Strasbourg Public Consultation Summary

1. Purpose

The Town of Strasbourg conducted public consultation to understand how residents value the urban forest, identify priorities for future tree management and planting, and inform the development of the Urban Forest Management Plan.

The consultation results are considered alongside the Town's updated tree inventory, Urban Forestry Policy TS-004, Official Community Plan and current strategic priorities. Together, these sources provide a practical basis for future decision-making, investment and program delivery.

A total of **47 residents completed the consultation survey**. The consultation demonstrates strong community support for protecting and expanding Strasbourg's urban forest. 83% of respondents support or strongly support a long-term tree-canopy target, and no respondents selected "oppose" or "strongly oppose." Residents recognize trees as important municipal assets that provide shade, beauty, wind protection, biodiversity and community value.

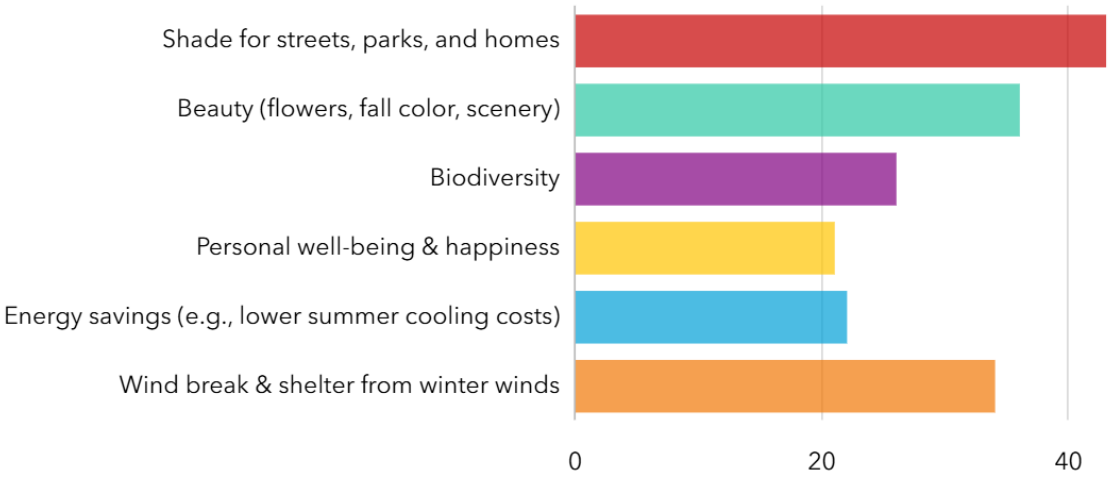
The strongest public priorities are to replace trees lost to age, storms, pests or disease; maintain mature trees and address visible safety concerns; and plant in low-canopy areas. Residents also place a high value on species diversity, with **89.4%** rating it very or extremely important.

These priorities align closely with the 2026 inventory findings. Strasbourg's public tree population is generally healthy, with **79.3%** of surveyed trees classified as excellent or good. However, the urban forest is heavily concentrated in a small number of species. Green ash, Siberian elm and Manitoba maple represent **62.4%** of the surveyed inventory, while ash and elm species together represent approximately **55.2%** of all surveyed trees. This concentration creates a long-term vulnerability to Emerald Ash Borer, Dutch Elm Disease and other future pest, disease and climate pressures.

The recommended direction is a phased, replacement-first urban forest program that protects healthy mature canopy while steadily improving diversity, tree survival, operational capacity and public accountability. The program should be supported by an up-to-date GIS inventory, grant-ready planting plans, proactive pest and disease preparedness, and realistic funding for ongoing maintenance.

2. Community Values and Benefits of Trees

Residents clearly recognize the practical and community-wide benefits provided by Strasbourg's trees.



