

FOR: COUNCIL

MEETING DATE: April 13, 2026

DEPARTMENT: CORPORATE SERVICES

SUBJECT: **GREEN MUNICIPAL FUND GROWING CANADA'S COMMUNITY CANOPIES**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To obtain a Council resolution supporting a grant application to the Green Municipal Fund Growing Canada's Community Canopies fund.

Recommendation

That Council direct Staff:

1. To apply to the GCCC program for funding of \$140,000 to update the City of Nanaimo's Urban Forestry Management Strategy; and
2. To include the Urban Forestry Management Strategy Update in the 2026-2030 Financial Plan at a total cost of \$175,000, \$50,000 in 2026 and \$125,000 in 2027 funded by grant of \$140,000 and \$35,000 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund.

BACKGROUND

The Green Municipal Fund's (GMF) Growing Canada's Community Canopies (GCCC) is a \$291M initiative that drives climate action by funding projects that plant and manage trees in communities across the country. GCCC will support the planting of at least 1.2M new trees by 2031-Mar-31. The GCCC initiative is a part of GMF's broader approach to nature-based climate solutions focused on achieving significant carbon sequestration and increasing forest and community resilience to climate change.

GCCC offers funding to support communities in developing comprehensive plans and studies to strengthen the planning, management and stewardship of their trees and forests. This includes projects that enable informed decision-making in urban forest management, and ensuring that forests in communities are resilient, equitably distributed and contribute long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits. GCCC supports the development of urban forestry plans and studies that enhance municipal capacity for future tree planting, and provide essential tools, strategies, and data to guide effective and long-term tree planting efforts.

Municipalities are eligible for funding up to a maximum of \$175,000 to fund up to 80% of eligible costs. The application deadline is 2026-Apr-15.

DISCUSSION

The City of Nanaimo's Urban Forestry Management Strategy (UFMS) was last updated in 2010, and no longer reflects current conditions, priorities, or best practices for managing the City's urban forest. Since 2010, the City has completed several foundational initiatives, including a municipal tree canopy assessment, canopy dashboard analysis, and specialized aerial photography, to support evidence-based urban forestry planning. The proposed UFMS update will provide a comprehensive assessment of current urban forest conditions and Urban Forestry operations across the organization and the community. The updated strategy will provide guidance for the stewardship of the City's extensive urban forest assets and help to establish goals, objectives, and performance targets to guide the long-term management.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The UFMS project is not currently included in the 2026-2030 Financial Plan. Total project costs are estimated at \$175,000, contingent on a successful grant application. If the grant application is successful, the City would be required to contribute \$35,000, representing 20% of total eligible costs.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This initiative does not require a statutory notification; however, community engagement, education and awareness activities may be included as part of the UFMS development.

ALIGNMENT WITH CITY PLAN

The report is aligned with the following City goals (tick all applicable goals, consult the [City Plan](#) for more details):

- A Green Nanaimo: Resilient and Regenerative Ecosystems
 - C1.3 Urban Tree Canopy, Natural Areas, and Greenways
- A Connected Nanaimo: Equitable Access and Mobility
- A Healthy Nanaimo: Community Wellbeing and Livability
- An Empowered Nanaimo: Reconciliation, Representation, and Inclusion
- A Prosperous Nanaimo: Thriving and Resilient Economy

The UFMS update project is also identified as Priority 16 in the Integrated Action Plan. The strategy is an update to the tree canopy management strategy and will help to inform future tree protection bylaw updates.

ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The report is aligned with the following Council Strategic Framework priorities (tick all applicable goals, consult [Council's Strategic Framework](#) for more details):

- Implementing City Plan Action Plans and Key City Management Plans
- Social, Health and Public Safety Challenges
- Maintaining and Growing Current Services
- Capital Projects

- Communicating with the Community
 Governance and Corporate Excellence

OPTIONS

1. That Council direct staff to:
 - a. To apply to the GCCC program for funding of \$140,000 to update the City of Nanaimo's Urban Forestry Management Strategy; and
 - b. To include the Urban Forestry Management Strategy Update in the 2026-2030 Financial Plan at a total cost of \$175,000, \$50,000 in 2026 and \$125,000 in 2027 funded by grant of \$140,000 and \$35,000 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund
 - The advantages of this option: The City's Urban Forestry Management Strategy was last updated in 2010 and is due for renewal to reflect current conditions and emerging best practices. Updating the UFMS through the GCCC program provides an efficient and cost-effective opportunity to strengthen long-term urban forest management.
 - The disadvantages of this option: A successful grant application will require a 20% municipal funding contribution and allocation of staff time to support project development.
 - Financial Implications: The UFMS project is not currently included in the 2026 - 2030 Financial Plan. The 2026 – 2030 Financial Plan will be amended for final to include the project, contingent on a successful grant application.
2. That Council provide staff with alternate instructions.

KEY MESSAGES

- The Green Municipal Fund's (GMF) Growing Canada's Community Canopies (GCCC) fund provides funding of up to 80% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$175,000.
- Staff recommend applying for funding to update the City's Urban Forestry Management Strategy.
- The grant application deadline is April 15, 2026.

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