

Tree bylaws

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## City looking for ways to encourage Vancouver property owners to replant trees



By Jon Azpiri Web Producer  
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**WATCH: The City of Vancouver is hoping that deposits will convince people to plant new trees when they cut old ones down. Linda Aylesworth explains.**

Little by little, the City of Vancouver is getting less green.

The city's tree canopy has declined from 22.5 per cent to 18 per cent over the last 20 years.

The reason, according to City Hall, is that property owners are cutting down too many trees.



“At last year’s council meeting they approved the first measure which protected trees, which was to amend the provision in the bylaw that allowed people to remove one tree a year with very little documentation,” said Malcolm Bromley of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation.

As a result of the amendment, owners can now only cut down a tree on their own property after getting approval from a city arborist, who makes a decision based more on the tree’s health than whether or not it blocks a view.

“We look at it and then we make a decision about whether there is a strong rationale for the removal of the tree or whether there’s alternatives,” Bromley said.

The amendment also called for every removed tree to be replaced with a new one, but it would seem the strategy wasn’t working as well as the city had hoped.

“There was a lack of rigour and follow-up,” Bromley said. “I think people saw trees as disposable and they would plant to meet their obligation and then they really wouldn’t pay as much attention to it as they should.”

Vancouver City Council was slated to vote Tuesday on a new amendment that would include a \$500 to \$750 security deposit to encourage people to follow the bylaw. If, one year later, the newly planted tree is healthy, the money will be refunded.

According to Bromley, “people respond better if they have a stake in the game.”

Vancouver Realtor Ryan Taylor says it may not be enough to make a difference.

“I think if it’s a small amount...\$1,000 or less, I don’t think it’s going to have much impact on the people who are building these massive homes,” he said.

Time will tell if the amendment passes. The vote was deferred until Wednesday.

*-With files from Linda Aylesworth*

