



Summary of Tree Protection Survey Results



A survey was advertised and posted on the City’s website for two weeks in early April, and we received 307 responses. The intent of the survey was to get a good sense of the public’s concerns and priorities related to tree protection in the City of North Port. The survey results will guide the discussions at the public workshops scheduled for April 23rd and 25th. The following is a summary of the survey results.

1. What do you value about trees in the City of North Port? (Check all that apply)

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Air and water quality	224	73%
Aquifer recharge	236	77%
Shade/Cooling effect	154	50%
Reduce stormwater runoff	194	63%
Wildlife habitat	245	80%
Aesthetic and other health benefits	206	67%
Noise mitigation	209	68%
Enhancement of property values	188	61%
Nothing-no value	12	4%
Did not respond	2	1%

2. Are you concerned about clearcutting and tree removal in North Port?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Very concerned	177	58%
Somewhat concerned	64	21%
Not concerned	65	21%
Did not respond	1	0%

3. Should the City make tree protection a higher priority?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes, the City needs to do more to protect trees	173	56%
No, the current regulations are sufficient	58	19%
No, the current regulations are too restrictive	74	24%
Did not respond	2	1%

4. The City has a goal to maintain a minimum of 35% canopy coverage when trees are mature. Do you feel this is adequate based on what you are seeing after properties are developed?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	137	45%
No	165	54%
Did not respond	5	2%

5. Should the minimum 35% canopy coverage goal be increased to account for trees that die off?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	185	60%
No	117	38%
Did not respond	5	2%

6. Do you think native trees should be given a higher priority for preservation than non-native trees?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	222	72%
No	81	26%
Did not respond	4	1%

7. Do you think larger/older trees should be given a higher priority for preservation than smaller/younger trees?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	206	67%
No	93	30%
Did not respond	8	3%

8. If larger trees are allowed to be removed, should it always be a requirement to compensate for their removal either by planting trees elsewhere or paying into a tree fund?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	196	64%
No	108	35%
Did not respond	3	1%

9. Do you support the use of incentives to encourage property developers to preserve trees and enhance tree canopy coverage?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	237	77%
No	68	22%
Did not respond	2	1%

10. Should property developers be required to remove and manage invasive species?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	237	77%
No	66	21%
Did not respond	4	1%

11. Should fines be increased to discourage illegal land clearing?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	226	74%
No	78	25%
Did not respond	3	1%

12. Should home owners be allowed to have trees cut down on their property without any restrictions or review?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	159	52%
No	147	48%
Did not respond	1	0%

13. Should home owners be allowed to have trees cut down on their property if there is currently more than 35% canopy coverage?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	242	79%
No	61	20%
Did not respond	4	1%

14. Do you support the use of incentives to encourage homeowners to preserve trees and enhance tree canopy coverage?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	234	76%
No	72	23%
Did not respond	1	0%

15. If native trees were available for planting on your property at a minimal cost, would you be interested in planting some?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	246	80%
No	58	19%
Did not respond	3	1%

16. Do you think more trees should be planted in your neighborhood on public property?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	144	47%
No	156	51%
Did not respond	7	2%

If yes, which neighborhood/street

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Provided comments	104	34%
Did not provide comments	156	66%

17. Do you have specific thoughts or concerns about tree preservation?

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Provided comments	151	49%
Did not provide comments	156	51%

Summary of Comments on Question #17 by Category

(151 respondents provided comments)

Anti-Clear Cutting (31)

Respondents understand buildings must exist but that completely clearing a property is unacceptable and should be avoided as often or for as long as possible.

Dislike Regulation of Homeowner's Private Property (23)

Respondents do not believe any regulation should affect trees on their private property. They sometimes point out the delays and difficulty in seeking a permit for removal of a dangerous tree. They also want people to know that they pay property taxes.

Pro-Tree (15)

These are just pro-trees in general and do not specify an issue or means of redress.

Specific Area (12)

These respondents point out specific instances of planting that they enjoy or have negative experience with. Often along particular streets or in specific neighborhoods. More information about where and what these comments spoke about can be found along with the feedback about "Do you think more trees should be planted in your neighborhood on public property? If yes, which neighborhood/street?" from the survey.

Pro-Regulation (7)

These are in direct opposition to the **Dislike Regulation of Homeowner's Private Property** crowd.

Dislike Regulation on Homeowner's Private Property & Anti-Clear Cutting (6)

Comments became progressively more complex, with the combination of the sentiments of not liking clear cutting on the part of large developers but still wanting the freedom for private home owners to maintain their property through tree removal and trimming.

Anti-Regulation (5) Anti-Government (1)

Responded in terms of not wanting regulations in general, often taking as a given the idea of government regulations as unwanted or inherently bad.

Mitigation/Pro-Replacement (4) Preservation Areas (1)

Those that believe replacing trees that are lost, even if such replacement is off site. Pro-tree, but not necessarily onsite. Replanting in other parts of the city is suggested. Replacing trees that are lost, but also placing them for optimum growth.

Tree Types (3)

The emphasis here is on excluding non-native or potentially invasive trees, seeing them as a nuisance.

Keep Existing Plants (3)

This ties into both **Tree Types** and **Anti-Clear Cutting**. Wanting to maintain existing trees whenever possible and encouraging business to work around trees.

Anti-Growth/Anti-Development (3)

Distinctly want further construction to be slowed or halted. This goes beyond being Anti-Clear Cutting, wanting to maintain more natural environment.

Pro-Wildlife (3)

In this instance the trees are more a means to an end of providing habitat for wildlife.

Pro-Canopy (2)

The emphasis on having shade and canopy streets.

Complex (2)

Explaining complex feelings about the topic or asking a pointed question about fees. No specific recommendation or clear opinion.

Carbon Futures (1), Absentee Property Owners (1), Commercial versus Residential (1), Pro-Pruning (1), Tree Maintenance is Expensive (1)

These each deal with a very specific idea related to tree preservation.

Multi-Topic = (25)

These are the longest comments that speak to several topics at once. They contain elements from each of the above categories, and sometimes elements all their own.