

Changes to the Tree Protection & Management Bylaw

Recommendation:

THAT Maple Ridge Tree Protection and Management Bylaw No. 8045-2026 be given first, second and third readings.

Report Purpose and Summary Statement:

To provide a summary of the changes proposed for the Tree Protection & Management Bylaw. With these changes, the existing Bylaw would be repealed and a new Bylaw adopted.

Previous Council Action:

Council endorsed the Urban Forest Management Plan on July 23, 2024. Council adopted the current Tree Protection & Management Bylaw in 2015 and amended it in 2017 and 2022.

Strategic Alignment:

An updated, streamlined Bylaw aligns with the strategies and goals of Liveable Community and Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship.

Climate Impact:

The proposed Tree Protection & Management Bylaw includes stronger protections for existing trees that align with the findings of the Urban Forest Management Plan. Trees provide significant benefits to the City and residents including oxygen generation, air filtration, shade, stormwater management, urban cooling, and carbon sequestration.

Advisory Committee Consultation:

Staff presented an update on proposed Bylaw changes to the Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee on July 9, 2025, and the Liveable Community Advisory Committee on July 24, 2025.

Communications:

A communication plan has been developed for the adoption of the updated Tree Protection and Management Bylaw.

Applicable Legislation/Bylaw/Policy:

Maple Ridge Tree Protection & Management Bylaw No. 7133-2015 establishes the City's current tree protection and removal requirements. This bylaw would be repealed upon adoption of Maple Ridge Tree Protection & Management Bylaw No. 8045-2026

To: Mayor and Council

Changes to the Tree Protection & Management Bylaw

BACKGROUND:

The City has had a tree bylaw since 1968. Through the years the tree bylaw has gone through many substantial changes and revisions as Maple Ridge has grown and our context has changed, demonstrating the City's longstanding commitment to valuing and protecting its urban forest resources. In 2000, Council approved substantial changes to the tree bylaw, establishing a difference between rural and urban tree protection and tree permit requirements. In 2015 Council approved the current tree bylaw which brought further protections for trees, introduced a minimum tree size that the bylaw applied to and introduced requirements for arborist reports and tree management plans among other changes.

In July 2024, Council endorsed the City's first [Urban Forest Management Plan](#) (UFMP) after substantial community engagement and consultation. Included in the 59 action items of this plan, is action item 1.1.1 to *"Review and update the tree protection and management bylaw to ensure adequate planting and protection measures are in place"*, reflecting the majority of participants' prioritization of Goal 1: to Protect and Expand the Urban Forest. This work began after the endorsement of the UFMP with background and best management practices research as well as internal staff engagement.

ANALYSIS:

The overall intent of the changes proposed for the Tree Protection & Management Bylaw are to strengthen the bylaw to enable better protection of healthy and mature existing trees, while also providing flexibility for removal of trees where a valid reason is presented and an increased planting of replacement trees when trees need to be removed. The intent in the bylaw is to differentiate between a residential stream of tree removals and a development stream for tree removals, recognizing the need to respond differently to these and limit direct cost impacts to residents who are faced with the costs to remove a tree.

The bylaw changes proposed align with other municipalities on tree bylaw definitions and best management practices for tree bylaws and urban forestry management as well as the *Metro Vancouver Tree Regulations Toolkit* for municipalities.

Discussion:

Using the findings of the UFMP from two separate phases of public engagement, the changes to the Tree Protection & Management Bylaw were developed. The below figure from the UFMP shows the results of a question in the first phase of engagement that explored public support for various tree protection regulations. In the phase 2 engagement for the UFMP, respondents identified the strategy to "Update bylaws, policies and guidelines to protect and expand the

urban forest” as their top strategy with 82% of respondents selecting this as a high priority in the plan.

Summary graphic from the UFMP showing support for tree regulations for private property.

