



Tree Protection Bylaw amendments, Questions and Answers

What is the purpose of the Tree Protection Bylaw (Bylaw)?

The Tree Protection Bylaw supports the goals of Saanich's Urban Forest Strategy by regulating tree cutting, removal or tree damaging activities, and sets requirements for replacing protected trees.

Why did Saanich change the Bylaw?

In March 2019, Saanich Council directed staff to identify how to strengthen tree protection in the District of Saanich. Recommendations were approved by Council on September 9, 2019, with final bylaw reading and adoption on January 6, 2020.

What changes did Saanich make to the Bylaw?

On January 6, 2020, Council adopted several amendments to strengthen the Tree Protection Bylaw:

- We increased the number of required replacement trees when existing protected trees are removed by one (from 1:1 to 2:1 and from 2:1 to 3:1).
- We introduced deposits for non-development related tree removals (\$300).
- We increased the deposit for development related replacement trees from \$300 to \$700.
- We made it easier to plant native trees as replacement trees by reducing the replacement tree size requirements (see Schedule D of the Bylaw).
- We committed to holding Saanich to the highest standard for replacing trees with a 3:1 replacement ratio for municipal projects.

When do these changes to the Bylaw come into effect?

Most changes will come into effect 30 days after final reading (January 6), or on February 5, 2020.

However, for certain kinds of development applications that have paid fees, the transition period may be longer (12 months for an application for a subdivision or bare land strata subdivision, and 24 months for building permits related to rezoning or development permit approval).

Has Saanich changed any of the "protected trees"?

The only change to the definitions of protected trees was to include all trees growing on Saanich owned property (parks, boulevards, etc.). Some examples of protected trees include Garry Oaks that measure 4 cm or more at Diameter Breast Height (DBH) or any tree measured at 60 cm DBH or more in Saanich. Please refer to the Bylaw for the full details about protected trees.



Why does it cost up to \$700 for a deposit for a replacement tree now?

Saanich changed the deposit amount for development related removals from \$300 to \$700 to better reflect the true cost of planting a tree. The deposit is returned in full once a replacement tree, that meets the requirements of the Bylaw, is planted and shown to be in good health one year after planting. If a property owner cannot, or chooses not to plant a replacement tree, the District can take cash in lieu to plant trees elsewhere in the municipality.

Why does Saanich now require replacement trees for non-development related tree removals?

The Urban Forest Strategy, approved by Council in 2010, states a "no net loss" goal which aims to replace at least one tree for each tree removed. Prior to these amendments, residents were offered replacement trees free of charge; however, the outcome only had limited results. While a replacement tree has always been required, Saanich had very little ability to administer the requirement. Now by requiring a deposit for replacement trees for some non-development related removals, Saanich hopes to provide an incentive for owners to replant trees on the property from which they were removed. For these new deposits the amount is introduced at \$300 and will be fully returned once a tree that meets the requirements has been planted and remains in good health for at least one year.

Does the deposit funding cover maintenance of the tree after it is planted?

The deposit funds do not cover the cost to maintain the tree on private property. The deposit will be returned in full once the tree has met the replacement requirements and is shown to be in good health at least one year after being planted.

Why does it cost \$1,350 for a replacement tree on public property?

The replacement cost of \$1,350 for trees on public property reflects the average cost of planning (\$575) plus the cost of maintaining a tree on public property for 2-5 years (\$775).

Why has Saanich reduced the replacement tree size requirements for native trees?

Saanich has reduced the replacement size requirements for native trees to encourage people to replant native tree species, where appropriate. Native trees are not produced at the same size and quantity as most horticultural varieties, which makes it difficult for people to find suitable native replacement trees. This amendment still requires as a large as available, and good quality native tree, but makes it easier for residents to find a native tree so they can meet the requirements of the Bylaw and get their deposit back.

Where will any cash in lieu (of replanting trees) go?

Saanich is in the process of establishing an Urban Forest Reserve Fund. Cash in lieu, relinquished deposits, donations and monies collected as a result of Tree Protection Bylaw infractions will go into the Urban Forest Reserve Fund. Money can only be spent from the fund on initiatives that support growing and enhancing the Urban Forest in Saanich.