

Appendix D – Example actions/policies for local government urban forest strategies

Extract from:

Environmental Values Policy Toolkit

A component of the Regional Framework for Nature-based Solutions on BC's South Coast

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March 2025



The Action for Adaptation website supports policy and land use planning for local governments and First Nations in southwest BC.

The project is a collaborative effort by the Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership (CDFCP), UBC Botanical Gardens to produce an online biodiversity atlas and climate adaptation tools that will provide First Nations, local governments and land managers with the resources that they have indicated they need to make informed decisions related to biodiversity in a changing climate.



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This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada

Appendix D – Example actions/policies for local government urban forest strategies

Theme	Strategy statement	Adapted from	Indicators / targets
General / multi-theme	Collaborate and coordinate across departments and agencies on a project-specific basis towards achievement of the canopy targets, goals and objectives.	District of Saanich Urban Forest Strategy (2024-2034) , pg 96.	
	Identify and implement tree planting targets for public land that support a 30% canopy cover target.	City of Surrey Urban Forest Management Strategy , pg 64.	
	For climate and disease resilience, plant a diversity of species, preferably native to our region that are pest resistant and adapted to a range of climate conditions, particularly temperature and moisture extremes.	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050 ,pg. 49. District of West Vancouver’s Urban Forest Management Plan , pg 53.	No more than 5% of any single tree species and no more than 15% of any tree genus. No more than 10% of any one species, no more than 20% of any genus, no more than 30% of any one family.
	Through policy, develop canopy cover targets for each land use type to support an equitable distribution of the urban forest	City of Surrey Urban Forest Management Strategy , pg 63 District of Saanich Urban Forest Strategy (2024-2034) , pg 83.	Canopy cover targets established
	Choose species with a useful life expectancy and budget for young tree mortality.	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050 ,pg. 81	>30 years in 90% of the tree population and <3.5% young tree mortality.
	Prioritize protection of significant trees and forest stands on both public and private lands.	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050 ,pg. 86	
	On public lands, formalize urban forest asset management and protection in corporate policies and systems. Ensure municipality-wide policies and practices are integrated to protect public and priority private trees, and the policies are consistently enforced.	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050 , pg 86.	All urban forest assets are inventoried and systems in place for their conservation and management.

Plant ### (e.g., 300) trees per year on public land (in addition to replacement and restoration plantings) and work with residents to plant approximately 850 trees per year on private land.	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050 , pg 89.	### Trees planted per year.
Consider planting western North American species that do well in regions with similar climate conditions to those projected for our region in 30 - 50 years (e.g., see Climate Projections for the Capital Regional District ¹ or General Climate Projections for Metro Vancouver ²).	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050 , pp 81 & 89. District of Saanich Urban Forest Strategy (2024-2034) , pg 95 City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy , pg 45	90% of species in the inventory are suitable for future climate.
In natural areas, maintain natural forest extent and enhance natural forest habitat quality to increase native biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.	District of Saanich Urban Forest Strategy (2024-2034) , pg 95	Natural forest cover of all types ≥ 3,700 ha. 40-year planting target of >50,000 new (non-replacement) trees, seedlings, and understory shrubs by 2064 in natural areas on public property.
Set neighbourhood tree canopy goals in consultation with the community to identify expectations and specificity regarding protection, character and function of the urban forest.	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050	
Establish forums for interdepartmental, interjurisdictional and interagency communication to continuously improve tree management protocols and clarify tree management expectations across public and private lands.	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050 , pg 85	
Develop policy for retaining soil and growing space for trees on private property in coordination with other	City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy , pg 44	

¹ Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium, 2024, Climate Projections for the Capital Region, report prepared for the CRD, <https://www.pacificclimate.org/sites/default/files/publications/ClimateProjectionsCapitalRegion2024.pdf>, accessed March 2025.

² Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium, no date, Climate Projections for Metro Vancouver, <https://metrovancouver.org/services/air-quality-climate-action/Documents/climate-projections-for-metro-vancouver-2016.pdf#page=13&zoom=100,0,0>, accessed March 2025.

Last updated 28 May 2025

	Planning policy updates and sustainable site design goals		
	Control invasive species that degrade forest ecosystems.	City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy , pg 45	
First Nations	Collaborate with Indigenous communities to reflect their values and caring for lands and waters in [municipality's] urban forestry program	District of Saanich Urban Forest Strategy (2024-2034) , pg 88.	
	Invite engagement with Indigenous knowledge keepers to inform the approach to urban forestry initiatives and natural areas management.	District of Saanich Urban Forest Strategy (2024-2034) , pg 91. District of West Vancouver's Urban Forest Management Plan , pg 55. City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy , pg 47	
	Allocate funding to support Indigenous roles and partnerships and explore opportunities to expand Indigenous involvement in urban forestry initiatives.	District of Saanich Urban Forest Strategy (2024-2034) , pg 88.	
Land cover & land use	Regularly update urban forest data and technology and revise key planning and policy documents to respond to changes in land use.	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050 , pg 83	
	Monitor canopy cover every two years using satellite imagery, supplementing this with LiDAR data at least every five years. Assess other accurate evaluation methods as technology advances.	District of West Vancouver's Urban Forest Management Plan , pg 54.	
	Require a minimum density of trees per hectare post-development to be achieved with retained healthy trees, new trees or replacement trees.		
	Prioritize tree retention and planting in public areas with low canopy and/or low tree equity scores.	District of Saanich Urban Forest Strategy (2024-2034) , pg 84	
	Develop forest canopy targets by land use type or neighbourhood, in coordination with other planning policy	District of Saanich Urban Forest Strategy (2024-2034) , pg 92.	

	updates and sustainable site design goals.		
	Increase canopy cover in conjunction with green infrastructure initiatives to improve rainfall interception and infiltration.	City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy , pg 45.	
Environmentally sensitive areas	Ensure tree replacement within ESAs require that replacement ratios meet or exceed Provincial Planting Criteria	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050 , pg 85	
	Update the Tree Bylaw and Environmental Development Permit Areas to require planting only native and /or climate-suitable species as replacement trees in Environmentally Sensitive Areas.	District of West Vancouver’s Urban Forest Management Plan , pg 55.	
	Enhance forest ecosystem components in parks such as understorey vegetation to support birds and other biodiversity.	City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy , pg 45	
	Where appropriate, retain dead or dying trees and downed wood to sustain forest ecosystems and biodiversity.	City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy , pg 45	
Hydroriparian (including marine)	Maintain hydrological pathways to support forest patches through management initiatives or bylaw changes that affect rainwater infrastructure.	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050 , pg 86.	
Ecosystem connectivity	Use land acquisition or regulation to enhance protection of significant tree stands and corridors.	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050 , pg 86.	
	Develop and implement a 5-year plan for natural forest restoration on public lands that considers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site prioritization within or adjacent to a Biodiversity Habitat Network. • Representation of CDF forest types and ecosystems, 	District of Saanich Urban Forest Strategy (2024-2034) , pg 86	
Species at risk	Plant trees to enhance bird and pollinator populations, including expanded use of native trees in park and street tree planting.	City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy , pg 45	
	Meet or exceed legal requirements to protect nesting birds and other wildlife during urban forest management activities.	City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy , pg 45	

Nature-based solutions to climate change	Aim for density in canopy cover and trees per hectare to account for mortality and improved heat mitigation over time.	City of Courtenay Urban Forest Strategy 2019 – 2050	35-40% canopy cover and 100-120 trees per hectare per block.
	Increase canopy cover in conjunction with green infrastructure initiatives to improve rainfall interception and infiltration.	City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy , pg 45	
	Increase tree planting to create cool streets and parks where vulnerable populations are at risk from urban heat.	City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy , pg 45	