



# Governance & Services Committee

**TO:** Governance and Services Committee

**FROM:** Murray Kopp  
Director of Parks Services

**DATE:** September 09, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Parks Hazard Tree and Tree Management Policy

---

**Purpose:** To seek approval from the Regional Board to adopt Board policy to support the inspection and management of hazard trees and tree management wholly or in part in RDCO parks.

## Executive Summary:

The proposed RDCO Parks Hazard Tree and Tree Management Policy will assist in the identification of hazardous trees in RDCO Regional and Community parks, especially in high human use activity areas including pathways, picnic areas, and exit and entrance ways, and in scheduling the required maintenance of these trees. The policy recognizes the importance of managing trees based on worker safety and risk management strategies for visitor safety, balanced with the responsibility to manage the resource for conservation values.

## RECOMMENDATION:

**THAT** the Governance and Services Committee recommends the Regional Board approve the Parks Hazard Tree and Tree Management Policy.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Kopp".

Murray Kopp, Director – Parks Services

Approved for Board's Consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Corie Griffiths".

Corie Griffiths,  
Director of Corporate Services

*Policy Prepared by:* Matt Hammond, Supervisor of Operations – Parks Services

---

**Implications of Recommendation:**

Strategic Plan:	The update of this policy to the current standards supports the strategic plan of the Regional Board by providing proactive and responsive governance though keeping policies current and relevant.
Financial:	On-going operational funding is considered through the development of annual financial plans. If the proposed policy is approved in 2021, the incremental annual operating budget required to be considered within the overall 2022 - 2026 RDCO Regional and Community Parks submissions will be proposed to be \$50,000 to the Regional Parks (142) program, \$10,000 to the Electoral Area Westside Community Parks (143) program and \$5000 to the Electoral Area East Community Parks (144) program increasing in each of the previously identified programs by 2% - 5% annually through to 2026.
Policy:	Establishing a Hazard Tree and Tree Management RDCO Board Policy would further enhance the RDCO Parks Department current operational procedures that support a common affirmative duty on occupiers of land and premises to take reasonable care that people and their property will be reasonably safe (Occupier's Liability Act).

---

**Background:**

Trees perform important functions that protect and enhance Central Okanagan resident's health and property. Trees make RDCO parks more beautiful and contribute to the emotional well-being of residents. They also clean the air by absorbing air pollutants and releasing oxygen, reduce storm water runoff and erosion, moderate climate, help reduce energy consumption, create wildlife habitat and strengthen community. They provide significant benefits to our community's economy and way of life. The benefits of trees are well understood however trees may also develop defects that can create hazards. Extreme weather events may cause healthy trees to fail, resulting in some risk to individuals using parks, trails and pathways within striking distance of tree branches or stems. The proposed policy is intended to reduce the risks associated with trees.

As the Central Okanagan has been rapidly urbanizing, it has become the occupier and manager of a growing amounts of public forest land that have many recreational uses. Because the RDCO invites public access and recreation in its natural areas, it has a duty to provide for reasonably safe use of the natural areas. That duty includes managing the risks associated with tree hazards.

**Financial Considerations:**

Approval of the recommendation in this report has the following additional Operating budget implications to be considered within the overall 2022 - 2026 RDCO Regional and Community Parks budget submissions. If approved in 2021, the incremental annual operating budget required beginning in 2022 for the mapping of existing maintained trails parks, trails and pathways that contain stationary park infrastructure (i.e. benches, picnic tables, trailhead signs) that are within striking distance of potentially hazardous trees, tree branches or stems, the installation of trail markers for the purpose of identification and record keeping, and signage identifying the nature of the trails and any caution that needs to be exercised as well as the contracting of external professional contracting services to address any of the more challenging identified hazard trees would be \$50,000 to the Regional Parks (142) program, \$10,000 to the Electoral Area Westside Community Parks (143) program and \$5000 to the Electoral Area East Community

Parks (144) program increasing in each program by 5% annually through to 2026. If approved, these costs will be incorporated into the draft 2022 – 2026 Parks budget request for Board consideration.

**External Implications:**

Generally, local governments in British Columbia will honour the duty of care that supports the implementation of a hazard tree management program. The Occupier's Liability Act imposes a common affirmative duty on occupiers of land and premises to take reasonable care that people and their property will be reasonably safe. An occupier is defined as a person who has physical possession of premises. The goal of the Act is to promote, and require where circumstances warrant, positive action on the part of occupiers to make their premises reasonably safe.

**Alternative Recommendation:**

**THAT** the Governance & Services Committee does not approve the proposed Parks Hazard Tree and Tree Management Policy and requests that RDCO Parks staff revise the policy to reflect RDCO Governance and Services Committee requested edits for subsequent review at a future Governance & Services Committee meeting.

***Considerations not applicable to this report:***

- *Organizational Issues*
- *Legal/Statutory Authority*

**Attachment(s):**

- Parks Hazard Tree and Tree Management Policy