Public tree planting averages approximately 40 caliper trees per year. Over the past two decades, planting has not consistently kept pace with removals. Without program expansion, it is reasonable to expect canopy stagnation or decline due to development pressures, tree mortality, and limited proactive maintenance.

Planting Capacity and Structural Constraints

Opportunities mapping identified approximately 8,000 potential planting sites, with roughly 7,300 meeting current Subdivision Servicing (SDS) Bylaw standards. This is insufficient to support higher canopy targets through municipal lands alone.

Achieving a 30%, 35%, or 40% canopy target requires:

- Expanded planting in parks and rights-of-way,
- Creation of new planting space through capital projects,
- Integration of tree requirements into development processes,
- Significant expansion of planting on private lands.

Planting capacity becomes increasingly constrained under higher targets. The feasibility of 35% and especially 40% depends on structural changes in how planting space is created and how private landowners participate.

Peer Comparison and Benchmarking

A jurisdictional scan was completed to situate View Royal's program relative to comparable municipalities across Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland, and the Sunshine Coast. Comparators vary in size, canopy conditions, and fiscal capacity, but clear patterns emerge.

Municipalities with higher canopy ambitions consistently maintain:

- Dedicated urban forestry staff (often one or more full-time arborists),
- Structured pruning and inventory programs,
- Larger planting budgets,
- Per-capita spending significantly above View Royal's current level.

Communities pursuing canopy increases in the range of 4% to 10% over 20 to 30 years typically maintain annual planting programs in the hundreds of trees and operate with multiple full-time urban forestry staff. Larger centres with ambitious targets, such like one bridging a delta of > 5% canopy coverage from current levels, operate programs often several times the size of View Royal's current budget and staffing complement. By contrast, smaller municipalities with limited budgets tend to adopt modest canopy increases, often in the range of 1% over 20 years, paired with incremental program expansion.

Peer comparison does not prescribe a specific target for View Royal, but it demonstrates a consistent relationship: higher canopy targets require higher, sustained investment. Targets set without commensurate resourcing tend to be aspirational rather than operational.

Enhanced Program Model

This Plan applies a lifecycle costing approach that accounts for planting, watering, structural pruning, cyclical pruning, removals, soil care, and inventory updates over a tree's lifespan. Under a proactive maintenance model, tree lifespans are expected to extend significantly, improving return on investment and reducing long-term replacement costs.

Core enhancements required to implement the UFS include:

Dedicated Town Arborist: A full-time Town Arborist is foundational. This role would provide technical leadership, oversee lifecycle management, coordinate contractors, support development review, and track canopy performance.

Enhanced Operational Funding: Maintenance budgets must scale with the number of trees under municipal care. Structured pruning cycles, establishment watering, and inventory management are necessary to sustain canopy gains.

Expansion of the Private Tree Planting Program: Municipal lands alone cannot deliver required planting volumes under higher canopy scenarios. The Resident Tree Program and related private initiatives must expand significantly to meet targets.

Natural Areas Capacity: Strengthening invasive species management and restoration planning supports long-term canopy health and biodiversity.

Financial Pathways

At full implementation (2045), estimated annual program costs are expected to be:

- **30% canopy cover:** approximately \$790,000 annually
- **35% canopy cover:** approximately \$1,140,000 annually
- **40% canopy cover:** approximately \$1,720,000 annually

These represent mature program levels that include full UFS implementation, dedicated staffing, and scaled planting and maintenance systems. Planting requirements rise sharply across pathways. A 30% target requires moderate expansion beyond current practice. A 35% target requires sustained, large-scale increases in municipal and private planting. A 40% target represents a substantial escalation that well exceeds current site availability and program structure without major policy and funding shifts.

Target Feasibility

All three canopy pathways rely on the same core program elements: a dedicated Town Arborist, enhanced lifecycle maintenance, structured pruning and inventory cycles, expanded private planting programs, and strengthened restoration capacity. These components are required regardless of whether Council selects a 30%, 35%, or 40% canopy target. The distinction between scenarios is not structural, but one of scale.

A 30% canopy target requires roughly **260 municipal trees per year** and **610 private trees annually** over 20 years. A 35% target increases this to approximately **625 municipal trees** and **1,515 private trees per year**. A 40% target would require about **1,300 municipal trees** and **2,060 private trees annually**.

Higher planting volumes expand the long-term municipal tree inventory and proportionally increase asset management obligations. The financial differences between scenarios therefore reflect the cumulative maintenance costs of progressively larger tree populations by 2046, not different program designs. Council's decision should align with the scale of sustained annual planting the Town is prepared to support, and the long-term maintenance responsibilities that accompany it.

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The Town of View Royal's Urban Forest Strategy (UFS) is being considered for adoption, laying out a strategic plan for the management of the community's urban forest over the next 20 years. It includes a broad range of goals, strategies, actions, and monitoring criteria to improve the planning, management, maintenance, protection, and stewardship of the Town's urban forest. Much of this framework either explicitly or implicitly supports the achievement of a canopy cover target, currently set to be 30%.

At its core, this document serves to provide insight into the resourcing required to support implementation of that ambitious plan. As a result, it is more operational in nature, and explores the operational burden associated with the UFS' gradual rollout, and offering insight into the potential operational burden associated across three canopy cover pathways (i.e., 30%, 35% and 40%). It also provides a brief review of management and resourcing practices in other communities, to support program benchmarking, and has the following overall structure:

- 1) **Key Context:** a summary of key considerations to keep front of mind while reviewing this document.
- 2) **Jurisdictional scan:** A peer comparison of municipalities and their urban forestry programs, including operational and canopy cover targets.
- 3) **Program Pathways:** Overview of the proposed canopy cover scenarios (30%, 35%, 40%) and their financial and level of service implications compared to the present.
- 4) **Life-Cycle Cost Analyses:** Summary of the life cycle costs associated with urban forest maintenance administration.

1.0 Key Context

Several core principles and insights set the stage for the discussion and are provided here.

Proactive Urban Forest Management Approach

View Royal's current urban forest program operates primarily on a reactive basis. The Town does not maintain a formal pruning cycle, inventory update schedule, or structured risk assessment program. Tree maintenance is largely responsive in nature, driven by service requests from the public or by incidental staff observations. Under this model, intervention typically occurs only once a tree has declined, failed, or otherwise suffered an observed issue. While this approach can address immediate safety and liability concerns, it does not systematically maintain tree health, structure, or long-term performance. It also results in unpredictable workloads and greater budget variability, particularly during storm events and extreme weather.

Best practices in urban forest management generally suggest that strategic, early investment in urban forest assets reduces long-term costs. Proactive programs typically include regular inventory updates, which drive recurring maintenance cycles, and can be further supported by a strong establishment care regimen, and prompt asset renewal (see Section 3.0 for expanded discussion on these practices). The rationale for this proactive investment is two-fold, and both are predicated on extended asset life cycles:

1. **Proactive management can extend a tree's functional lifespan by decades**, reducing the frequency of relatively expensive planting and removal activities. These are dollars spent on maintenance rather than replacement, and

2. **Elongated asset life-cycles secure a better return on public investment** by way of extending the period through which mature tree benefits are being enjoyed by the community (Figure 1).

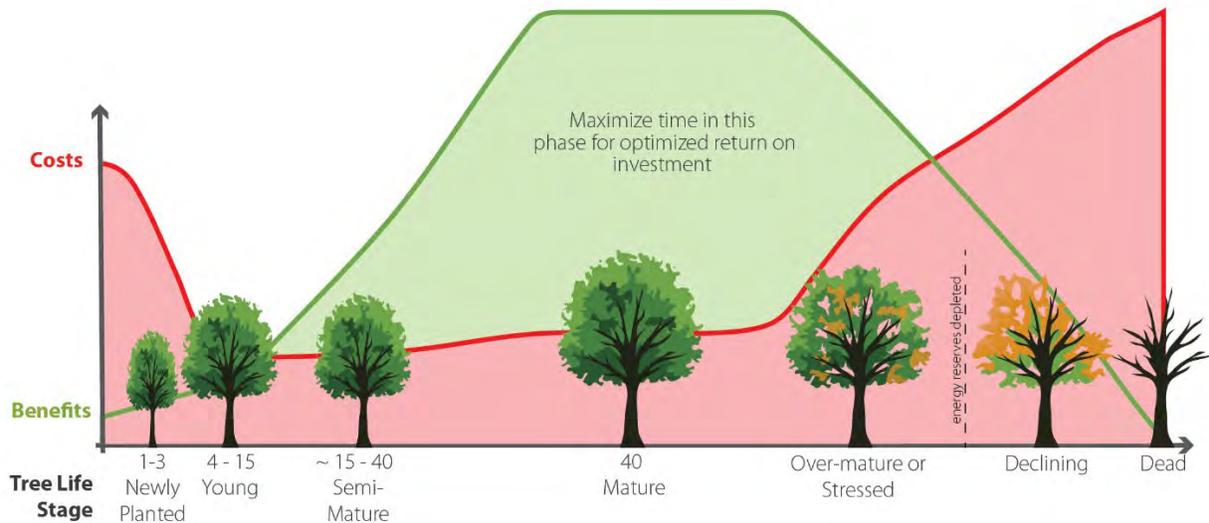


Figure 1. General tree life cycle cost-benefit analyses.

