

Coquitlam is writing its first urban forest plan. It needs help

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Erin Gorby and Jeff Case are with the City of Coquitlam's urban forestry services program. | JANIS CLEUGH/THE TRI-CITY NEWS

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Trees, forest, vegetation and soils.

That's how the City of Coquitlam defines an urban forest as it gets ready to build a roadmap to create its first Urban Forest Management Strategy.

Diamond Head Consulting, regional experts in developing high-level environmental plans for municipalities, is leading Coquitlam's push to protect, preserve, restore and expand its urban tree cover by 2050 — a project budgeted at \$115,000 that's part of the city's 2023 Business Plan.

And, to help shape the new document, the municipality is asking for public input.

Until Friday, May 31, residents and groups are invited to fill out an [online survey](#) that asks respondents about the benefits of having an urban forest and what threats it faces like new roads, climate change and development.

[The poll](#) also asks about where more trees should be planted and how the city can retain trees on private land while still meeting housing targets.

As well, there's a map to pinpoint favourite forests and places to improve.

The city will also host pop-ups at local events to get the word out.

"The Urban Forest Management Strategy is going to be the best if it can reflect the community's priorities for the forest," Erin Gorby, Coquitlam's urban forestry and park services manager, told the *Tri-City News*, noting that pop-ups will appear during Youth Week and senior community hubs.

"We really want a made-in-Coquitlam strategy that speaks to our needs."

The strategy comes on the heels of Port Moody's and at the same time Burnaby is developing its urban forest management plan.

It's also part of Coquitlam's Environmental Sustainability Plan and aligns with the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan and the upcoming Climate Action Plan.

Following the public engagement this spring, the Diamond Head team will present their report in the fall for possible council adoption early next year.

Metro Vancouver last measured Coquitlam's tree canopy at 40 per cent, in 2014; that number has since dropped.

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