

Tree Protection Bylaw

Final Engagement Report
October 20, 2022



Engagement Summary

The City of Saskatoon (City) is developing a [Tree Protection Bylaw](#) to provide clarity on the protection, growth and preservation of public trees as well as improving the City's ability to protect them. As Saskatoon grows, greater environmental and developmental pressures are placed on our urban forest. Currently, the [existing City policies and processes](#) have not been sufficient in preventing damage to and the loss of City trees, primarily due to the lack of an effective form of recourse or enforcement. To protect their urban forests, many cities across Canada have enacted bylaws to regulate the protection of public trees. These measures and bylaws have helped to ensure public trees within urban environments are protected for the enjoyment of future generations.

From February to March 2022, City Administration engaged the community in the development of a Tree Protection Bylaw. Based on what we heard from stakeholders, in addition to best practise research and internal considerations, City Administration will seek approval to develop the bylaw through a report which will be presented to City Council in 2022.

The City engaged the community through two phases:

Phase 1: Options Identification

- Identify options that may work in Saskatoon
- Identify program elements to enhance opportunities and mitigate barriers


Phase 2: Close the Loop

- Further identify new program elements that enhance opportunities and mitigate barriers
- Share relevant components of the report to close the loop

This engagement summary includes the activities and results that informed the engagement goals for the project. A total of 766 participants took part in the engagement activities, including various meetings, workshops and surveys. Engagement goals, intended audiences, activities, dates, participation rates and detailed engagement results are provided in the Final Engagement Report that follows this summary. Engagement results from all activities that informed each goal are summarized below.

Importance of Protecting Public Trees

Respondents were asked how important it is to protect trees in public spaces and Saskatoon's urban forest, to which they provided an average response of five out of a total of five, indicating protecting trees is of great importance to the community. This high level of support is rare when compared to other similar City initiatives. When asked to select their top five reasons for why protecting trees is important from the choices provided, respondents provided the following ranking:

- 
1. Moderating temperatures and providing shade (71%)
 2. Improving air quality (68%)
 3. Providing habitat for wildlife (66%)
 4. Adding character to our surroundings (62%)
 5. Improving our quality of life and reducing stress (61%)

When asked which types of trees should be given a greater level of protection from the provided suggestions, respondents provided the following ranking:



1. The tree is located within an environmentally sensitive area, habitat restoration area or protected area (64%)
2. The tree is rare (i.e., age, size, species, distinctive features, etc.) or its location is of special significance (63%)
3. The tree species is classified as endangered, threatened or at-risk or the tree is an active habitat site for a species classified as endangered, threatened or at-risk (61%)
4. The tree is healthy and in good condition (60%)
5. The tree is located in an under-treed area or neighbourhood with less than 15% canopy cover (58%)
6. All options listed (56%)

Numerous other suggestions were provided by respondents, including female trees to reduce asthma and allergic reactions to pollen, native trees, and trees in low-income neighbourhoods to counteract inequitable tree cover within the city.

Current City Approaches

When asked whether they were aware of the current tree protection policy ([Council Policy C09-011 Trees on City Property](#)), 61% of respondents were not aware of this policy until now while 39% were aware. Additionally, most respondents (60%) were unaware that the City requires reimbursement to the Parks Department for cutting down and/or damaging trees on City property.

When asked whether the community supports the City's current approach in not removing public trees for reasons surrounding aesthetics or nuisance, most respondents supported this approach (71%). Within the comments, many respondents called on the City to not punish trees for growing and functioning as they are intended to. Many respondents encouraged the City to prioritize tree protection rather than allowing trees to be removed based on a few complaints. However, there were conflicting views on natural fall from trees as most respondents commented that excessive fruit and leaf fall should not be a consideration for the removal of a tree, while some suggested it should be.

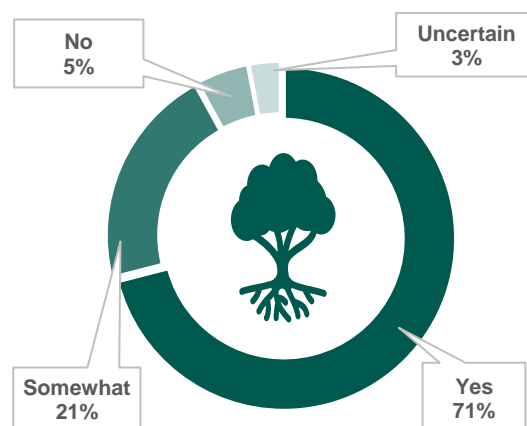


Figure 1: Support for the City's current approach in not removing public trees for complaints surrounding aesthetics or nuisance trees.

Community Consultation

Subject Matter Experts strongly support community consultation, especially in situations where an individual homeowner or developer calls for a tree to be removed; however, the development community strongly did not support community consultation, especially if it was required for every tree. Many respondents within the community (42%) believed consultation should occur every time a City tree is considered for removal. However, some respondents expressed their concern for the increased costs as well as the time associated with community consultation. Respondents suggested that if community consultation is not required, at minimum the City should notify the neighbours/Community Association of the tree removal and locations of future replacement trees.

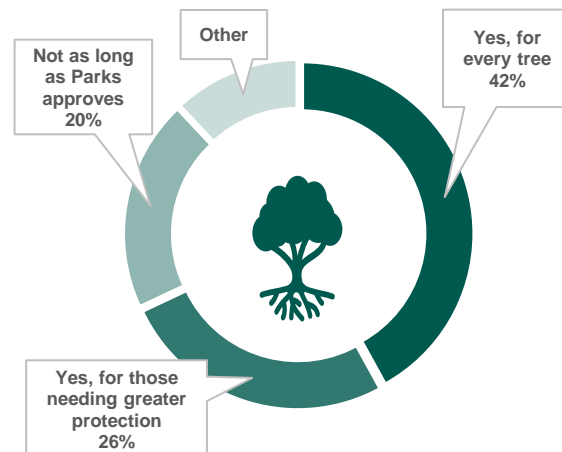


Figure 2: Support for the consulting neighbouring property owners for the removal of a City tree

When the Tree Protection Bylaw Should be Applied


When asked whether the City should change its scope to take responsibility and ownership of any tree that has any part of its trunk growing on public property, most respondents believed the City should (57%), followed by those who were uncertain (29%). Comments provided by respondents for consideration were summarized into the following themes:

Better maintenance and protection: some respondents supported the City taking responsibility of these trees since it would result in greater protection and better maintenance; some respondents felt that most homeowners may not possess the knowledge or equipment to properly maintain these trees

Engagement with owner needed: it was suggested that the City needs to engage with, consult or inform the homeowner if more aggressive maintenance measures or the removal of a tree is required to ensure relationships with residents are maintained

Greater costs: if the number of trees the City maintains increases then so to will the associated costs to the taxpayers, which respondents did and did not support; many respondents believe that the City does not currently have adequate resources to take on these additional responsibilities

When asked which of the following areas the Tree Protection Bylaw should apply to, respondents provided the following ranking:

- 
1. In natural areas and natural riverfront areas (87%)
 2. On City-owned property that is planned for new neighbourhood development (85%)
 3. On City-owned infill property or vacant lots that are zoned for redevelopment (78%)
 4. In afforestation areas (71%)
 5. On buffers/expressway corridors (66%)

Development and Utility Considerations

Subject Matter Experts expressed their concern over the potential for development to take precedence over tree protection. It was suggested that the future bylaw needs to be tied into the building permit process to ensure, at the onset of a project, homeowners or developers are aware of the importance of protecting trees and the consequences in not doing so.