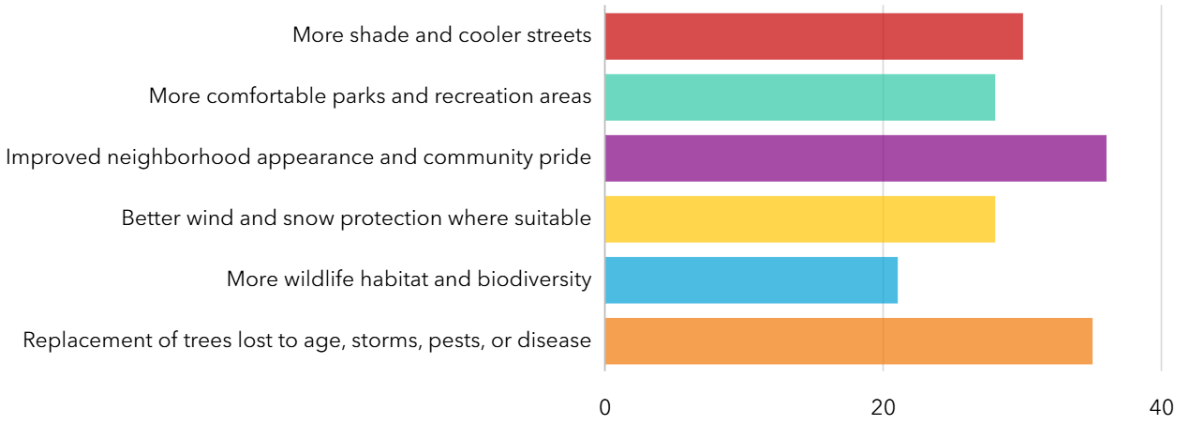
Benefit identified by respondents	Responses	Percentage
Shade for streets, parks and homes	43	91.5%
Beauty, flowers, fall colour and scenery	36	76.6%
Windbreak and shelter from winter winds	34	72.3%
Biodiversity	26	55.3%
Energy savings	22	46.8%
Personal well-being and happiness	21	44.7%

Shade was the strongest single result in the consultation, selected by **91.5%** of respondents. This demonstrates that residents view trees not only as landscaping, but as practical infrastructure that improves comfort, livability and the function of public spaces.

When asked about the benefits of planting more trees, residents placed greatest importance on:

- Improved neighbourhood appearance and community pride: **76.6%**
- Replacing trees lost to age, storms, pests or disease: **74.5%**
- More shade and cooler streets: **63.8%**
- More comfortable parks and recreation areas: **59.6%**

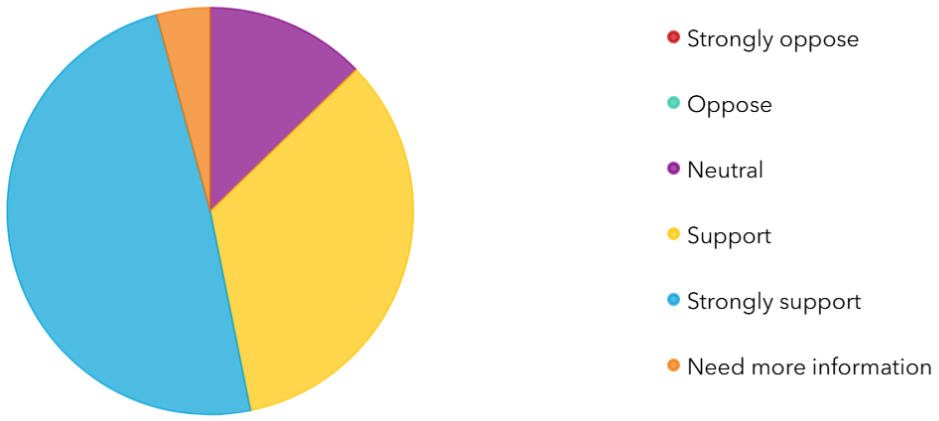
- Better wind and snow protection where suitable: **59.6%**
- More wildlife habitat and biodiversity: **44.7%**



These findings show that residents are seeking both visible improvements and long-term environmental benefits from future tree planting.

3. Support for Canopy Growth and Species Diversity

The consultation found strong support for establishing a long-term canopy goal for Strasbourg.