Canopy Cover

Just One Measure

Canopy cover provides a simple, accessible measure to track the extent of the urban forest and the broad successes and failures of management efforts within a community. It is also increasingly feasible to report on regularly, as the costs of acquiring LiDAR and remote imagery have decreased in recent years. Further still, coverage metrics like canopy cover offer a quantitative metric that's easily integrated into other municipal processes and plans, like the Official Community Plan, or through local development processes and bylaws.

It is however important to recognize that canopy coverage measurements do not offer a full picture of the successes or merits of an urban forestry program and alone do not offer sufficient information to assess the sustainability of management practices. A range of other considerations (e.g., maintenance practices, biodiversity, program resourcing) also support canopy growth and cannot be adequately evaluated through current canopy coverage measurements. As a result, canopy coverage measurements should be considered alongside a range of other program metrics to understand the full picture; this is why the urban forest management strategy puts forward a monitoring program broader in scope than canopy coverage alone.

Temporality of Canopy Cover Targets

Trees experience growth continually through life stages. As a tree ages, growth tends to slow considerably, particularly with respect to height. Because growth and therefore canopy area are not static, a canopy coverage measurement (or target) is just the proportion of a given area of interest

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covered by tree canopy at one particular point in time. Canopy cover targets that are set nearer-term (e.g., < 30 years), tend to require planting more trees annually to hit a target than if that same target were set further out (e.g. 30 - 50 years). This is because the trees planted towards a nearer-term target will not generally have time to grow to maturity under relatively short time horizons. This is particularly true where a large delta exists between the identified target and the current canopy coverage measure. When tree planting numbers are increased to realize a shorter-term target, the result is often that the set target is ‘overshot’ in the years following the target date, as the young trees reach maturity in the decades following.

View Royal’s canopy coverage would likely exceed its identified target (i.e., 30%, 35%, or 40%) in the years following 2045. The magnitude to which the target is exceeded or ‘overshot’ depends on how many trees have been planted in the years leading up to the target date, as those trees will continue to grow well beyond the current 20-year horizon (Figure 2).

View Royal Canopy Pathways

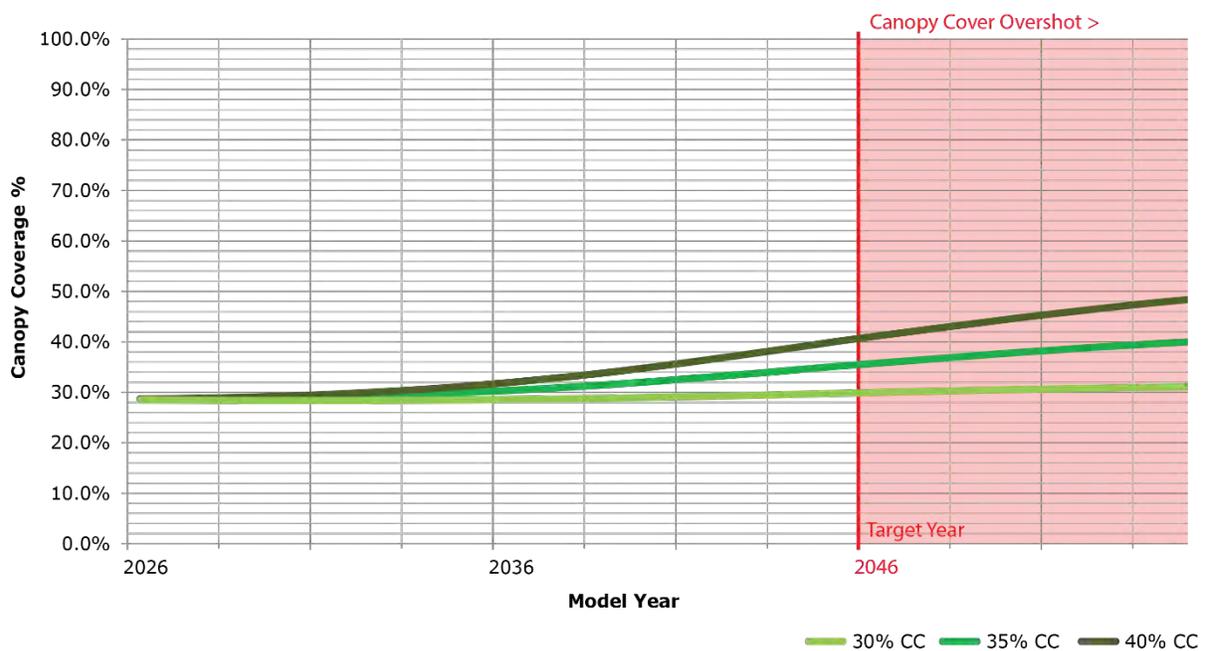


Figure 2. View Royal's canopy pathways.

Limited Planting Areas

Planting opportunities were also mapped during the preparation of alternative canopy pathways. ‘Opportunities mapping’ simply describes sites that would be immediately available for tree planting. Typically, these consist of turf grass that meets the requirements of the Town’s Subdivision Servicing (SDS) Bylaw. There are currently approximately 8,000 planting sites available, and 7,300 comply with the Town’s SDS Bylaw, which is not currently enough planting opportunities identified through the mapping process to support the achievement of a 30% (17,400), 35% (42,800) or 40% (67,250) canopy cover

target in the Town of View Royal. In practice, a canopy cover target can still be met without having planting opportunities available. However, in this case, the Town will likely need to employ a combination of planting in turf sites that do not meet the requirements of its own SDS bylaw and/or by creating new opportunities where opportunities don't currently exist (e.g., new boulevard planting sites through capital works). The latter of the two solutions can introduce considerable cost to a planting program.

2.0 Peer Comparison

A jurisdictional scan of the operational design and resourcing of urban forest programs was conducted to situate View Royal's current (2024) program relative to those of peer municipalities. This sort of comparison facilitates the Town to benchmark its program against that of its peers. Peers were selected based on similar contexts, such as land area, population, and/or proximity. Selections encompass a range of resourcing levels, canopy coverages, and canopy coverage targets (Figure 3). Additional details were included about each comparator's planting program, as available. The following communities were selected as peer comparators:

- The City of Langford,
- The Town of Oak Bay,
- The City of Victoria,
- The Town of Gibsons,
- The Town of Comox,
- The City of Courtenay,
- The City of North Vancouver, and
- The City of Port Moody.

The following is a brief review of each of those programs, as well as a quick overview of View Royal's own program.

Our Program

Like many of the selected peers, View Royal is located in the CRD and had a population of 11,500 in 2021 across an area of 14km² (5.6 km² of which is urban). In 2023, our urban canopy cover was measured to be 29%, and 60% canopy cover across the Town's entire jurisdictional area (including Thetis and Mill Hill Regional Parks). Within the urban area, View Royal's land base is dominated by right-of-ways (24%) and single-family residential use (22%), with major components of mixed residential (12%), and parks (9%). The Town's Urban Forest Strategy has set an urban canopy cover target of 30% to be achieved by 2045. Council has also expressed interest in exploring the feasibility of achieving 35% and 40% targets within that same period. That interest served as the catalyst for this document.

The Town's current urban forestry budget is approximately \$343,000 annually, which includes a \$17,500 replacement tree budget, staff time spent on tree-related matters, contractor supports for development review, and the annual free tree giveaway that supports planting on private land (160 trees in 2024). Currently, public tree planting occurs at very modest levels, with approximately 30-50 trees being installed annually. Overall, public and private rates of tree planting have not kept pace with removals

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over the last two decades. To decouple from historic patterns of net loss, each of the 30%, 35%, and 40% canopy pathways would require significantly more tree planting than has been the case previously (see Section 3.0 Program Pathways).

There is currently no dedicated staff capacity to absorb significant expansions of program scope or technical requirements. All tree maintenance activities are currently contracted, as are some development and permit review activities.