Many home builders stressed the importance of protecting trees and Saskatoon's urban forest to the development community; however, some participants felt that the current system pits developers against Parks staff through a lack of communication, confusion surrounding tree protection requirements, and the need for timely responses. Participants felt that the City needs to create a better balance between encouraging infill development and creating unneeded administrative hurdles (i.e., red tape) for developers. Participants called on the City to collaborate with developers to meet common goals, such as growing infill development in the community, rather than implementing policies that hinder development in Saskatoon. Suggestions by home builders included:

Allow for consultation: participants called for a form of consultation or negotiation process with Parks to discuss situations where tree removal is needed

Education and awareness: developers and utility companies need to be aware of why certain trees are being protected and what requirements need to be met; participants strongly encouraged the City to provide more information (i.e., GIS maps or tree inventory maps) at the time of the permitting process so that all contractors are aware of the trees within the area and their requirements

Streamlined process: participants called for a streamlined process that does not cause separate processes to be stacked on each other and add further confusion to an already confusing process

Education and Awareness

Throughout the engagement process, many respondents commented on the importance of educating the community on the Tree Protection Bylaw, which trees apply, and the importance of Saskatoon's urban forest. Participants suggested that the City take a proactive rather than a reactive approach to generate long-term adherence to the bylaw. Further education and awareness campaigns will limit violations caused by individuals being unaware of the bylaw and the associated consequences.

Support and Final Comments

Respondents were asked how supportive they are of a Tree Protection Bylaw for trees on public property, to which they provided an average response of five out of a total of five, indicating strong support. Overall, 92% of participants indicating they supported the development of the bylaw.

When asked to identify any final concerns they have about a Tree Protection Bylaw for trees on public property, respondents provided the following comments:

Communication: the community needs to be aware of why trees are being removed in advance of their removal; specific circumstances for tree removals that are not as clear should be open for public input; Parks should provide easy ways for residents to contact them to have their questions answered

Development: many respondents stressed that tree protection should be of equal, if not more, value as development within Saskatoon; all development should be required to protect public trees/green infrastructure that is existing and incorporate new public trees/green infrastructure into their designs

Enforcement: there needs to be continual, long-term monitoring of the full health of a tree following the completion of a project; the bylaw needs to be enforceable with substantial financial penalties for non-compliance; it was suggested that those who can pay the financial penalties will continue to do things their way, therefore enforcement should include accountability measures alongside

financial penalties; healthy trees have been removed in the past without proper consultation and due process

Flexibility: participants identified the importance for the bylaw to be flexible enough to include and adapt to the variety of differing circumstances, public spaces and special circumstances that Parks will encounter

Simple: respondents stressed that the bylaw needs to be simple to understand and to communicate to the community; the definition of what is a protected tree needs to be clear

Consideration of Results:

Results from all engagement activities, alongside internal considerations and best practice research, will be considered to inform the development of the Tree Protection Bylaw. Results will also be considered in future implementation. Specific examples of how the results shaped the report and recommended options include:

Education and Awareness

We heard that there is confusion for what is a public tree and what are the requirements under the Tree Protection Bylaw. An education and awareness campaign will be implemented following the development and approval of the bylaw by City Council to ensure the community is aware of and understands the new bylaw.

Implementation

Participants provided numerous suggestions on how the bylaw could be implemented to improve awareness, accessibility, and uptake in the community. This feedback will be used in the future development and implementation of the bylaw if approved by City Council.

Lead By Example

We heard that the City should adhere to the same requirements expected of property owners; some residents suggested it can appear that the City does not follow their own standards on City development projects. Additional education and awareness opportunities will be provided to applicable City staff to ensure adherence to the bylaw.

Support for the Bylaw

Overall, the community strongly supported the creation of a Tree Protection Bylaw to protect public trees and Saskatoon's urban forest. The results of public engagement and final report will be presented to City Council in 2022.

Contents

Engagement Summary	2
Contents	7
List of Tables	8
List of Figures	8
1 Background.....	9
1.1 Strategic Goals	9
1.2 City Project Team	10
1.3 Spokesperson(s).....	10
1.4 Summary of Engagement Strategy	10
1.5 Participants.....	11
1.5.1 City Administration.....	11
1.5.2 Impacted Groups	12
1.5.3 Subject Matter Experts.....	12
2 Engagement Activities.....	13
2.1 Meetings	13
2.1.1 Intended Audience.....	13
2.1.2 Marketing Techniques.....	13
2.1.3 Analysis	13
2.1.4 What We Heard	13
2.2 Community Survey.....	15
2.2.1 Intended Audience.....	15
2.2.2 Marketing Techniques.....	15
2.2.3 Analysis	16
2.2.4 What We Heard	16
2.3 Home Builders Workshop	24
2.3.1 Audience.....	24
2.3.2 Marketing Techniques.....	24
2.3.3 Analysis	24
2.3.4 What We Heard	24
2.4 Utilities Workshop	26
2.4.1 Audience.....	26
2.4.2 Marketing Techniques.....	26

2.4.3	Analysis	27
2.4.4	What We Heard	27
3	Evaluation of Engagement	29
3.1	Survey Evaluation	29
3.2	Informal Feedback	30
3.3	Data Limitations	30
3.4	Opportunities for Improvement.....	30
4	Next Steps	31

List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of Engagement Strategy.....	10
Table 2: Summary of Engagement Activities	11

List of Figures

Figure 1: Support for the City Not Removing Public Trees Based on Complaints.....	3 & 18
Figure 2: Support for Consulting Neighbouring Property Owners	4 & 19
Figure 3: Evaluation of Public Survey.....	29

1 Background

Saskatoon's urban forest significantly contributes to our community's quality of life by adding beauty and character to our city, lowering the air temperature in the summer by providing shade, reducing air pollution, sequestering greenhouse gases, creating habitat for birds and other animals, and increasing property values. The City of Saskatoon (City) owns and maintains around 107,000 trees located on boulevards, center medians and in parks. As Saskatoon grows through infill development and roadway construction, greater environmental and developmental pressures are placed on our urban forest.

In March 2021, the City's [Urban Forest Management Plan](#) was passed in principle by City Council with the purpose of improving the quality of life through trees by providing a structured approach to protecting and enhancing the environmental, social and economical value provided by our urban forest and ensure its health for the benefit of the community. Currently, the [existing City policies and processes](#) have not been sufficient in preventing damage to and the loss of City trees, primarily due to the lack of an effective form of recourse or enforcement. To protect their urban forests, many cities across Canada have enacted bylaws to regulate the protection of public trees. These measures and bylaws help protect public trees within urban environments for the enjoyment of future generations. Therefore, the City is developing a Tree Protection Bylaw to provide clarity on the protection, growth and preservation of public trees as well as improving the City's ability to protect them.

From February to March 2022, City Administration engaged the community in the development of the Tree Protection Bylaw. Based on what we heard from stakeholders, in addition to best practise research and internal considerations, City Administration will seek approval to develop the bylaw through a report which will be presented to City Council in 2022.

1.1 Strategic Goals

The Green Infrastructure Strategy supports the City's [Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#) by creating a green network that is integrated, managed and enhanced to protect, land, air and water resources. At its meeting on January 31, 2022, City Council approved the City of Saskatoon 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. An outcome in the Strategic Plan is, "The Green Network is integrated, managed, and enhanced to protect, land, air, and water resources". Key actions include:

- Implement actions in the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Implementation Plan within proposed timeframes.
- Develop proactive policies, strategies, and practices to ensure the environment is protected from damage and, where possible, ecosystems are enhanced.

A healthy protected urban forest is one of several important pathways to an integrated green network. Action 3.4 of Green Pathways describes the implementation of the UFMP.

