



Victoria joins U.N. Challenge with 5,000 Tree Pledge

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – Today in New York City, Mayor Lisa Helps participated in the launch of the United Nations Trees in Cities Initiative hosted by the U.N. Executive Secretary, Under-Secretary-General Olga Algayerova.

As part of this initiative, the City will work with the community to plant 5,000 trees on public and private land by the end of 2020. Victoria is the first city in Canada to join the pledge.

"We know there is a climate crisis and we're committed to everything we can as a City to mitigate the impacts," said Mayor Lisa Helps. "Participating in this U.N. initiative allows Victoria to join in a global movement of communities. City staff are currently designing ways in which we can harness the power of our community to meet this goal."

Algayerova wrote to Mayor Helps in the summer noting that, "I believe there is a lot we can learn from the progress your city has already achieved in this area, and I would like to help you share this achievement with other cities and allow them to learn from it."

The City's Urban Forest Master Plan identifies 26 recommended actions for the improved management of trees on public and private lands over the next 50 years. A new investment of \$1 million annually will expedite implementation of the [Urban Forest Master Plan](#), to maintain the trees we have and to plant new trees. In 2019, a total of nearly \$3 million will go to maintain and enhance the urban forest.

"We hope all Victorians are proud of our city's leadership on the urban forest and we are delighted the City has accepted this challenge," said Frances Litman, a spokesperson for Community Trees Matter Network, a local tree-advocacy group. "Since three-quarters of our urban forest is on private land, we will certainly do all we can to spread the word and encourage homeowners to plant trees. Planting season is coming up soon – late fall is a great time to plant trees in Victoria!"

Trees are a critically important community asset providing a wide range of benefits, from positive mental health impacts, to environmental attributes such as regulating temperature, mitigating stormwater runoff, and providing wildlife habitat. The value of the urban forest will continue as the city adapts to climate change.

Planting more trees in urban areas holds a considerable potential to tackle effects of climate change. The United Nations has invited mayors around the world to join the Trees in Cities Challenge by making a pledge to plant trees in their city.

For more information visit: <https://treesincities.unece.org/>

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