Considering Resourcing and Target Setting

Figure 3 plots canopy change against program budgets, and helps to illustrate the relationship between program resourcing, design, capacity and aspired canopy growth. View Royal is situated amongst peers with relatively low levels of program resourcing and a lower canopy cover target. This is not inherently bad or poor practice. Canopy cover targets that are higher notwithstanding lower levels of resourcing may be more aspirational in nature, and difficult to achieve in practice, whereas higher levels of resourcing and a lower target may be indicative of urban forestry resources being directed to other program areas besides canopy growth (such as maintenance and monitoring, which is also beneficial). Communities with higher existing canopy coverage, like Port Moody and Langford, tend to set lower canopy cover targets but may allocate greater resources to retaining what’s already in place. High levels of resourcing and higher canopy cover targets are more common in larger centres, which generally have lower canopy coverage but greater available resources and capacity to support a more aspirational target.

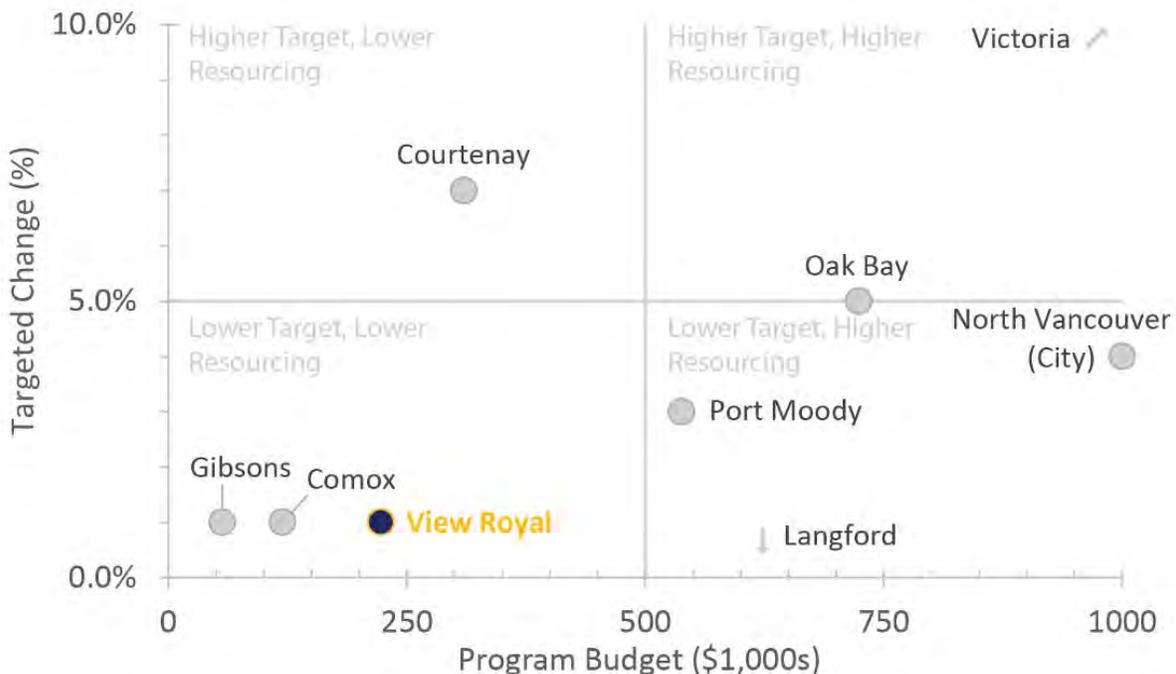


Figure 3. Comparison of peer urban forest program resourcing relative to their targeted canopy cover change.

Figure 3 simplifies the nuances that go into setting a canopy cover target. Contextual factors, such as differences in land use, large parks, development pressures, and available resources, need to be considered in a target-setting exercise. However, plotting canopy cover against resourcing in this way helps to communicate some of the justification for the setting of a target that is aligned with the real resources available to a program.

Peer Comparators

City of Langford

The City of Langford had a population of 56,500 in 2021 across 41 km². In 2023, the city had 48% community-wide canopy cover. Key land uses include hillside and shorelines (29%), parks (25%), residential (15%), and right-of-ways (11%). The city has adopted community-wide canopy target that is both ranged and regressive from current canopy cover; 40% to 45% by 2050. This is predicated on the significant pressures the community faces in terms of continued growth, as well as the fact that 48% canopy coverage is already quite high amongst peer municipalities. In addition, the city's canopy cover target is measured community-wide, which tends to inflate coverage metrics in communities with significant parkland.

Langford currently plants about 200 caliper trees per year toward offsetting losses associated with new development. Target municipal planting rates range from 300 trees at the lower end, to more than 40% lower target to over 2,000 trees per year for sustainment of canopy coverage at 45% (this also assumes significant greenfield growth). Langford's urban forestry program budget is roughly \$630,000 (\$11/capita), which includes a \$100,000 planting and replacement budget. The City currently has one dedicated urban forestry FTE (i.e., an arborist) responsible for tree inspections, contract administration and development review, in addition to a Director of Parks whose role encompasses overseeing urban forest management and operations.

In View Royal, there is opportunity to include Thetis within the canopy coverage metric. In some communities, including large parks can make sense given the configuration or ownership of the parkland. In others, inclusion of parks can result in large, forested areas being considered within a target where the municipality has little influence over management intervention. Including more canopied area within a target makes it so that the same nominal change (e.g., planting of a few hundred trees) is less perceptible in terms of its overall influence on the overall target. Being as Thetis is Provincial and very large relative to View Royal's overall land base, the inclusion of the park as part of the Town's canopy cover does not make sense.

Town of Oak Bay

The Town of View Royal is located in the CRD and had an urban population of 18,000 in 2021 across 11 km². In 2015, the Town reported 33% urban canopy cover. Key land uses include single-family residential (39%), right-of-ways (19%), low-density residential (11%), community institutional (11%), commercial and mixed use (10%), and parks (8%). The Town has set an urban canopy target range from 36% to 40% by 2045, and plants about 125 caliper trees per year despite a target rate of 200 trees per year on public land, and 330 trees per year in private. The community's urban forestry program budget is \$724,000

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(\$40/capita), including a \$38,000 planting and replacement budget. The Town has two dedicated urban forestry staff, including an arboriculture supervisor and an arborist, responsible for planting, pruning, removals, watering, and tree health care.

The Town of Oak Bay's 40% canopy cover target represents a delta of 7% and was to be achieved over a longer period (eight more years) than the 20-year period underpinning View Royal's target pathways. To achieve this increase, Oak Bay's UFMP proposed a \$300,000 increase to its urban forestry program budget within the first two years of the plan's adoption; securing funds for a new urban forester to guide plan implementation, and a grants coordinator to support funding, public education and stewardship activities; actions consistent with View Royal's UFS. This also included seasonal labourers to support a regular pruning cycle for its young, park and street trees (\$50,000) and an extension of its watering program by two months (\$10,000). It also increased its annual planting program by \$23,000, bringing it to \$61,000, up from its 2017 baseline.

City of Victoria

The City of Victoria is also located in the CRD and had an urban population of 92,000 in 2021 across its 19 km² land area. In 2023, Victoria had 30% urban canopy cover. Land use information was not made available to us at the time of the writing of this report. The City has set a target of 40% urban canopy cover by 2050. Victoria plants approximately 375 municipal caliper-sized trees per year.

Victoria's urban forestry program budget is \$3,500,000 (\$38 per capita). The City's program consists of 16 dedicated urban forestry staff positions, together responsible for all aspects of urban forest management, including planting, removals, maintenance, inspections, and bylaw administration;

- Manager of Urban Forestry Services
- Supervisor of Arboriculture Operations
- Supervisor of Urban Forest Planning
- Assistant Supervisors (2)
- Senior Urban Forest Planner
- Tree Preservation Coordinators (3)
- Urban Forest Technicians (2)
- Utility Arborists (2)
- Technical Field Arborists (3)

The City of Victoria's urban forest program budget is 16 times the size of View Royal's and consists of 16 more full-time staff. The city has also experienced an increase in canopy cover over the past decade, differing from most municipalities on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland, which have experienced a decline. Their current planting rates are comparable to those that would be required for View Royal to achieve a 40% target and are backed by significant staff and fiscal resources.

Town of Gibsons

The Town of Gibsons is in the Sunshine Coast Regional District and had a population of 4,750 in 2021, across a 4 km² land area. In 2021, Gibsons reported 30% urban canopy cover. Dominant land uses include low-density residential (28%), medium and high density residential (22%), right-of-ways (15%),

mixed use (8%), and parks (8%). The Town has recently set an urban canopy cover target of 31% by 2045.