Also, the Urban Forest Management Plan is in alignment with the objectives and policies of the Official Community Plan, 2020 (Bylaw No. 9700) outlined in 2.7 Urban Forestry.

- (a) To protect the urban forest through sustainable practices, including new planting and the protection and maintenance of existing trees throughout the city.

1.2 City Project Team

- Darren Crilly, Project Sponsor, Parks
- Konrad Andre, Project Supervisor, Parks
- Shannon Dyck, Project Manager, Sustainability
- Jeff Boone, Project Manager, Parks
- Cate Francis, Project Member, Parks
- Jennifer Pesenti, Marketing & Communications Manager, Communications & Public Engagement
- Kenton Lysak, Public Engagement Consultant, Communications & Public Engagement

1.3 Spokesperson(s)

- Darren Crilly, Project Sponsor, Parks
- Konrad Andre, Project Supervisor, Parks

1.4 Summary of Engagement Strategy

Participants were provided the opportunity to inform the following engagement goals:

Phase 1: Options Identification

- Identify options that may work in Saskatoon
- Identify opportunities and barriers for the bylaw

Phase 2: Close the Loop

- Further identify new program elements that enhance opportunities and mitigate barriers
- Share relevant components of the bylaw to close the loop

A summary of participants, level of influence, engagement objectives, engagement goals and engagement activities completed are provided below.

Table 1: Summary of Engagement Strategy

Phase	Participants	Level of Influence	Engagement Objective	Engagement Goal	Engagement Activities
1	Impacted Groups Subject Matter Experts	Involve	Identify options, opportunities and barriers	Options Identification	Correspondence Meetings Survey
2	Impacted Groups	Collaborate	Share relevant components to enhance opportunities and mitigate barriers	Close the Loop	Correspondence Workshops

* Correspondence refers to emails, phone calls, and virtual meetings with participants

A summary of engagement activities selected, activity and event dates, intended audiences, and number of participants engaged for each engagement goal is provided in the table below.

Table 2: Summary of Engagement Activities

Phase	Participants	Activity	Timeframe	Participants
1	Subject Matter Experts	Meetings	February to March 2022	8
	All	Community Survey	February to March 2022	739
	Subtotal			747
2	Impacted Groups - Home Builders	Workshop	March, 2022	8
	Impacted Groups - Utility Companies	Workshop	March, 2022	11
	Subtotal			19
Total Participation February 2022 to March 2022				766

Engagement activities, participants, marketing techniques, analysis methods and results are described in this report, followed by a summary of evaluation feedback and data limitations.

1.5 Participants

The participants outlined below were identified due to their knowledge, interest, or their potential to be impacted by the bylaw. Not all of those listed below may have participated; however, all of those listed were invited to participate through at least one of the engagement activities.

1.5.1 City Administration

Various City departments and staff with associated knowledge or correlated projects involving tree protection, including:

- City Solicitors
- Community Standards
 - Bylaw Compliance
- Communications and Marketing
- Construction and Design
- Corporate Risk
- Parks
 - Parks Development Standards Project
 - Urban Forestry
- Planning and Development
 - Building Standards
 - Development Review
 - Infill Development
 - Urban Design
- Saskatoon Land
- Saskatoon Light and Power
- Saskatoon Police
- Saskatoon Water
- Sustainability
 - Environmental Protection
 - Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Transportation

1.5.2 Impacted Groups

Those who may be disproportionately impacted by the implementation of a Tree Protection Bylaw, including:

- Arborists, surveyors, and registered professional foresters
 - International Society of Arboriculture Prairie Chapter
- Business associations
 - Business Improvement Districts
 - Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce
 - North Saskatoon Business Association
- Community Associations
- Developers and home builders
 - Saskatoon and Region Home Builders Association
 - Saskatoon Construction Association
- Residents
- Saskatchewan Environmental Society
- Saskatoon Heritage Society
- Saskatoon Nature Society
- Utility & Telecom providers
 - SaskEnergy
 - SaskPower
 - Sasktel
 - Shaw

1.5.3 Subject Matter Experts

Those with experience or knowledge related to urban forests and tree protection within Saskatoon, including:

- Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas Inc.
- Meewasin
- SOS Trees Coalition

Engagement with all participants aimed to be inclusive in terms of neighbourhood, age, gender, marital status, family size, culture, citizenship, income, etc.

2 Engagement Activities

Participants provided their feedback through individual meetings, a community survey, various workshops or by contacting the project team directly. All engagement activities are described in further detail below.

2.1 Meetings

From February to March 2022, various meetings were held with identified participants. The meeting format consisted of a short presentation to introduce the project followed by a series of discussions on various aspects of the project.

2.1.1 Intended Audience

Participants included specific Subject Matter Experts, including the Meewasin Valley Authority and SOS Trees Coalition.

2.1.2 Marketing Techniques

Participants were contacted individually by the project lead and engagement consultant to organize meetings.

2.1.3 Analysis

Meeting notes were analyzed by the engagement consultant using mixed methods. Qualitative methods included a thematic analysis and open coding of responses to identify key concepts.

2.1.4 What We Heard

Discussions and comments were summarized into the following themes:

Protection

When asked whether specific trees should be given greater levels of protection, participants suggested those tree species in decline (ex. plains cottonwood, green ash, etc.), heritage trees, and the American elms on Spadina Crescent are in need. One participant suggested providing greater protection to trees of greater value; however, it was recognized that there are many different approaches to tree valuation. Another participant suggested the City should take an ecosystem approach in determining the value of a tree by incorporating various ecosystem services the tree provides, such as whether the tree provides habitat, ability to sequester carbon, or assistance with stormwater management.

Participants suggested that the City should better consider the impacts of wildlife on trees, such as the impacts of beavers on trees along the river valley. Although dead and dying trees are often removed in public sites, they can often provide valuable habitat for many species that inhabit the river valley and in special circumstances may warrant protection.

Build in Flexibility

Participants identified the importance for the bylaw to be flexible enough to include and adapt to the variety of differing circumstances, public spaces and special circumstances that Parks will encounter. The process needs to be clearly defined so that it can be easily referenced and understood, while also being flexible enough to allow for the City to take site-specific circumstances into consideration. For an example, allowing for resource management practises, such as controlled burning or grazing, that could be viewed as further limiting trees. The bylaw should also not hinder the removal of nuisance and invasive tree species, especially within naturalized areas or green

spaces. A Subject Matter Expert suggested that a clause in the bylaw could allow the City to apply best arboricultural practises to effectively manage Saskatoon's urban forest and balance competing civic priorities.

Enforcement

Enforcement of the bylaw was a concern for many participants, since they felt that many healthy trees have been removed in the past without proper consultation and due process. Participants advised the City to enforce the bylaw through significant fines; however, it was noted that there have been instances where developers have proceeded with removing a tree since the costs in delaying the project further were greater than the fines for removing the tree.

Another challenge identified is the need for continual, long-term monitoring of the full health of a tree following the completion of a project. Often a tree appraisal is prompted when a tree is removed, damaged or dies; however, the long-term consequences of root damage and branch removal can greatly impact the overall health of the tree via "death by a thousand cuts." The impacts to the root zone are often overlooked, especially when multiple projects are working near the same tree over multiple years. Therefore, forms of ground protection and ways to mediate the impacts to the root zone (i.e., directional boring) can be considered for the bylaw so they can be properly enforced.

Development Considerations

Participants expressed concern over the potential for development to take precedence over tree protection. It was suggested that the future bylaw needs to be tied into the building permit process to ensure, at the onset of a project, homeowners or developers are aware of the importance of protecting trees and the consequences in not doing so. Special conditions could be written into the permit to allow for specific circumstances where tree removal is warranted.