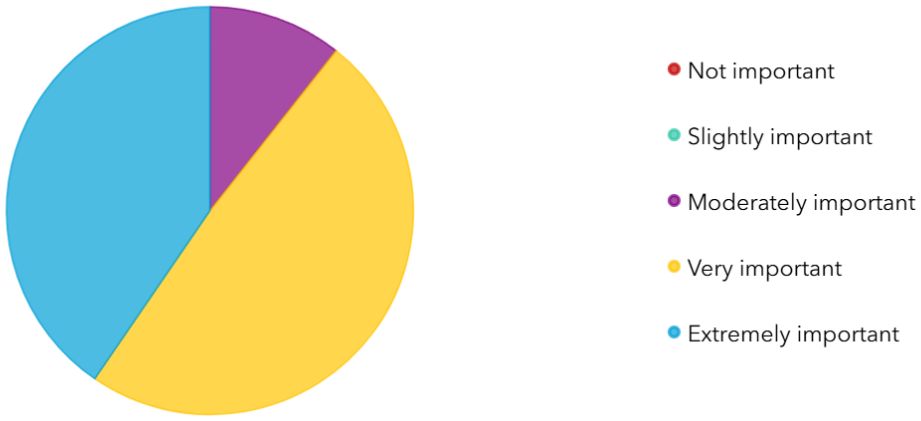
Response to long-term canopy target	Responses	Percentage
Strongly support	23	48.9%
Support	16	34.0%

Neutral	6	12.8%
Need more information	2	4.3%
Oppose / strongly oppose	0	0.0%

A total of **39 respondents, or 83.0%, support or strongly support** a long-term canopy target. No respondents opposed the direction. This provides a positive basis for the Town to establish a realistic, measurable canopy objective as part of the Urban Forest Management Plan.

The survey introduced respondents to the Town's current canopy estimate of approximately 3.3%. Before this figure is adopted as a formal long-term baseline, the Town should confirm the boundary, imagery date and measurement method so future comparisons remain consistent.

Species diversity also received very strong support:

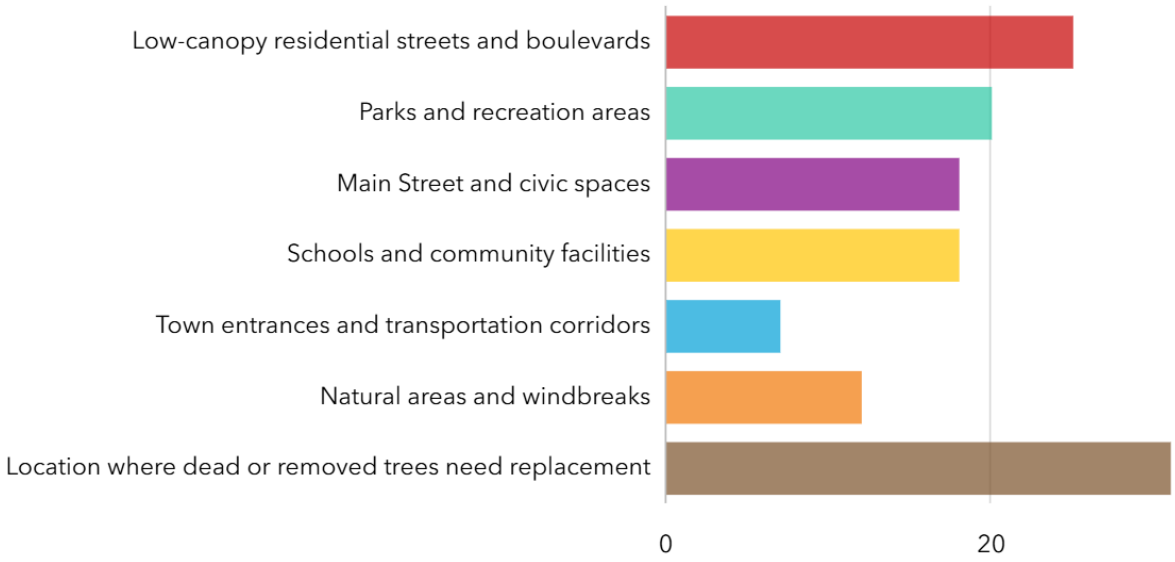


Importance of increasing species diversity	Responses	Percentage
Extremely important	19	40.4%
Very important	23	48.9%
Moderately important	5	10.6%
Slightly important / not important	0	0.0%

Overall, **89.4%** of respondents considered increasing species diversity very or extremely important. This is a particularly important finding because it directly supports the technical direction emerging from the tree inventory.