The Town has not historically planted trees in an intentional capacity. The target municipal planting rate is 110 caliper trees per year, supported by a target private planting rate of 25 trees per year, which will require the development of a new street tree and park planting program. Gibsons' urban forestry program budget is \$57,000 (\$12 per capita). The Town reports no dedicated urban forestry staff positions. The Town of Gibson's UFMP proposes canopy cover and planting target increases similar to View Royal's 30% canopy cover pathway.

Town of Comox

The Town of Comox is in the Comox Valley Regional District and had a population of 14,750 in 2021, as well as a land area of 17 km². In 2025, Comox reported 25% urban canopy cover. Dominant land uses include the airport (36%), single-family detached (26%), right-of-ways (12%), and parks (9%). The size of the Town's airport skews the results of its canopy cover, which would otherwise be significantly higher. While the Town's Urban Forest Management Strategy is still in draft, it proposes urban canopy cover targets of 26% by 2045 and 30% by 2065. Municipal rates of tree planting have not historically been tracked. The target municipal planting rate is 115 caliper trees per year, supported by a target private planting rate of 100 trees per year.

Comox's urban forestry program budget is \$120,000, or \$8 per capita, including a \$20,000 planting or replacement budget. The Town has one dedicated urban forestry staff position, the Town arborist, who is responsible for planting, planning, contracting, and inspections. Though still draft, The Town of Comox is set to commit to a 1% increase in canopy cover over 30 years, with planting rates and budgets comparable to those of View Royal's 30% pathway.

City of Courtenay

The City of Courtenay is in the Comox Valley Regional District and had a population 28,500 in 2021 across a land area spanning 32 km². In 2018, Courtenay reported 25% urban canopy cover. Dominant land uses include low-density residential (23%), agriculture (20%), rural use (17%), and public lands (12%). The City has considered a range of urban canopy cover targets, from 21% to 34% by 2050, reflecting different levels of program resourcing, tree bylaw restrictions, and voluntary private tree planting rates. The target municipal planting rate was set as 165 caliper trees per year and private from 285 to 565 caliper trees, per year (moderated by target).

Courtenay's urban forestry program budget is \$310,000 (\$11 per capita), including a \$103,500 planting and replacement budget. The city has one dedicated urban forestry staff position. While the Courtenay's canopy cover target ranges from a 4% decrease to a 9% increase, the planting rates committed to are similar to those needed to achieve View Royal's 30% canopy cover target. The target would have also be achieved over a longer period (i.e., 30 years), with support from a Town arborist, and about five times View Royal's existing resources for tree planting. Their UFMP implementation budget also includes a significant increase in funding for planting, young tree maintenance, cyclical pruning, proactive risk and health assessment and management, and stumping and removals.

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City of North Vancouver

The City of North Vancouver, located in Metro Vancouver, had a population of 58,000 in 2021 distributed across 12 km². In 2021, North Vancouver reported an urban canopy cover of 20%. Dominant land uses include residential (39%), right-of-ways (25%), parks (12%), and mixed use (10%). The City has set targets of 24% urban canopy cover by 2050 and 30% by 2065. They also aim to achieve over 40% canopy cover on select 'Cool Streets' by 2045 to mitigate the effects of extreme urban heat in areas with low canopy cover and high pedestrian use and population density. The target municipal planting rate is 670 caliper trees per year, supported by 890 private trees, annually.

North Vancouver's urban forestry program budget is \$1,010,000 (\$17 per capita), including a \$138,000 planting and replacement budget, and a \$154,000 natural areas budget. Six dedicated urban forestry staff positions are on staff, including an urban forestry supervisor, assistant supervisor/field arborist, two tree workers, and two labourers. Collectively, they are responsible for tree planting, inspections, pruning, watering, removal, bylaw administration, planning, and IPM.

The City of North Vancouver has committed to a 4% increase in canopy cover over the next 20 years, with an existing planting budget about eight times larger than the View Royals, and six additional FTEs. To achieve this, it proposes planting rates comparable to those required to achieve View Royal's 35% pathway. Recognizing the time required for trees to grow, the City has also set a more ambitious target over a 40-year period of 30%, a 10% increase from current coverage.

City of Port Moody

The City of Port Moody, located in Metro Vancouver, had a population of 33,500 in 2021 and a land area of 26 km². In 2019, Port Moody had 28% urban canopy cover¹. Dominant land uses include parks (47%), single-family detached (21%), and industrial (17%). The City has set a target of 31% urban canopy cover by 2050. Port Moody currently plants approximately 50 municipal caliper trees per year. The target municipal planting rate is 275 trees per year, supported by a target private planting rate of 825 trees per year to achieve 31% canopy cover by 2050.

Port Moody's urban forestry program budget is \$538,000 (\$16 per capita), including a \$15,000 planting and replacement budget. The City reports three dedicated urban forestry staff positions, including an urban forestry supervisor, urban forestry technician, and labourer responsible for planting, establishment, trail maintenance, emergency and hazard response, inspections and removals.

Its target planting rates are comparable to View Royal's 30% canopy cover target, but again over a longer 30-year period. While its dedicated planting budget is currently near that of View Royal's, its urban forest program includes 3 FTE able to support the City's planting program, among the many other aspects of urban forest management.

¹ Port Moody's urban canopy cover target was calculated by excluding large parks and open space rather than only including areas within its urban containment boundary.

3.0 Finance and Operations

The following financial forecasts are to be received as forecasted program budgets at full rollout of the actions contained in View Royal's Urban Forest Strategy, to be phased in over a 20-year period. While core changes to maintenance regimen are suggested regardless of the Town's future inventory size, Council are currently considering three canopy scenarios (i.e., 30%, 35% and 40%), and so program budgets would be expected to vary dependent on the number of trees planted, and therefore the number of trees brought under the Municipality's care over the 20-year period.

The financial forecasts assembled here use a life-cycle costing approach. This means regular activities like tree care, replacement, and removal are first assigned an activity cost, then averaged across the assets' anticipated service life, and finally given a frequency at which the activity is expected to occur over the asset's life. Some activities like planting and removal occur once in an asset's life-cycle, while others like watering or structural tree training are to occur a finite number of times (i.e., 3 years through establishment, as put forward through the UFS), while others still will vary dependent on matters such as climate and the care regimen resourced in practice (e.g., reactive maintenance).

This section first describes the operational program put forward through the UFS, as it relates to the Town's current program, and then explores three funding and canopy pathways based on that design: 30%, 35% and 40% canopy coverage.

Enhanced Operational Program

View Royal's UFS involves changes to the operational program designed to support sustainability in management practices, and resilience within the urban forest. These changes range, most of them would require the support of a new or significantly enhanced program resources to be realized. This section offers a review of the activity costing approach used to inform the following program pathways, as well as expanded discussion around key enhancements to operational design.

Table 3-1. View Royal's current and enhanced activity costs and frequencies, and life-cycle costs (approx.).

Activity Cost		Current		Enhanced	
Asset Renewal (Years)		40		80	
Pruning cycle (Years)		80		7	
LC Activities	\$	Frequency	LC Cost	Frequency	LC Cost
Tree planting	\$150.00	1	\$150	1	\$150
Inventory updates	\$8.00	0	\$0	11.4	\$100
Planned pruning	\$150.00	0.5	\$75	11.4	\$1,725
Reactive pruning	\$200.00	1.2	\$240	0.8	\$150
Structural pruning	\$30.00	0	\$0	3	\$100
Watering	\$30.00	0.5	\$15	3	\$50
Soil management	\$30.00	0	\$0	3	\$100
Removal	\$300.00	1	\$300	1	\$300
Stumping	\$80.00	1	\$80	1	\$75

Total	\$860	\$2,735
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Tree planting, stumping and removal

All trees are planted, removed, and stumped once in their lifetime. These are fundamental activities that occur as part of any management program. The primary difference between the current and enhanced management regimen is that given improved maintenance practices, we would expect elongated asset life cycles, which would in turn reduce the aggregate annualized removal and replacement costs incurred by the municipality on a yearly basis. Again, it becomes money spent on maintenance, rather than replacement.