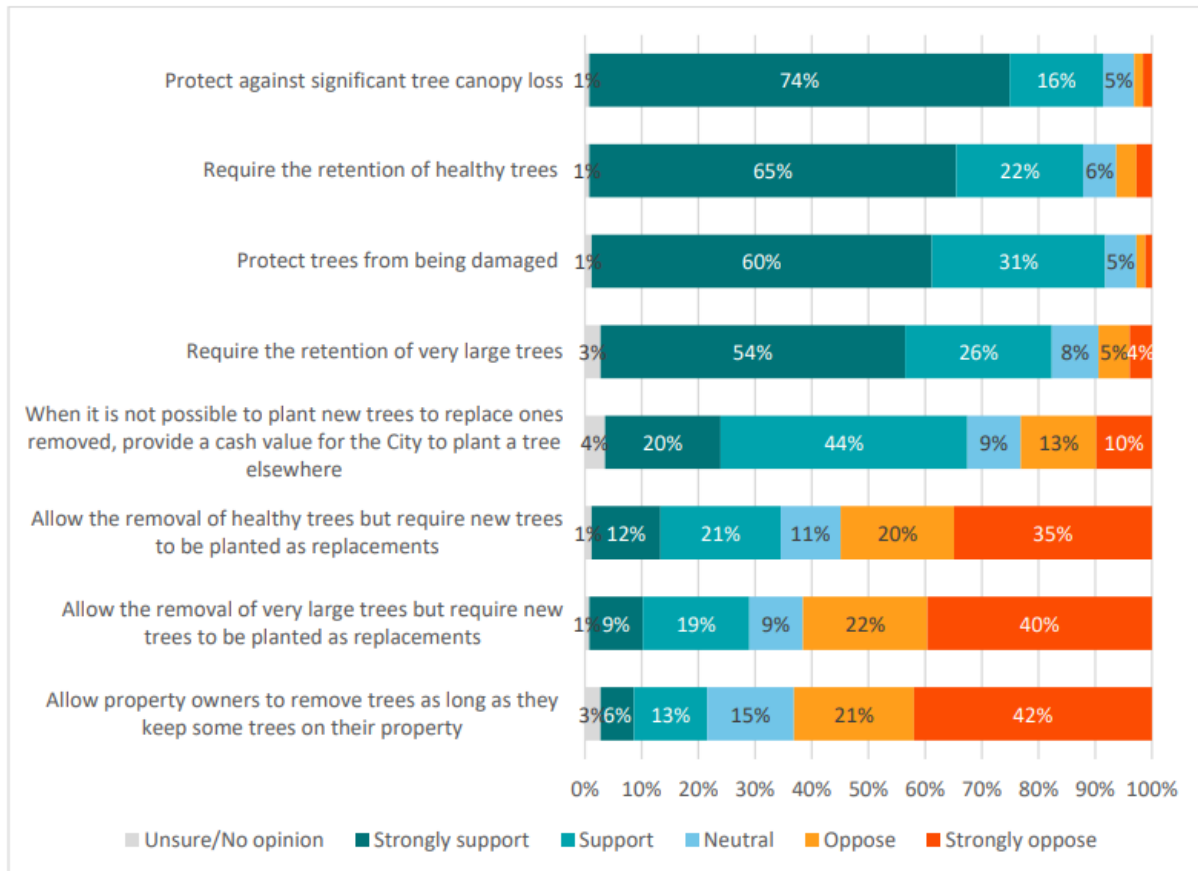


Figure 13. Respondents’ levels of support for eight tree regulations on private property (total respondents = 255)

Summary of Changes:

The following table summarizes key changes for the updated Tree Protection & Management Bylaw:

Bylaw Section/ Topic	Existing Tree Protection & Management Bylaw No. 7133-2015	Proposed Tree Protection & Management Bylaw No. 8045-2026
Definitions	Removal of terms no longer used in the bylaw.	New definitions to align with other Cities; Expanded definition of a “Protected tree”; definition of arborist report, etc.
Schedules	Schedule A- Heritage Tree Protection Schedule B – Tree Management Plan (TMP) Requirements Schedule C – Tree Protection Specifications	Removes Schedules for Heritage Tree Protection, Application and Arborist report schedules as they are accommodated elsewhere. Includes updates to:

	Schedule D – Tree Permit Application Schedule E – Replacement Tree Criteria Schedule F – Arborist Report	Schedule A – Tree Management Plan Requirements Schedule B – Tree Protection Specifications Schedule C – Replacement Tree Criteria
Application	Applies to trees 20cm DBH and larger Urban and Rural lands bylaw applied differently	Applies to all “Protected Trees” (20cm DBH and larger) both urban and rural. Differs between single tree removals (residential) and development related removals.
Exemptions	Exempted Poplars and Alder trees, small scale clearing without a tree permit if 40 trees/ ha being retained. Exemption for planting replacement trees if trees being retained. Exemptions from a tree permit if removing less than 10 trees on a rural lot.	Exempts dead trees, farming uses, imminent tree failures, City operations from tree permit requirements only.
Reasons to issue a tree permit	Only applies to Significant Trees (50cm, DBH/ 70cm DBH) Otherwise, no reason required to remove a healthy tree	Reason required for all tree removals including: Hazard tree Within 1.0m of a dwelling Use allowed in the zoning bylaw Tree causing damage to infrastructure Tree management plan requires removal To site a dwelling, septic, utilities, etc. Farming use – active farm use
Arborist Report Requirements	Only required for more than 5 trees proposed for removal, or development related but not a TMP	Required for all applications except single tree removals – not associated with development. Professional reliance on arborist reporting
Critical Root Zone	DBH x 18	DBH x 6 (industry standard) or equal to the dripline – for determining tree protection barrier sizes
Security Deposits	Only for replacement trees and some retained trees (TMP)	For replacement trees and retained trees. Maximum and minimum amounts per application. Details for release of securities and forfeiture of securities
Replacement trees	Only required if 40 trees/ ha (16% tree canopy) not retained on the lot Credits for retained trees	Varies by land use – aligns with UFMP 40% canopy target

