



## Partnership to Accelerate City's Street Tree Program

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – A new partnership will benefit Victoria's 20,000 aging street trees, increasing proactive regular maintenance, inspections and assessments for overall health and safety. The program is made possible by a five-year, \$400,000 funding agreement with BC Hydro that the City will match from its urban forest capital fund.

"There is no question that our community values trees. A healthy urban forest is part of a healthy, sustainable community," said Mayor Dean Fortin. "This partnership with BC Hydro will help us care for our aging trees and introduce the next generation of street trees to Victoria's urban forest."

Up to now, BC Hydro has been responsible for pruning only City street trees that grow under utility wires. The work has been done on a four-year cycle, with Parks crews pruning other City street trees as needed. As many of Victoria's street trees are nearing the end of their life cycle, they require more attention in the form of regular pruning to prevent injury or property damage, and to protect them from disease. This partnership allows the City to do all required tree work at one time thereby creating efficiencies and reducing costs. In the past, it was not unusual for two different crews to work on the same tree at two different times.

"This is our first agreement with a local government in the province of BC", said Ted Olynyk, BC Hydro's Manager for Community Relations on Vancouver Island. "We are able to do this with Victoria because they have a complement of qualified staff who can work safely and properly in proximity to power lines. The agreement provides good value to the citizens of Victoria and will meet BC Hydro's safety criteria."

City street trees are only one part of Victoria's urban forest, which includes all of the community's trees, shrubs, groundcover and the soils in which they grow. The City of Victoria manages over 40,000 trees in its parks and boulevards and is developing an Urban Forest Master Plan to ensure our urban forest is healthy, safe and abundant in the future. Public input has informed the development of a plan that will be presented to City Council in the fall.

In recent years, BC Hydro has partnered with Victoria to help purchase and plant more than 1,000 new trees which had previously been removed from city streets and parks in the interests of public safety. This new agreement developed as a result of the success of the work done under BC Hydro's Community Regreening Program.

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### For More Information:

Kate Friars  
Director  
Parks, Recreation and Community Development  
250.361.0355

Ted Olynyk  
Manager, Community Relations  
Vancouver Island  
BC Hydro  
Phone: 250.755.7173