CITY OF RICHMOND PUBLIC TREE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2045

A Plan for Managing Richmond's Public Urban Forest

December 2019

Adopted by Richmond City Council: December 9, 2019

Richmond

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY
BLANK

Acknowledgements

This document was prepared by the City of Richmond Community Services Division Parks Services Department.

The Public Tree Management Strategy was endorsed by Richmond City Council on 9 December 2019.

Malcolm Brodie, Mayor

Chak Au, Councillor

Carol Day, Councillor

Kelly Greene, Councillor

Alexa Loo, Councillor

Bill McNulty, Councillor

Linda McPhail, Councillor

Harold Steves, Councillor

Michael Wolfe, Councillor

Public Tree Management Strategy Project Team

Serena Lusk, General Manager, Community Services

Todd Gross, Director, Parks Services

Jamie Esko, Manager, Parks Planning, Design & Construction

Paul Brar, Manager, Parks Programs

Ted De Crom, Manager, Parks Operations

Conor Sheridan, Supervisor, Urban Forestry, Parks Operations

Emily Toda, Coordinator, Parks Programs

Alex Kurnicki, Planner, Parks Planning, Design & Construction

Consultants – Diamond Head Consulting

Amelia Needoba, Principal and Project Manager

Camille Lefrançois, Urban Planner

Trevor Cox, Principal

Dave Williams, GIS Analyst

Matt Shields, Forester

Kelsey Walker, Landscape and Graphic Designer

The Project Team would like to acknowledge the valuable input we received from the public and internal staff stakeholders. The Strategy benefited greatly from all of your contributions!

2045 VISION...

Richmond's public trees are managed as a high-value, civic asset. Richmond trees are beautiful, resilient and sustainable and are supported by the community for the benefits they provide.

Executive Summary

Changing the way Richmond manages City-owned trees

Richmond's urban forest is key to developing a world class city and maintaining a livable environment for citizens. Trees are the keystone organisms of the urban forest and their management is a priority for the City. Trees are living, life-supporting natural assets that provide Richmond with benefits like shade, stormwater interception, air quality improvements, beautification and habitat. However, climate change, urban densification and technology are presenting new challenges and opportunities for managing public trees. In response, the City has developed the Public Tree Management Strategy to direct urban forest management until 2045. **This Strategy is focused on trees managed by the City only.**

The Strategy contains some key actions that will shift City tree management practices towards a more resilient and sustainable future:

Conserve and Protect

The City will target increasing the proportion of large diameter City trees (>40 cm diameter) from 18% to 30% of the population by 2045. The priority actions are to implement:

- City Tree Policy to guide City tree protection, removal, replacement and maintenance decisions.
- City Tree Management Protocol to update the process and standards that apply when City trees are affected by City capital and development related activities.

Manage and Maintain

The City will maintain tree mortality rates in young trees below 3.5% and maintenance practices will maximize the healthy life-span of mature trees. The priority actions are to:

- Expand the City's young tree watering program to include 3 years after planting, with 4th year trees watered if necessary.
- Shift from demand-based to preventative young tree pruning and establish a tree pruning cycle.
- Develop and implement a 5-year staffing, equipment and budget plan to enable the transition from demand to preventative maintenance.

Enhance and Expand

The City will target an increase in canopy cover **on public land** from 20% to 30% by 2045. The priority actions are to:

- Plant at least 850 shade trees per year (in addition to replacement and restoration tree planting).
- Develop a Public Realm Planting Master Plan to guide species selection, local diversity targets, planting character and planting schedules.

Educate and Engage

The City will enhance the existing stewardship opportunities and education to target engaging 5,000 people by 2025. The priority actions are to:

- Create an interactive City tree map linked to the City's tree inventory that reports individual tree data and ecosystem services.
- Provide stewardship opportunities such as tree or understory planting, invasive species removal and citizen science projects.
- Investigate opportunities to partner with homeowners in single-family neighbourhoods to care for newly planted trees in City boulevards.
- Investigate opportunities to work together with local First Nations and other levels of government to develop appropriate stewardship activities for native forests.

The Strategy's Action Plan provides the roadmap for growing an urban forest that is beautiful, resilient and sustainable and is supported by the community for the benefits it provides.

Table of Contents

1 The Public Tree Management Strategy 1

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Urban Forest Policy Context 3

1.3 Strategic Framework 4

2 Urban Forest History and Values 5

2.1 History of the Urban Forest 5

2.2 The Value of Richmond's Public Urban Forest 8

2.3 What We Heard from the Public 11

3 Status and Trends 13

3.1 Tree Canopy 13

3.2 Native Forests and Natural Areas 17

3.3 Soils and Permeability 19

3.4 City Trees 20

3.5 Public Planting Opportunities 24

4 The Future of the Public Urban Forest 25

4.1 Climate Change and Forest Health 25

4.2 Parks and the Ecological Network 27

4.3 Integrated Rainwater Management and Flood Protection 29

4.4 City Trees Operations 30

4.5 Community Stewardship 36

5 Strategy Objectives and Action Plan 37

5.1 Conserve and Protect 38

5.2 Manage and Maintain 39

5.3 Enhance and Expand 41

5.4 Educate and Engage 42

5.5 Measuring Success 43

5.6 Next Steps 43

5.7 Five-Year Implementation Plan 44

Appendix A: Public Survey 46