		1:1 ratio for single tree removals, higher for multi-tree removals and large size tree removals. New credits for retained trees
Cash in Lieu	Available if planting replacement trees is not desirable to the applicant	Available if the City determines it's not feasible to plant replacement trees. Clarifies use of City tree reserve for planting and establishing new trees.
Appeal process	Appeal directly to Council	Re-consideration first to the Director. Can still appeal to Council through provisions of the <i>Community Charter</i>
Tree Management Plan (TMP)	Required for developments where 20 or more trees proposed for removal	Required for developments where 10 or more trees proposed for removal and development related tree removals.
Fees	Incentivized multi-tree removals by offering lower fees for every additional tree removed.	Now in fees and charges bylaw Disincentivizes multi-tree removals. First tree removal is subsidized; 2 nd is full cost recovery of tree permit review. New fees for re-inspection and permit changes

Sustainability/Climate Impact:

The UFMP found that 49% of the tree canopy in Maple Ridge is on privately owned lands which represents the largest classification of ownership across the City. The tree bylaw is the most effective tool the City has for the protection and retention of existing trees. The proposed changes to the Tree Protection and Management bylaw align with Council's target of reaching a 40% tree canopy cover by 2050 by offering greater protections for existing healthy and mature trees while requiring additional tree replacements when trees need to be removed.

Existing mature trees provide some of the greatest public benefits and take decades to replace. Updating the tree bylaw to prioritize retention of trees, while increasing replacement requirements where removals are necessary helps prevent tree canopy loss over time. This approach supports both climate mitigation (carbon storage and sequestration) and climate adaptation including heat risk reduction, stormwater management, and overall urban climate resilience.

Strategic Alignment:

Updating the Tree Protection & Management bylaw specifically relates to action item 1.1.1 in the Urban Forest Management Plan as well as Bold Moves in the City's Climate Action Plan, Resilient Future 2050. This work also aligns within the Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship strategic area and a key result within that area. This bylaw update also aligns within the Livable Community strategic area as it relates to building and developing liveable and healthy communities.

Advisory Committee Consultation:

Staff presented a summary of the proposed bylaw changes to the Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee on July 9, 2025. Comments regarding differences between urban and rural applications of the tree bylaw and considerations for not disincentivizing people from planting new trees on rural properties were raised. These comments were considered with the need to strike a balance between large scale tree removal in rural areas and increasing protection of existing tree canopy.

Staff presented a summary of the proposed bylaw changes to Liveable Community Advisory Committee on July 24, 2025. Comments and questions were raised about replacement tree requirements, protecting clusters of trees, shared tree concerns between neighbours and security deposits for retained trees during construction. The questions raised during the meeting were responded to. The comments were considered and reflected with updated sections of the proposed bylaw.

Financial Impact:

Associated fees and the introduction of new fees for this bylaw update are being proposed through the updating of the Maple Ridge Fees & Charges Bylaw No. 7575-2019. Staff will monitor the cost recovery model that tree permit fees generate to offset the staff cost of administering the bylaw.

Cash in lieu of replacement trees and forfeited securities for tree retention or replacement trees are deposited to a City tree reserve as described in the Tree Protection & Management Bylaw. These funds will be used to plant new trees on public or private lands and for the promotion and stewardship of maintaining a healthy tree canopy in the City.

Applicable Legislation and Bylaw

The Community Charter, sections 8, 15, 50, 51 and 52 enable Council to permit and establish conditions and fees for permit issuance in relation to the regulation and management of trees within the City. The City's existing tree bylaw, the Tree Protection & Management Bylaw No. 7133-2015 will be repealed and replaced with the proposed updated Maple Ridge Tree Protection and Management Bylaw No. 8045-2026 if Council adopts it at fourth reading.

CONCLUSION:

The updated Tree Protection and Management bylaw aligns with the goal of providing stronger protections for existing trees, a key factor in setting the framework to achieve the City's goal of a 40% tree canopy by 2050. The updated tree bylaw includes a number of changes that modernize the bylaws terms, provide stronger protection for existing healthy trees, and require additional replacement trees when trees need to be removed.

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Attachments:

- (A) *Tree Protection & Management Bylaw No. 8045-2026*
(Proposed bylaw)
- (B) *Tree Protection & Management Bylaw No. 7133-2015*
(Current bylaw)

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Changes to the Tree Management Bylaw.docx
Attachments:	- Existing Tree Protection and Management Bylaw No.7133-2015 (Consolidated).pdf - Proposed Tree Protection and Management Bylaw 8045 2026.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 13, 2026

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

Valoree Richmond, Director of Facilities, Parks and Properties

Carolyn Mushata, Director of Legislative Services and Corporate Officer

Scott Hartman, Chief Administrative Officer