To monitor and enforce adherence of the bylaw, participants suggested designing an environmental review process following the completion of a developmental project. Some participants suggested that more timely site visits by either Parks (i.e., Urban Forestry) or qualified bylaw inspectors (ex. urban forestry experience, arborist certification, etc.) would allow issues with tree damage or removal to be mediated before they occur; however, this would require additional resources.

When asked how trees should be considered in the development of new neighbourhoods, participants suggested including a tree assessment within the Natural Areas Screening process to identify heritage trees or those of importance. Participants suggested promoting the bylaw and the protection of trees to developers, since trees are a selling feature and of benefit to property owners.

Education and Awareness

Participants suggested that the City take a proactive rather than a reactive approach to generate long-term adherence to the bylaw. Further education and awareness campaigns will limit violations caused by individuals being unaware of the bylaw and the associated consequences. Examples of future education and awareness topics provided by participants included the following:

- Education that targets the developer community and new homeowners/buyers
- Partner with existing organizations for already existing awareness campaigns
- The value of trees, both financial and environmental
- Videos that are informative

Participants identified that many aspects of the bylaw could be confusing to the community if not properly defined nor enforced by the City. For an example, it was suggested that residents may have differing definitions for trees, with some identifying shrub species (ex., chokecherry, wolf willow, European buckthorn, etc.) as trees, and differing definitions for public trees.

Community Consultation

Community consultation was supported by many participants, especially in situations where an individual homeowner or developer calls for a tree to be removed. Participants identified that the surrounding community or neighbours adjacent to a tree scheduled for removal should be consulted at the onset and prior to the design phase for the project. Others suggested the community should be consulted during the rezoning process or during a regulation change.

Some participants identified that consulting the community on every tree removal would be costly and time consuming; therefore, the City should determine specific circumstances that would trigger community consultation. For an example, should community consultation occur for both the removal of an individual tree and the removal of a large group of trees within a neighbourhood?

2.2 Community Survey

An online survey was conducted from February 23rd to March 13th, 2022 and contained a total of 20 closed- and open-ended questions to identify what is needed, what works, and what is possible for protecting public trees in Saskatoon. Respondents were able to write-in an “other” preference for numerous questions and provide explanations for their preferences.

2.2.1 Intended Audience

The survey was intended for the community and all identified participants.

2.2.2 Marketing Techniques

A variety of marketing techniques were employed to reach the intended audience.

1. City Website
 - a. Updates to the Engage Page were made to encourage participation in the online survey
 - b. A notice box was put at the top of the Tree Protection Requirements webpage (saskatoon.ca/treeprotection) directing people to the Engage Page for more information on engagement opportunities.
 - c. An article promoting the survey was published on MyCity and the Monday eblast
2. Social Media
 - a. The social media campaign, which ran from February 23rd – March 13th, included Facebook and Twitter ads and posts promoting the survey. An Instagram story with a clickable link was also used to promote the survey. All paid social media ads used location targeting
 - b. The survey was included and advertised in the StarPhoenix within the “Top Things to Do This Weekend”
3. Public Service Announcement (PSA)
 - a. A PSA was issued on February 23rd to promote the online survey.
4. Email
 - a. Personalized emails were sent to organizations and community members asking them to share the information with their members

2.2.3 Analysis

The results were analyzed for the following indicators using mixed methods:

- Most popular recommendations (count)
- Analysis of comments for more popular options and trends
- Opportunities that may improve accessibility and uptake within the community

Mixed methods were used to analyze the data. Qualitative methods included the thematic analysis and open coding of responses.

2.2.4 What We Heard

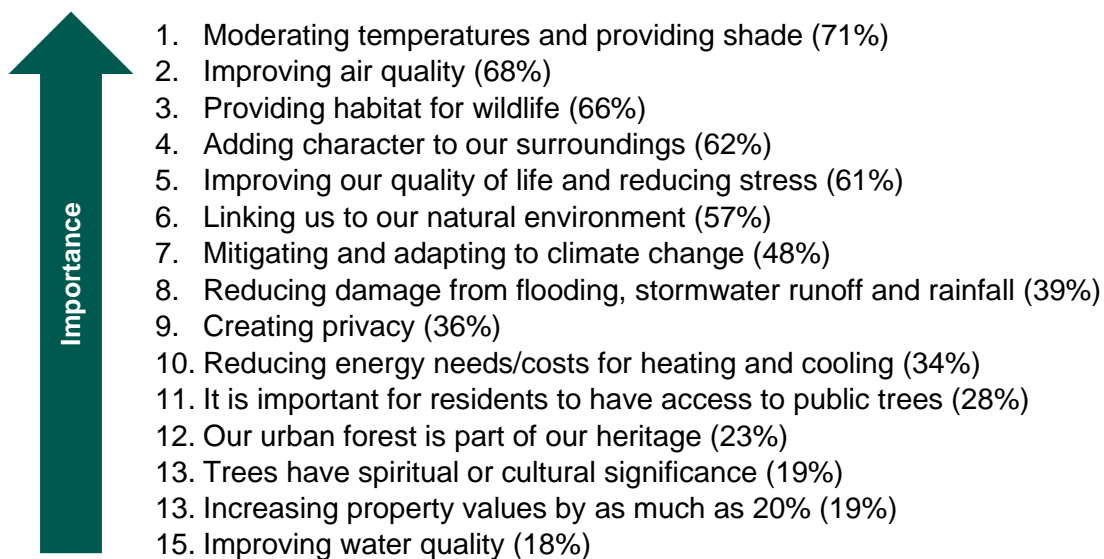
Demographics

A total of 739 individuals participated in the community survey with the largest group of respondents being residential homeowners (85%), followed by renters (13%), business owners (8%), and those who identified themselves as subject matter experts or involved in the environmental sector (6%).

Feedback was received from all age groups with the higher number of responses coming from 35-44 (23%) and 65+ (22%) age groups. We also received representation from All of Saskatoon's neighbourhoods were represented.

Importance of Protecting Public Trees

Respondents were asked how important it is to protect trees in public spaces and Saskatoon's urban forest, to which they provided an average response of five out of a total of five, indicating protecting trees is of great importance to the community. This high level of support is rare when compared to other similar City initiatives. When asked to select their top five reasons for why protecting trees is important from the choices provided, respondents provided the following ranking:



Other suggestions provided by respondents for why protecting trees is important included the following:

- Educational opportunities and school programs
- Food sources
- Human health and extending life expectancy

- Improving driving conditions during the winter
- Mental health

When asked which types of trees should be given a greater level of protection from the provided suggestions, respondents provided the following ranking:



Suggestions provided by respondents for trees and areas that should be given a greater level of protection included the following:

- Boulevard trees
- Disease and drought tolerant trees
- Edible trees and urban food forests
- Female trees to reduce asthma and allergic reactions to pollen
- Mature or established trees
- Native trees
- Neighbourhood trees that hold significance for the community
- Newly planted trees and those in new developments/neighbourhoods
- Species favoured by beavers
- Specific species, such as elm, spruce, oak, birch, cottonwood
- Those hiding undesirable views (ex. adjacent to industrial areas)
- Those over a standardized, species-specific trunk diameter
- Those providing wind resistance, sound muffling, shoreline stability, and erosion control
- Trees in core neighbourhoods
- Trees in residential, commercial, and industrial easements
- Trees with aesthetic value (ex. colourful foliage, exceptional form, etc.)
- Trees in low-income neighbourhoods to counteract inequitable tree cover within the city
- Trees with greater than 15% canopy cover
- Within public parks and those providing valuable shade in public areas

Current City Approaches

When asked whether they were aware of the current tree protection policy ([Council Policy C09-011 Trees on City Property](#)), 61% of respondents were not aware of this policy until now while 39% were aware. Additionally, most respondents (60%) were unaware that the City requires reimbursement to the Parks Department for cutting down and/or damaging trees on City property.