Maintenance

Under View Royal's current urban forest program, trees are pruned on a reactive basis, and beyond watering, young tree care practices are relatively inconsistent. To sustainably grow urban forest canopy, and to reduce the likelihood of establishment mortality, best practices suggest watering trees for at least 3 years post-planting. Structural pruning, being the (ground) pruning of young trees (suggested to occur at years (5, 7, and 9), also helps ensure trees develop strong branch structure that reduces the risk of significant failures that are thought to have a greater likelihood of severe impacts for the tree, person(s) or property, and which have poorer prognosis for the tree's recovery.

Along those same lines, a regular 7-year pruning cycle, ensures each tree under the Town's care is visited once on a seven-year cycle. This is an industry best practice, and ensures that as trees mature, they continue to maintain good structure and that most branches that pose a risk to the public, structures, or infrastructure are removed before damage occurs. Additional activities that support tree establishment and help maintain or improve tree condition can include soil amendments and mulching, which can help keep tree roots nourished and moist at the time of planting, and as they begin to establish.

Inventory updates

Currently, the Town of View Royal has an incomplete street tree inventory. The UFS suggests updates should occur in-step with an enhanced cyclical pruning program, so that inventory updates may drive operational programming. Having a complete tree inventory and regularly updating stewards an invaluable operational dataset, giving the Town insight into what it has and the state it in.

For annualized activity costs for each scenario based on final population sizes in 2045, see Appendix 1.

Bolstered Administration

Town Arborist

View Royal's Urban Forest Strategy is constrained by limited in-house capacity; urban forest management responsibilities currently incurred across departments primarily as secondary duties. Administration costs aggregated across roles are thought to amount to \$72,000 annually, while technical

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expertise remains largely contractor- and consultant-reliant. Establishing a Town Arborist at a market rate of \$80,000–\$100,000 would offer critical new capacity and subject matter expertise to support implementation of the Strategy and achievement of the Town’s canopy target. The Arborist would serve as the technical and strategic lead for urban forest lifecycle management, contract administration, development review, performance tracking, stewardship programming, and grant applications. They would also formalize operational standards and build internal expertise and capacity. This role would also oversee and expand the Town’s private tree-planting initiatives in collaboration with the Natural Areas Technician, and work with the existing Communications Coordinator to promote urban forestry programs and recruit volunteers. Consolidating these functions under a single technical lead would strengthen accountability, reduce reliance on external consultants, and internalize long-term program capacity.

Natural Areas Technician

The importance of View Royal’s natural areas is enshrined in its OCP vision statement. A part-time Restoration Coordinator funded at \$18,000 annually and is responsible for invasive species management and restoration in View Royal, including coordination with the Greater Victoria Green Team. Existing funding limits their ability to manage invasive species across the Town’s many forested natural areas. Expanding the Coordinator’s current role into a full-time Natural Areas Technician position at an annual cost of approximately \$60,000–\$80,000 would enable the development of forest management plans for flagship parks, systematically prioritize invasive species control and native planting efforts, and contribute to the Town’s urban canopy cover target. It would also enable the Town to monitor the health of its forested natural areas, ensure the success of its restoration sites, and expand existing stewardship programming. With support from the Town’s existing Communications Coordinator, the Technician would also pursue grants and external funding opportunities to expand the Town’s urban forestry initiatives.

View Royal’s existing Resident Tree program grew exponentially from 2023 to 2024. Increasing canopy cover in View Royal depends on public support and shared responsibility, as it will require sustained tree planting on both private and municipal land. This is especially true because municipal lands alone do not provide enough planting opportunities to reach the proposed 30%, 35%, or 40% scenarios. Without dedicated engagement capacity, the high levels of planting on private property required to achieve a 30% - 40% canopy cover target are unlikely to be achieved. The Technician would also collaborate with the Town Arborist to administer View Royal’s private tree planting programs, directly accelerating canopy growth by turning private property into a much-needed driver of urban forest expansion.

Recurring Initiatives

Canada Summer Jobs Intern

Since the Town of View Royal currently has limited capacity and resources to implement the UFS, a subsidized Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) Intern would provide program support during the peak growing season to both the Town Arborist and the Natural Areas Technician at a reduced cost of approximately

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\$15,000 annually. The Intern would assist with updating and completing the Town's tree inventory, perform structural young-tree pruning under the supervision of the Town Arborist, and verify that contracted services such as young-tree watering have been completed to municipal standards. They would also complete assessments of young-tree mortality and support the Natural Areas Technician with restoration site monitoring, invasive species removal, and stewardship events. In collaboration with the Technician and the existing Communications Coordinator, the intern would also play a critical role in public outreach and growing the Town's private planting programs towards View Royal's canopy target.

Greater Victoria Green Team

The Greater Victoria Green Team plays an important role in supporting View Royal's restoration and invasive species management efforts. With guidance from the Town's Restoration Coordinator, they lead volunteer-based work parties that restore degraded forest natural areas by removing invasive plants and planting native trees and shrubs in municipal parks. These activities directly improve forest health and support biodiversity, provide public opportunities for urban forest stewardship, and protect the ecological integrity of the Town's native ecosystems. These volunteer events increase awareness of ecological issues and build public support for the Town's urban forestry initiatives.

Current funding levels limit the scale and frequency of this work. Invasive species management requires repeated treatment and monitoring over multiple years. Restoration plantings require follow-up care to ensure survival and canopy establishment. Expanding the Green Team would allow the Town to increase the number of restoration sites treated annually, improve maintenance of planted areas, and extend programming across more parks, while contributing to the Town's canopy cover ambitions.

Private Tree Planting Program

View Royal's Resident Tree Planting Program is currently led by the Town's Engineering Department and has grown nearly sixfold between 2023 and 2024, to \$26,000. As discussed in Section 1.0 Limited Planting Areas, there is currently insufficient planting space on municipal property in View Royal to achieve a 30% to 40% canopy cover target. Therefore, continuing to expand the Town's Resident Tree Program and developing new planting programs to encourage private residential and ICI landowners to plant trees will be necessary in addition to expanding the Town's municipal planting program. Under a 30% canopy cover scenario, the Town's private tree planting program would be doubled (\$52,000) under the 30% scenario, tripled (\$78,000) under the 35% scenario, and would grow to \$156,000 under the 40% scenario. This would support the annual planting target of 410, 1515, and 2060 trees on private property under each respective scenario.

Forest Management Planning & Intervention

Forested natural areas management in the Town of View Royal is currently limited to occasional restoration activities supported by the existing Restoration Coordinator and the Greater Victoria Green Team. As previously discussed, current levels of resourcing limit the number of View Royal's parks and forested natural areas that can be regularly managed. It also prevents the Town from developing Forest Management Plans for its flagship park natural areas, such as Portage Park. This is especially important

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for parks and green spaces that contain Garry oak meadows, which have steadily declined by 85% on the Island since 1800.

Beginning a proactive forest management approach for \$19,000 annually is essential to maintaining the health and function of these ecosystems. By planning ahead, View Royal can strategically reduce wildfire risk and prioritize invasive species management and native habitat restoration. Integrating biodiversity thinking into forest management planning helps ensure that ecological integrity is preserved while also adapting to climate change and urban development pressures. Strategic, long-term planning allows View Royal to protect its natural heritage while building a more resilient and sustainable future.

Program Pathways

Note that the program pathways identified in this part assume full implementation (i.e., 2046) and do not imply that resourcing must immediately reach the identified levels. Further, costs associated with increased tree planting to achieve the inventory populations for each pathway are not included in the identified resourcing levels and would be incurred annually until the public tree population for each pathway is realized.

Current Resourcing Pathway

The Town of View Royal's current urban forest program costs approximately \$343,000 across a range of cost centres identified in Figure 3. This includes \$195,000 for lifecycle management² (i.e. planting, pruning, watering, removal and stumping), \$87,000 for program administration across staff with diverse portfolios (Director of Engineering, Deputy Director of Engineering, Engineering Clerk, Parks Supervisor, Restoration Coordinator), and \$61,000 for recurring initiatives, including invasive species management and the Town's resident tree planting program.

² See Appendix 3 Annual Operating Costs for details.