Every year the City receives numerous inquiries/complaints about trees for reasons surrounding aesthetics or being viewed as a nuisance (i.e., casting shade, blocking views, shedding leaves/seeds, tree root damage, etc.). The City's current approach is to not remove public trees for these reasons. Most respondents supported this approach (71%) and within the comments many respondents called on the City to not punish trees for growing and functioning as they are intended to. Many respondents encouraged the City to consider the importance of tree protection rather than allowing trees to be removed based on a few complaints.

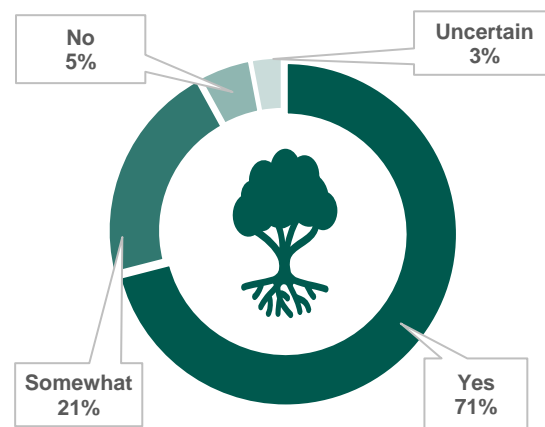


Figure 2: Support for the City's current approach in not removing public trees for complaints surrounding aesthetics or nuisance trees.

"Aesthetic or nuisance complaints should not be value(d) over natural landscape and the well being of our local ecosystems."

"trees in public spaces should be entirely immune from such complaints. they are, after all, PUBLIC trees in PUBLIC spaces. private interests are irrelevant."

There were conflicting views on natural fall from trees as most respondents who provided comments on this question stated that excessive fruit and leaf fall should not be a consideration for the removal of a tree, while some suggested it should be. Some respondents called on the City to compensate property owners for damage made by public trees and for the City to clean areas where trees (ex. mountain ash, maple, fruit trees, etc.) create a large mess for the neighbourhood.

"We need to do a better job at planting appropriate trees in certain areas. ie. not planting mountain ashes near sidewalks or public walkways with red berries that stain footwear and cement constantly."

Numerous examples were provided for circumstances where the removal of a tree should be considered, including:



1. Causing infrastructure or property damage, such as impacting residential sewer lines and concrete foundations
2. Safety concerns, such as obstructing views for drivers, hindering pedestrian traffic, or hanging branches
3. Poses a health risk, such as causing asthmatic or allergic reactions to the homeowner
4. Specific species, such as poplars, are viewed as a hazard due to their short life, large size and greater potential to cause damage
5. Diseased or dying
6. Potential hazard for utilities, such as near power lines
7. Blocking views

Community Consultation

Respondents were asked whether consultation (i.e., signs being posted, signatures from neighbours, community open houses, etc.) with neighbouring property owners should be required to remove a City tree. Many respondents (42%) believed consultation should occur every time a City tree is considered for removal. However, some respondents expressed their concern for the increased costs and time associated with community consultation. Others suggested whether neighbourhood consultation occurs depends on the type of tree being removed and the associated reasoning. For an example, diseased or smaller trees may not require public consultation when a private request to remove a mature tree would.

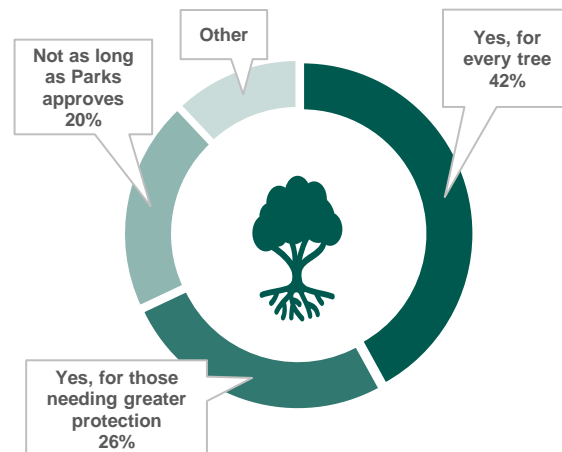


Figure 2: Support for the consulting neighbouring property owners for the removal of a City tree


Within the comments, respondents noted that this decision depends on how clear/stringent Parks' criteria for tree removal are, how strongly they will be enforced, how timely the process is, and whether the protection of trees continues to be of importance for City Administration. A few respondents were concerned about the potential for conflict between neighbours and suggested that if neighbour consent was required then it should only be for adjoining neighbours and not the entire street or community. Some respondents suggested that more weight should be given to Parks and expert opinions (i.e., arborists, biologists, etc.) and if there were concerns from the community (ex. via a developmental appeal process) then the City could provide the opportunity for further community consultation.

*"The neighbourhood should be consulted and their views considered, and Parks Department should have the chance to communicate what's going on and why to the community. However, the Parks Department should [not] need the permission of the neighbourhood, *as long as they're acting in the interest of urban forest preservation*."*

Respondents suggested that if community consultation is not required, at minimum the City should notify the neighbours/community association of the tree removal and locations of future replacement trees. Public education could then be used to raise awareness about the importance of trees and the criteria for their removal could be provided to the community through various forms (i.e., handouts, website information, etc.); however, it was stressed that posting signs on their own is not a valid form of community engagement.

When the Tree Protection Bylaw Should be Applied

When asked which of the following areas the Tree Protection Bylaw should apply to, respondents provided the following ranking:

- 
1. In natural areas and natural riverfront areas (87%)
 2. On City-owned property that is planned for new neighbourhood development (85%)
 3. On City-owned infill property or vacant lots that are zoned for redevelopment (78%)
 4. In afforestation areas (71%)
 5. On buffers/expressway corridors (66%)
 6. In utility corridors (58%)

6. In close proximity to water and sewer infrastructure (58%)
7. Volunteer trees on public property (55%)
8. On private property that is planned for new neighbourhood development (51%)
9. Trees planted without permission on public property (46%)
10. Unsure (11%)

Participants were asked whether the City should change its scope to take responsibility and ownership of any tree that has any part of its trunk growing on public property. Most respondents believed the City should take ownership (57%), followed by those who were uncertain (29%). Comments provided by respondents were summarized into the following themes:

Better maintenance and protection: the most popular comment; some respondents supported the City taking responsibility of these trees since it would result in greater protection and better maintenance; most homeowners do not possess the knowledge or equipment to properly maintain these trees; many respondents hope that the results of the City taking ownerships of these trees would result in an increase in the number of protected trees

"Trees provide the same benefits regardless of what legal status of land they're on, so I support more public responsibility for trees. We can't trust tree protection to a private party, we can only hope that they choose to consider the public interest."

Co-maintenance: if the City would take ownership of these trees many respondents called for the ability to prune and maintain them; one respondent suggested the owner should assume the costs of maintenance/removal following consultation with City staff

Enforcement: respondents identified that the bylaw is only as good as its associated enforcement, therefore the City will need to be prepared to properly enforce their ownership of the tree; what kind of consequences will be implemented for property owners who are unaware of the bylaw

Engagement with owner needed: the second most popular comment; it was suggested that the City needs to engage with, consult or inform the homeowner if more aggressive maintenance measures or the removal of a tree is required to ensure relationships with residents are maintained; the maintenance or removal of a tree without notice is shocking to many residents, therefore collaboration with residents is needed

Flexibility required: opportunities should exist for shared ownership or for the homeowner to take full ownership of the tree if they are willing to take on the corresponding maintenance/removal costs; there will be public trees that do not straddle property lines at first, but will eventually over time

Greater costs: the third most popular comment: if the number of trees the City maintains increases then so will the associated costs to the taxpayers, which respondents did and did not support; many respondents believe that the City does not currently have adequate resources to take on these additional responsibilities

"If the added maintenance becomes a burden (overwhelms staff, budget, etc.) and tree maintenance falls behind- it could result in increased tree complaints from the public and have an overall negative impact on the perception of trees in our communities."