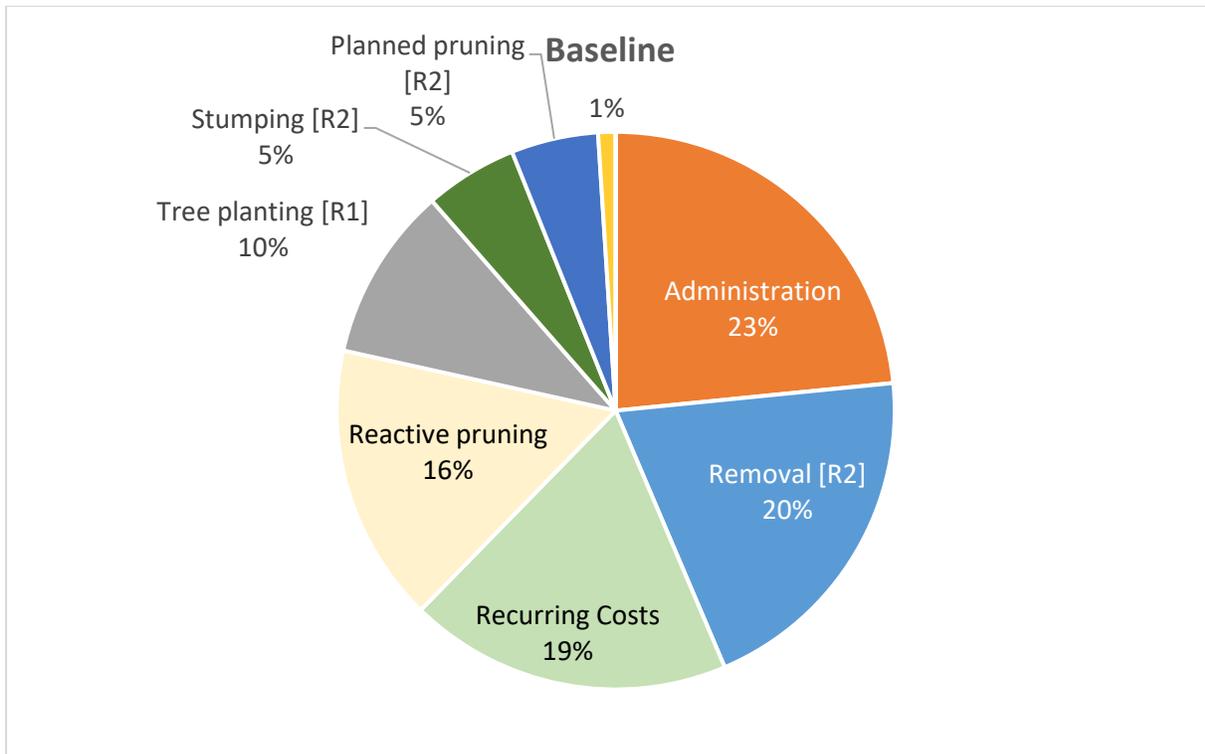


Figure 3. View Royal's existing (2024) urban forest program budget distribution across major cost centres.

This is not a program pathway, but rather a review of baseline program resources. It would be reasonable, given current growth pressures and past trends, to continue to observe a canopy decline from the 29% the Town currently holds, if resource levels remain unchanged. Significant tree-planting efforts would continue to be primarily opportunistic and predicated on the initiation of other capital initiatives, rather than on any defined target. Operational budgets supporting urban forestry would continue to be set independently of desired program design and the number of assets under the municipality's care, leaving resource attrition a concern. Program responsibilities would continue to be absorbed as secondary scopes under existing roles, leaving tree care expertise out of house and the Town reliant on third-party expertise for tree-related matters. Decision-making would continue to be based primarily on institutional knowledge, rather than through datasets and recorded observations. Private tree planting would continue to be encouraged, principally through the free tree giveaway, however, not to any defined private land target, and only as finances allow.

30% Canopy Cover Pathway

Each of the following three scenarios leverages the same fundamental program design, aligned with that suggested through the UFS and previously described. To sustain the levels of service put forward through the UFS and achieve a 30% canopy cover target by 2045, program costs would be expected to rise to \$790,000 at full implementation (Figure 3-5). This would consist of \$504,000 for enhanced lifecycle management of the Town's trees, \$140,000 for program administration and staff costs, and \$146,000 for annualized special projects. As the Town significantly increases tree planting to achieve a

30% canopy cover target by 2046 (est. 260 tree/year), approximately \$39,000 would be required to that end, annually.

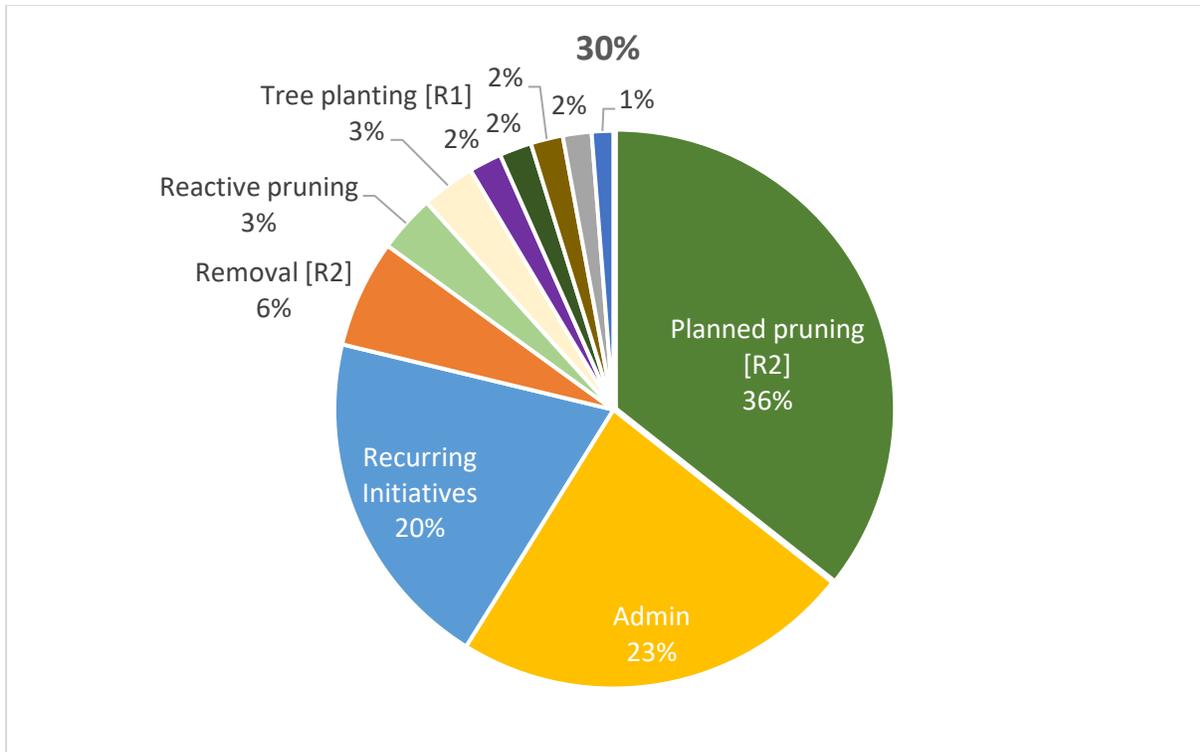


Figure 4. Urban forest program budget distribution across major cost centres in 2045 under the 30% canopy pathway.

Under this scenario, full implementation of the UFS is achieved over a 20-year horizon. Canopy cover would be expected to increase from 29% to 30% by 2045. Operational budgets would be benchmarked to scale with the number of assets under the City’s care. Enhanced maintenance practices would be expected to elongate asset life cycles, supporting enhanced return through mature tree benefits, given public investment in their care. New staff would shore up existing in-house capacities, institutionalize in-house tree care knowledge, and expand the City’s capacity to roll out programming for tree growth on private land. Additional discussion of the program’s scope identified through the UFS is provided earlier in this Section.

35% Canopy Cover Pathway

Under this scenario, canopy cover would increase from 29% to 35% by 2045. The 35% canopy cover scenario builds directly on the program framework established under the 30% pathway, including full implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy, enhanced lifecycle management, dedicated staffing, structured pruning and inventory cycles, restoration capacity, and expanded engagement programming. The increase in budget relative to the 30% scenario is driven primarily by three factors: higher municipal

planting rates, substantially expanded private planting through the Resident Tree Program and related initiatives, and the long-term maintenance obligations associated with a significantly larger tree population in 2045.

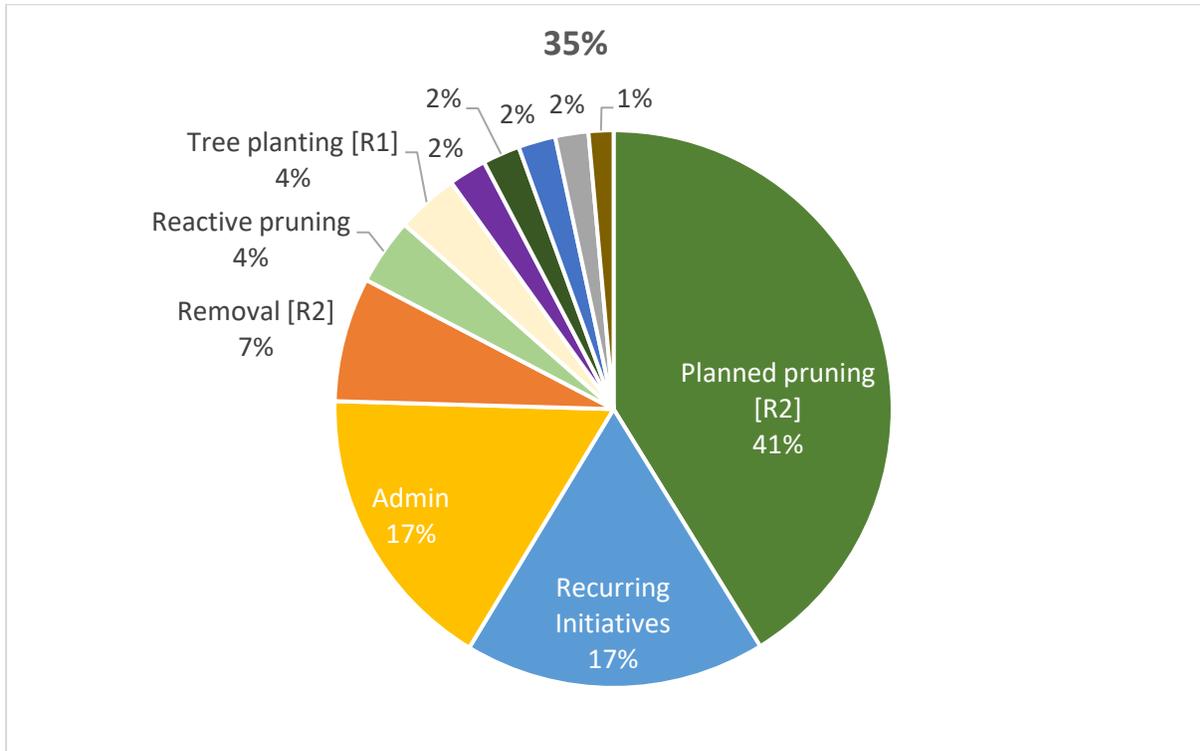


Figure 3-5. Urban forest program budget distribution across major cost centres in 2045 under the 35% canopy pathway.

To achieve a 35% canopy cover target by 2045, total annual program costs at full implementation are estimated at approximately \$1,140,000. Of this, \$825,000 is allocated to lifecycle management, \$140,000 to administration and staffing, and \$172,000 to recurring initiatives. In the short term, increasing planting and establishment watering to approximately 625 trees per year will require an estimated \$94,000 annually.

40% Canopy Cover Pathway

Under this scenario, canopy cover would increase from 29% to 40% by 2045. The 40% canopy cover scenario represents a drastic increase in investment and canopy ambition. It maintains the same program structure as the 30% and 35% scenarios—dedicated urban forestry leadership, formalized lifecycle management, restoration planning, engagement capacity, and data-driven asset management—but significantly increases the scale of planting and long-term maintenance as the trees planted will not have time to grow very large within the 20-year timeframe. Similar to the 35% scenario, the higher budget is driven overwhelmingly by markedly expanded municipal and private planting programs and the maintenance required for the corresponding growth in the Town’s tree asset inventory. As canopy targets rise, so too do the number of trees requiring structured maintenance, risk inspection, watering, and eventual renewal.

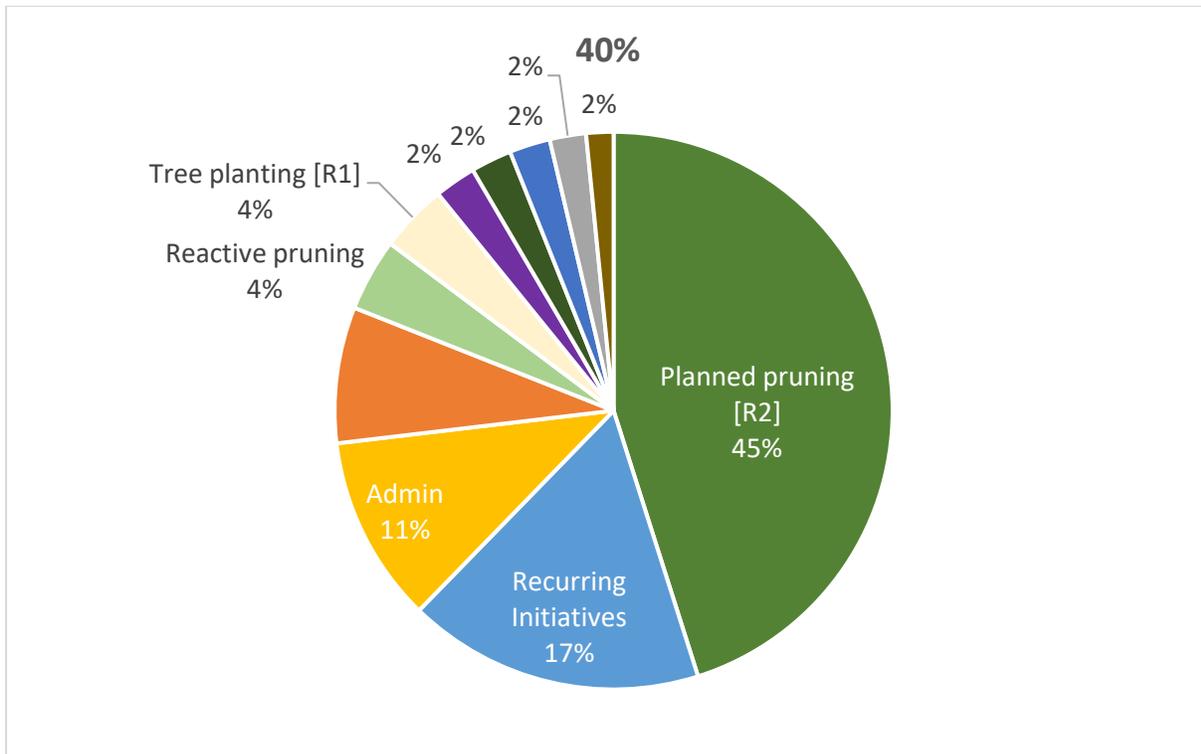


Figure 3-6. Urban forest program budget distribution across major cost centres in 2045 under the 40% canopy pathway.

At full implementation, annual program costs are estimated at approximately \$1,720,000, including \$1,325,000 for lifecycle management, \$140,000 for administration and staffing, and \$250,000 for annualized recurring initiatives. In the short term, achieving planting and establishment rates of approximately 1,300 trees per year would require an estimated \$195,000 annually.

Appendix 1 Disaggregated Summary of Canopy Cover and Urban Forest Program Resourcing

Table 2. Peer comparison of urban forest program operational design and resourcing.