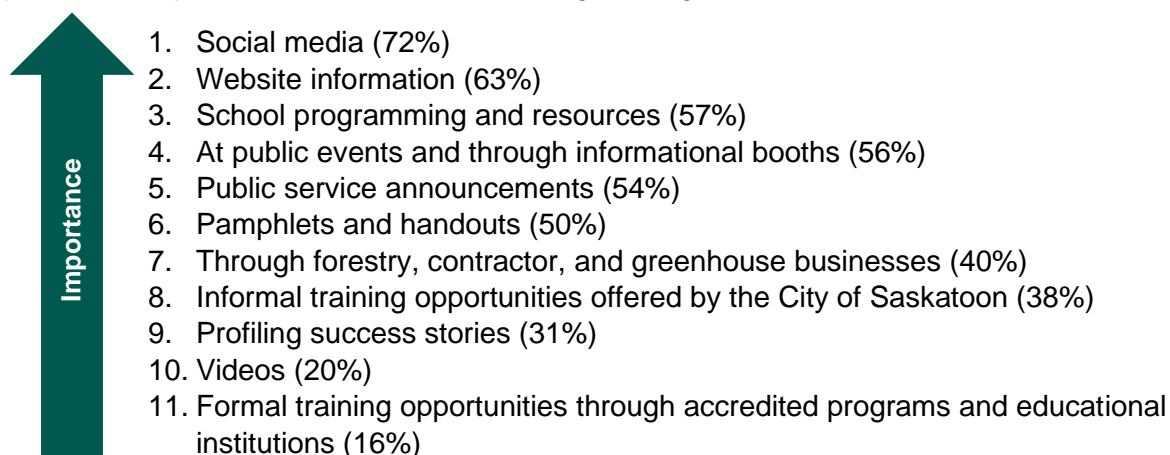
Timely Response: some respondents are concerned that the City would not be timely in acting nor that they would work with residents in the protection of trees; a few respondents expressed their

concern for the City prioritizing less costly solutions (ex. tree removal), therefore routes should be in place to allow for the community to be part of the decision-making process if needed

Private property: a few respondents identified that some residents may become concerned about the City having access to trees on their private properties; however, other respondents suggested the bylaw should not only apply to public trees, but residential trees as well to ensure Saskatoon's urban forest is protected; many residents want to be informed and part of the decision-making process to remove a tree on their property; what considerations are made for the homeowner if the tree is damaging their property

Education and Awareness

Throughout the survey, many respondents commented on the importance of educating the community on the Tree Protection Bylaw, which trees apply, and the importance of Saskatoon's urban forest. When asked to identify the top education and awareness approaches from those provided, respondents identified the following ranking:



Suggestions for other educational and awareness approaches provided by respondents included the following:

- Billboards
- Citizen science and stewardship opportunities
- Community associations and their newsletters
- Educate business owners, newcomers, and developers
- Explore partnerships with existing organizations and programs, such as Scouts, Girl Guides, EcoQuest, ScienceTrek, Master Gardener program and outdoor schools
- In combination with the future green cart program to discourage elm clippings
- Information on the criteria Urban Forestry uses to evaluate a tree for removal, including graphics of examples and explanations on why they are necessary
- Information included in utility bills, e-bills and City mail-outs
- Information provided to realtors and new homeowners prior to purchasing a home
- Mail-outs
- Media interviews
- Newspaper ads
- QR codes on all signs, pamphlets, and information

- Participants in annual events, such as Earth Day and Arbour Week
- Publishing more information on the health of Saskatoon's urban forest, neighbourhood tree counts, and canopy cover.
- Radio
- Signs near developments stating the value of trees in the area and how they are being protected
- Signs posted on/near trees that have had attention stating how they are of benefit
- Television ads
- Through City Councillors
- Training and hands-on opportunities to learn about tree planting and maintenance
- Urban forest ambassadors or tree coaches, similar to compost coaches
- Use visuals, such as a street where trees are absent
- Walking tours on tree identification, heritage trees and the urban forest, including views from high architecture

Support and Final Comments

Respondents were asked how supportive they are of a Tree Protection Bylaw for trees on public property, to which they provided an average response of five out of a total of five indicating they are strongly supportive. Overall, 92% of participants indicating they supported the development of the bylaw.

When asked to identify any final concerns they have about a Tree Protection Bylaw for trees on public property, respondents provided the following comments:

Communication: the most popular theme; the community needs to be aware of why trees are being removed in advance of their removal; specific circumstances for tree removals that are not as clear should be open for public input; Parks should provide easy ways for residents to contact them to have their questions answered

"If the city expands its role as caretaker to all trees with a branch in public property, they should initiate an open, accessible line of communication between the public & the tree caretakers."

Complaint-based approach: some respondents expressed their concern for the City being reactionary and taking a complaints-based approach to tree protection; trees should not be removed due to complaints and personal preferences; the City should implement an effective bylaw that can counter specific complaints when needed

Enforcement: the second most popular theme: the bylaw needs to be enforceable with substantial financial penalties for non-compliance; it was suggested that those who can pay the financial penalties, such as development companies and businesses, will continue to do things their way, therefore enforcement should include accountability measures alongside financial penalties

"It has to be strong enough to stand up to developer demands. The idea that new development is worth more to the economy than the green infrastructure needs to be addressed. Properties with trees must be developed in such a way that protecting the trees should be easy. There should be zero tolerance for removing trees so that builders plan around the trees, not plan for how they can remove them."

"Penalties should be stiff and creative. It's frustrating when people with money violate policies meant to protect all residents and simply pay a fine without difficulty."

Equity: tree protection should include considerations for equity, such as prioritizing areas with less access to trees/greenspace; enforcement measures need to incorporate equity considerations for low-income and high-density housing; the bylaw should incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing

Funding: more funding is required for the proper monitoring, enforcement, and maintenance of trees to ensure the bylaw is a success; many respondents supported providing greater funding towards implementing the bylaw, although some expressed concern for the potential increase in property taxes

Holistic approach: it was suggested that bylaws typically provide requirements to meet aesthetic/maintenance concerns, however considerations for biodiversity and climate change mitigation should also be included; one respondent commented on the need to control the local beaver populations to ensure the health of the urban forest within the river valley

Lead by example: respondents recommend that if the bylaw is implemented the City will need to lead by example; the City should encourage more tree plantings throughout Saskatoon; some residents feel that some City staff do not currently follow their own tree protection standards (ex., snow clearing, weed trimming, pruning, etc.), therefore further training is required; already existing trees should be incorporated into new neighbourhood design concepts

Implementation: there is concern for whether the City can take on the additional workload if the bylaw is implemented; some respondents felt that the City already struggles with proper maintenance schedules for the trees they currently manage; will the City be liable for property damage caused by the trees that are incorporated into the new bylaw; will the City also take on the regular maintenance (ex. watering) of these trees

Private property: many respondents expressed their concern that damage to private property should be of equal importance as tree protection; the City needs to consider the potential negative impacts some trees cause private properties; a few respondents suggested that a new bylaw is not needed but rather greater enforcement of the policy that has been ignored

Replacement: participants recommended that the replacement of trees should be within the same neighbourhood that they are removed from; it was suggested that property owners or developers should have to factor in tree replacements if any are removed

Simple: the third most popular comment; respondents stressed that the bylaw needs to be simple to understand and to communicate to the community; the definition of what is a protected tree needs to be clear

Final comments provided by respondents were summarized into the following themes:

Development: many respondents stressed that tree protection should be of equal, if not more, value as development within Saskatoon; all development should be required to protect public trees/green infrastructure that is existing and incorporate new public trees/green infrastructure into their designs; however, some respondents believe that downtown infill and further development should not stop due to the presence of trees

Education: many respondents stressed the importance of education and public awareness for protecting trees and Saskatoon's urban forest; it was suggested that many residents do not understand the many benefits trees provide and their responsibilities as a property owner

“Public education is an important part of tree protection. Many people do not understand the importance of the role of trees in light of our changing climate.”

Immediacy: many respondents called on the City to implement the bylaw immediately to combat the effects of climate change

Plant and replace more trees: many respondents called on the City to plant more trees in public spaces and replace any trees that are removed for appropriate reasons; some respondents suggested that when replacing trees the City should explore planting more female trees to reduce the effects of pollen on those with allergies; some respondents suggested planting more edible and native trees to promote greater biodiversity and food forests; the City should think ahead while planting under areas for future utilities and plant smaller trees or bushes to prevent their removal; more trees should be planted in public parks and near play structures for greater shade

Support: many respondents expressed their support for Saskatoon’s urban forest and the tree protection bylaw

“Thank you for protecting the mature trees we have in this city. I wouldn’t want to live here without them.”

“Our city is beautiful. In this time of climate change we should be planting trees and not cutting them down because people want a different view or are bothered by leaf cleanup. Our very lives depend on trees. Thanks for protecting them. Our forefathers planted with us in mind. Let’s do the same for succeeding generations.”

“Trees are one of the city’s most important assets from a number of perspectives including environmental, quality of life, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic. We need to protect this valuable resource and ensure that when a tree is removed that careful consideration is given to the impact.”

2.3 Home Builders Workshop

A virtual workshop was held from on March 1st, 2022, to receive feedback on how the Tree Protection Bylaw may affect home builders within Saskatoon.

2.3.1 Audience

Eight representatives from a variety of local home building businesses participated in the virtual workshop.

2.3.2 Marketing Techniques

With the assistance of the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders Association, home builders were invited to participate directly via an e-invite.

2.3.3 Analysis

Qualitative methods were employed, which included the thematic analysis and open coding of responses.

2.3.4 What We Heard

Working with the City

Many participants stressed the importance of protecting trees and Saskatoon’s urban forest to the development community; however, some participants felt that the current system pits developers against Parks staff through a lack of communication, confusion surrounding tree protection

requirements, and the need for timely responses. For an example, participants expressed their confusion surrounding why the City forces developers to provide compensation for the pruning and loss of canopy when the above ground air rights are owned by the property owner. It was noted that the City requests compensation for pruning and loss of canopy for development that does not follow good arboricultural practices. Although all City trees share airspace with private property, for the health of City trees the entire canopy is maintained.

Many participants felt that the City needs to create a better balance between encouraging infill development and creating unneeded administrative hurdles (i.e., red tape) for developers. Participants called on the City to collaborate with developers to meet common goals, such as growing infill development in the community, rather than implementing policies that hinder development in Saskatoon.

Opportunities and Barriers

Participants identified numerous opportunities and barriers in implementing a Tree Protection Bylaw, including the following themes:

Allow for consultation: participants called for a form of consultation or negotiation process with Parks to discuss situations where tree removal is needed; this would allow home builders to present their rationale for tree removals through a formalized process

Damage deposits: although the City currently has the ability to ask for damage deposits for trees, some developers strongly oppose them

Education and awareness: developers need to be aware of why certain trees are being protected and what requirements need to be met; many developers are unaware of the actual appraised value of a tree nor how many new trees are needed to account for the removal of a mature/established tree

Follow building standards: participants suggested that tree maintenance or removal processes must correlate with building standards and adapt to changing circumstances; considerations need to be made when a row of mature trees does not follow the current planting distance requirements instead of further limiting development

Independent planning: participants supported the City allowing for independent arborist reports and the submission of tree protection plans to ensure the process is transparent and honest; although there may be additional costs, they felt it could allow for quicker turn-around and submission times

Lead by example: participants identified the need for the City to follow the same requirements that it requires of property owners; it was suggested that during City development projects it can appear as though the City does not follow their own standards

Problem already solved: participants questioned whether a bylaw was needed for a problem that is small in scale and already requires a tree protection plan to be submitted in the development process; participants cautioned that the City should not create a new process if it only addresses a limited number of violations each year

Streamlined process: participants called for a streamlined process that does not cause separate processes to be stacked on each other and add further confusion to an already confusing process; create a single, simplified process for tree appraisals and permitting

Timely responses: often development is slowed down due to additional red tape, which can become extremely costly and further delay projects

Tree valuation: there is confusion surrounding what model the City uses for tree valuation; although the City uses numerous factors based on ISA standards, greater transparency is needed for home builders to understand and support this process

Tree Replacement

Participants asked whether home builders would be able to replace trees without financial penalties; however, there is often a lack of suitable/plantable spaces on public property for tree replacement. To combat this, participants suggested that any compensation developers pay for tree maintenance/removal should go towards tree replacement or new trees within the same neighbourhood. This may allow for the community to be more accepting of specific trees being removed if they saw the benefit of adding trees back into the neighbourhood.

Consultation

It was recommended that the City should develop a more formal process for providing tree assessments/valuations to home builders in advance of land purchases, since this would allow for proper budgeting and developmental concerns to be addressed prior to the purchasing of land. It was recognized that this form of an appraisal system would be complicated to administer due to changing conditions over the lifetime of a tree; however, participants proposed that even providing a value based on the scale (ex. diameter), estimated range based on past appraisals would be extremely useful in determining the rough costs. Also, providing information on trees that cannot be removed could be useful in determining whether a site is developable.

Participants did not support consulting the community in cases where tree removal is needed, since in most cases the community would not support the removal of a tree even when there are valid reasons for its removal.

2.4 Utilities Workshop

A virtual workshop was held from on March 24th, 2022, to receive feedback on how the Tree Protection Bylaw may affect utility companies within Saskatoon.

2.4.1 Audience

Representatives from a variety utility companies participated in the virtual workshop, including:

- City of Saskatoon – Construction and Design
- City of Saskatoon – Water and Waste Operations
- SaskEnergy
- Saskatoon Light & Power
- SaskPower
- SaskTel
- Shaw Cable

2.4.2 Marketing Techniques

Utility companies were invited to participate directly via an e-invite or by phone.

2.4.3 Analysis

Qualitative methods were employed, which included the thematic analysis and open coding of responses.

2.4.4 What We Heard

Overall participants supported the development and implementation of a Tree Protection Bylaw within Saskatoon. Themes that were discussed during the workshop are included below.

Education and Awareness

Participants identified that tree protection is a concern for them and that their crews are very willing to alter line locations and include measures for tree protection if they are aware of protected trees onsite. Providing project teams quick access to general tree protection guidelines and information on the trees within a project area would greatly improve current practises and knowledge associated with tree protection. It was suggested that if project teams are unaware of the bylaw nor the specific trees requiring protection then they should not be held accountable for being uninformed. The City should provide training opportunities to ensure the bylaw is easily understood and adhered to by all contractors.

It was suggested that often projects can be delayed due to a lack of information or the inability to directly contact Parks for this information. To combat this, participants strongly encouraged the City to provide GIS maps or tree inventory maps to the project lead at the time of the permitting process so that all contractors are aware of the trees within the area and their requirements.