	VIEW ROYAL	LANGFORD	VICTORIA	GIBSONS	OAK BAY	COURTENAY	COMOX	NORTH VANCOUVER (CITY)	PORT MOODY
Context									
Population & Tax Base (2021)	11,500	56,500	92,000	4,750	18,000	28,500	14,750	58,000	33,500
Population density (people/km2)	800	1,400	4,700	1,100	1,700	900	900	4,900	1,300
Land area (km2)	14	41	19	4	11	32	17	12	26
Canopy Cover	2023	2023	2023	2021	2015	2018	2025	2021	2019
Canopy Cover	60% (29% urban)	48%	(30% urban)	38% (30% urban)	(33% urban)	33% (25% urban)	(25% urban)	(20% urban)	58% (28% urban*)
Canopy Cover Target (Years)	(30 - 40% urban) (2025 - 2045)	40 - 45% (2024 - 2050)	(40% urban) (2026 - 2050)	(31% urban) (2025 - 2045)	(36 - 40% urban) (2017 - 2045)	34% - 40% (21% - 34% urban) (2019 - 2050)	(26% urban) (2025 - 2055), (30% urban) (2025 - 2085) ⁱⁱⁱ	(24% urban) (2025 - 2045), (30% urban) (2025 - 2065)	59% (31% urban) (2019 - 2050)
Canopy % Difference	(1% to 11% urban)	-3% to -8%	(10% urban)	(1% urban)	(3% to 7% urban)	1% to 7% (-4% to 9% urban)	(1% urban) (2055), (5% urban) (2085)	(4% urban)	1% (3% urban)
Land Use Area (%)	Right-of-ways: 24% Residential & Large Lot Residential: 33% Mixed Residential: 12% Park: 9% Institutional: 7% Mixed Use: 5% Commercial: 4% Hospital Transit Oriented: 4% Rural: 1%	Parks & Open Space: 25% Hillside & Shorelines: 29% Neighbourhood: 15% Right-of-ways: 11% Business & Light Industrial: 5% Mixed Use Employment Centre: 4% City Centre: 4% Agricultural: 2% Neighbourhood Centre: 2% Village Centre: 2%	-	Residential (Low): 28% Residential (Medium & High): 11% Roads: 18% Mixed use (urban): 10% Greenbelt & Natural Open Space: 5% Public & Community Uses: 6% Rural & Agriculture: 6% Park & Recreation: 2% Schools & Fields: 3% Service Commercial: 3% Other: 2%	Established Neighbourhoods: 39% Right-of-ways: 19% Uplands: 11% Community Institutional: 11% Commercial & Mixed Use: 10% Parks & Open Space: 8% Multi-Unit Residential: 2%	Residential: 23% Agriculture: 20% Rural, Multi-use: 17% Public: 12% Rural, Residential: 8% Golf Course: 6% Commercial: 5% High-Density: 3% Multi-use: 2% Industrial, Light: 2% Commercial, Large: 1% Rail: 1% Industrial, Heavy: 1%	Airport: 36% Residential (Low Density): 26% Right-of-ways: 12% Parks & Open Space: 9% Residential (Medium to High Density): 5% Agricultural: 4% Mixed Use: 4% Institutional: 3% Light Industrial: 2% Other: 1%	Residential: 39% Right-of-ways: 25% Parks, Recreation & Open Space: 12% Mixed Use: 10% Industrial: 8% School & Institutional: 3% Commercial: 2%	Parks & Open Space: 47% General Industrial: 17% Single Family Low Density: 21% Multi-Family Residential: 7% Mixed Use: 4% Public & Institutional: 3% Industrial Business: 1%
Program	2024	2024	2026	2024	2017	2018	2024	2021	2022
Urban Forestry Program Budget (CAD)	\$363,000	\$626,800	\$3,533,000	\$57,000	\$724,000	\$310,000	\$120,000	\$1,010,000	\$538,000
Planting/Replacement Budget (CAD)	\$17,500	\$100,000	-	-	\$38,000	\$103,500	\$20,000	\$138,000	\$15,000
Natural Areas Budget (CAD)	\$43,000	-	\$ 126,000	-	-	-	-	\$ 154,000	-
Program Budget \$ per capita (CAD)	\$31	\$11	\$38	\$12	\$40	\$11	\$8	\$17	\$16
Dedicated urban forestry staff (FTE)	0	1	16	0	2	1	1	6	3
Current average annual municipal tree planting rate (caliper only)	40	200	375	-	125	-	-	-	50
Target new annual municipal tree planting rate (caliper only)	190 (30%) 620 (35%) 1415 (40%)	-	-	110	200	165	115	670	275
Target annual private tree planting rate (caliper only)	830 (30%) 1440 (35%) 2100 (40%)	-	-	25	330	285 (34%) 565 (40%)	100	890	825

ⁱⁱⁱ The Town of Comox's Urban Forest Management Strategy and associated canopy cover targets have yet to be formally adopted by Council.

Appendix 2 Peer Land Use Comparison

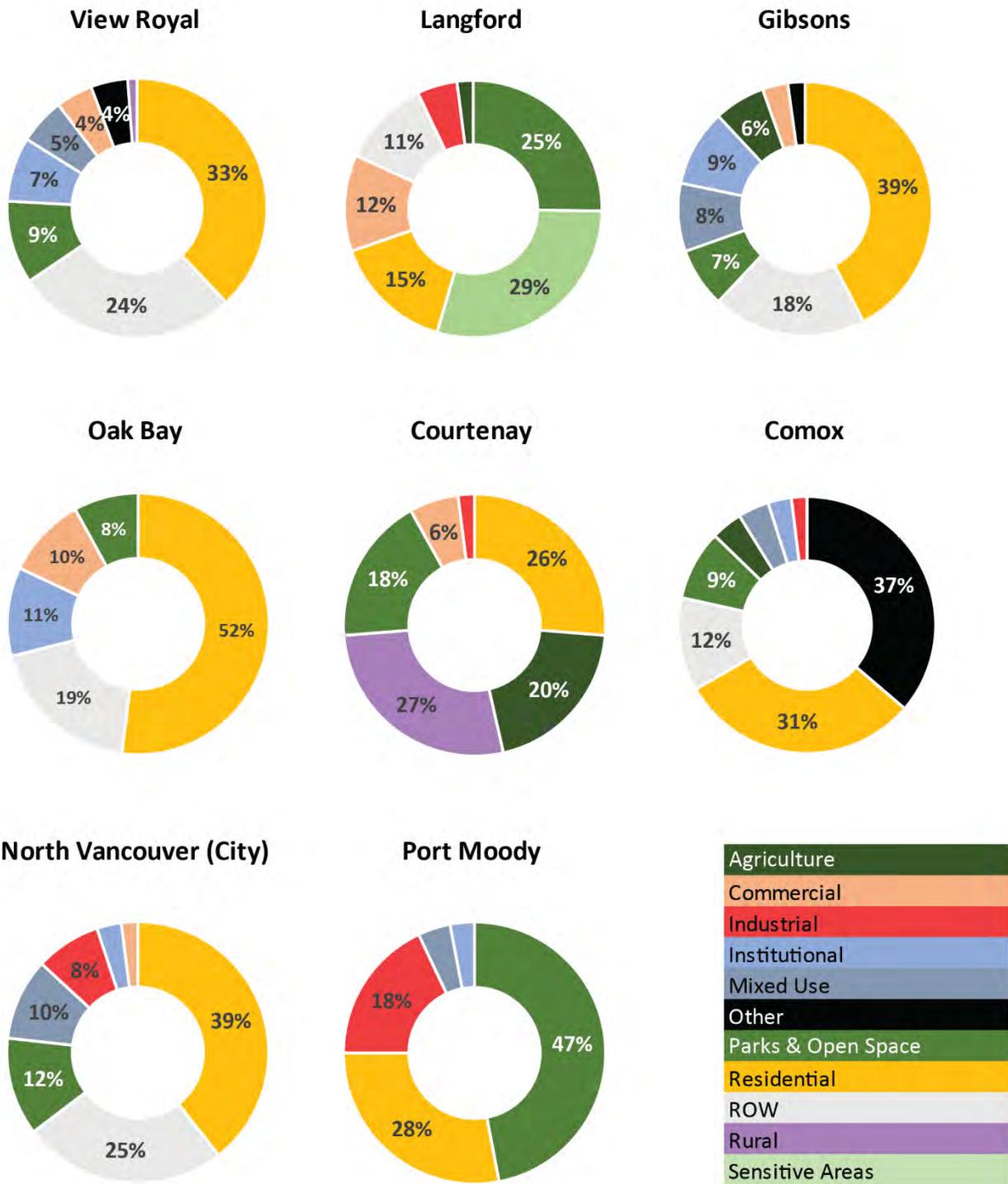


Figure 7. Peer land use summary comparison graphic.

Appendix 3 Annual Operating Costs

Table 3. Annualized operating cost estimates.

Activity Cost		Current		30%	35%	40%	
Population Size		10,000		13,600	21,750	36,900	
LC Activities	\$	Frequency	Annualized Cost (2045)	Frequency (30 – 40%)	Annualized Cost (2045)	Annualized Cost (2045)	Annualized Cost (2045)
Tree planting	\$150.00	1	\$37,500	1	\$27,500	\$45,000	\$72,500
Inventory updates	\$8.00	0	\$0	11.4	\$17,000	\$27,500	\$44,500
Planned pruning	\$150.00	0.5	\$18,750	11.4	\$316,000	\$517,000	\$831,000
Reactive pruning	\$200.00	1.2	\$60,000	0.8	\$29,500	\$48,000	\$77,500
Structural pruning	\$30.00	0	\$0	3	\$16,500	\$27,000	\$43,500
Watering	\$30.00	0.5	\$3,750	3	\$11,000	\$27,000	\$43,500
Soil management	\$30.00	0	\$0	3	\$16,500	\$18,000	\$29,000
Removal	\$300.00	1	\$75,000	1	\$55,500	\$90,500	\$145,500
Stumping	\$80.00	1	\$20,000	1	\$15,000	\$24,000	\$39,000
Total			\$215,000		\$505,000	\$825,000	\$1,325,000