Opportunities and Barriers

Participants provided numerous opportunities and approaches to improve the implementation of the Tree Protection Bylaw, including the following themes:

Accessibility of green spaces: utility companies typically prefer to run utility lines through green spaces rather than roadways to reduce the costs of restoration and potential damage to grey infrastructure; however, this causes greater interactions with public trees

Awareness: many felt that the City will need to provide more opportunities for contractors to learn about the requirements within the bylaw; this includes regular updates to ensure they have the most up to date information

Clarity: participants stressed that the bylaw needs to clearly define the technical requirements (ex. minimum depths, whether assessments are needed, etc.) needed

Development: for new neighbourhoods participants suggested Parks should review the design plans to ensure the requirements of the bylaw are included; issues need to be identified at the outset of the project to best mitigate them

Flexibility: the bylaw will need to be flexible enough to allow for site-specific considerations; a pre-existing utility line should not have to follow the same standards as a new utility line; creative solutions can be found if the City is open and willing to work with contractors to find them

Incentives: one participant suggested providing incentives or waving restoration costs when lines need to be relocated due to the location of a tree would be more cost effective

Known process: participants supported clarifying the process of working around trees through an annual meeting and agreement (i.e., municipal access agreement); it was suggested that approvals and requirements should also be provided to all contractors associated with a project so they are aware of what is needed; general guidelines that provide information on the measures that need to be taken (i.e., using protective matting with certain equipment, the depth based on the distance from the tree, etc.) can be useful to have on-site

Timeliness: it was suggested that there are times where tree inspections/assessments/permits can hold back a project from being completed and can compound additional costs; assessments and maintenance needs to be timely (ex. 10 days) with the ability for a quick turnaround for projects that have a shorter time window; tree pruning can be an obstacle for many utilities

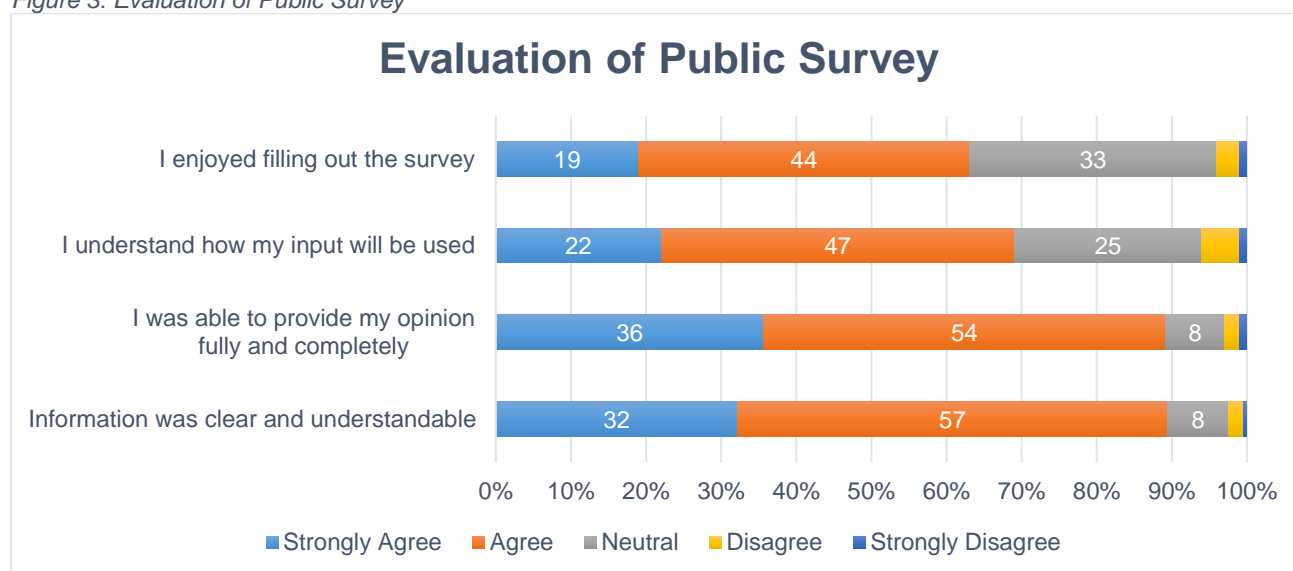
3 Evaluation of Engagement

Evaluation is discussed in terms of feedback received during engagement activities and through informal comments, data limitations and opportunities for improvement.

3.1 Survey Evaluation

Participant evaluation through the survey indicated support for both the level of engagement conducted and the opportunities provided. 89% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the information that was provided being clear and understandable, with 90% feeling they were able to provide their opinions fully throughout the process.

Figure 3: Evaluation of Public Survey



Comments provided by participants were supportive of the engagement process:

"Thanks for bringing this info to the attention of the public & for asking for public input."

"I assume this survey plays a role in assessing the large scale & long term plan for the city's trees, and appreciate being able to advocate for their care."

"Thanks for putting out the survey; it was an interesting topic to think about! Good luck with everything; I hope the bylaw passes!"

Some respondents provided some suggestions to improve future surveys, including removing internal biases, using plain language terms (i.e., for afforestation, utility corridor, etc.), providing additional background information/examples, and better advertising engagement opportunities.

"Providing Some additional background information would help to make more educated opinions; for example; How many tree related complaints does the city receive (annually)? How much would this proposed bylaw increase the workload for city arborists/urban forestry, etc? Above current levels? Any projected internal budget changes, tax changes for members of the public"

"I only found this survey because I was looking for something on the City's website. I'm not sure what other methods of advertising it were used, but I would be happy to fill out future city surveys if I see them advertised."

Some respondents expressed concern that their feedback would not be considered or implemented within the decision-making process.

“With any city-commissioned survey, it is always unclear as to how the information will be used, to what degree it has any impact, and what further action citizens can take to influence Council decisions.”

3.2 Informal Feedback

Informal feedback was received through meetings and workshops where participants indicated that they appreciated being engaged and supported the City in continuing to engage the community through virtual means. Many participants supported the City’s efforts in developing the Tree Protection Bylaw, stressing the importance of the proposed initiatives for Saskatoon’s urban forest.

3.3 Data Limitations

Due to the public health orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic, all engagement activities for this project were conducted virtually. Virtual engagement has limitations, primarily by limiting accessibility for those without internet access or with limited computer literacy and by enabling greater accessibility to those who are more active online. Multiple avenues were available for the public to provide their input and mitigate the inability to conduct in-person activities; however, engagement practises and procedures were limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in conducting physical meetings with the community.

The COVID-19 pandemic also shifted the priorities for many people, resulting in numerous participants being unable to participate in our engagement process due to more pressing concerns. Therefore, some participants may not have been able to fully participate in the engagement activities conducted; however, the results are considered to provide the best available indication of how participants perceive the bylaw at the time.

3.4 Opportunities for Improvement

Based on participant feedback, the following opportunities for improvement will be considered for future engagement activities:

- Any written or verbal information uses plain language and easy-to-understand terms
- Educating the community on the importance of public trees and on the requirements within the future bylaw should be a priority for future awareness campaigns
- Steps should be taken to explore hybrid options for workshops, which are an important tool for engaging communities

4 Next Steps

The next steps for development of the Tree Protection Bylaw are described below:

Phase 1: Options Identification

- Identify options that may work in Saskatoon
- Identify opportunities and barriers for the bylaw

Phase 2: Close the Loop

- Further identify new program elements that enhance opportunities and mitigate barriers
- Share relevant components of the bylaw to close the loop

Report to City Council

- A request to approve drafting the bylaw will be presented to City Council in 2022