4. Preferred Planting Locations and Community Priorities

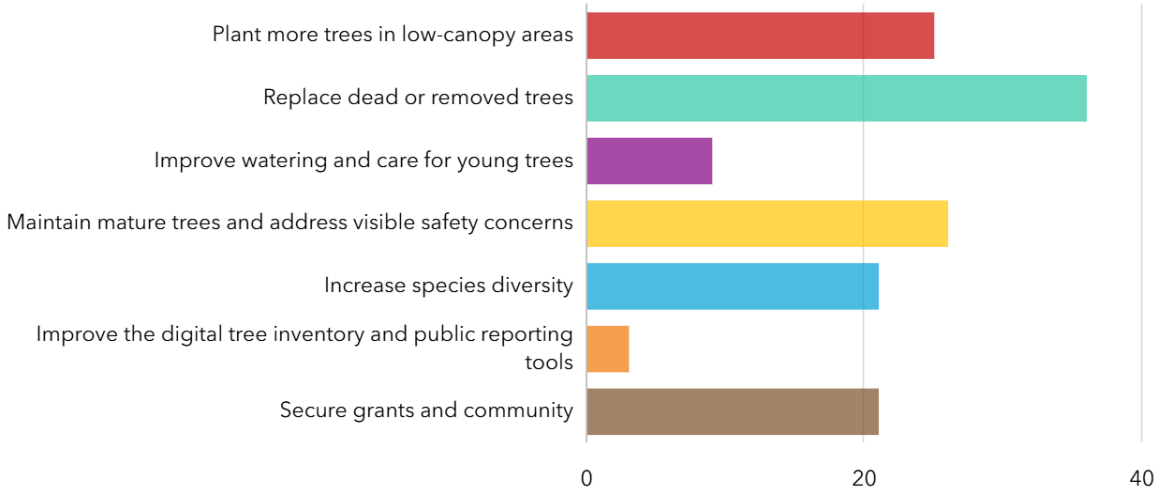
Residents identified the following locations as priorities for future tree planting:



Preferred planting location	Responses	Percentage
Locations where dead or removed trees need replacement	31	66.0%
Low-canopy residential streets and boulevards	25	53.2%
Parks and recreation areas	20	42.6%
Main Street and civic spaces	18	38.3%
Schools and community facilities	18	38.3%
Natural areas and windbreaks	12	25.5%
Town entrances and transportation corridors	7	14.9%

The preferred direction is clear: residents want the Town to first address locations where trees have been removed, then expand planting into low-canopy residential streets, parks, civic areas and community facilities.

When asked to select the most important actions for improving Strasbourg's urban forest, respondents identified:



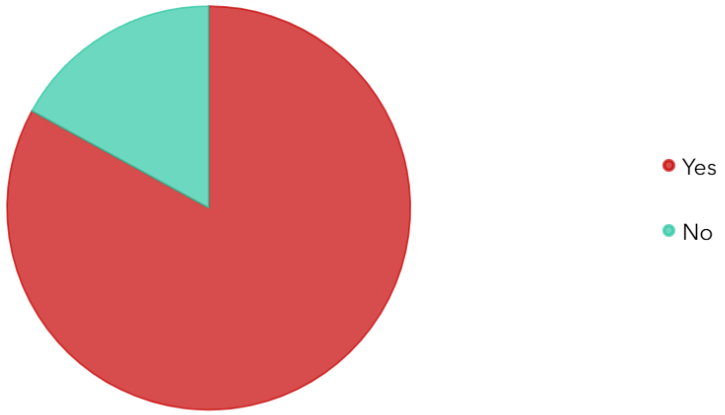
Improvement priority	Responses	Percentage
Replace dead or removed trees	36	76.6%
Maintain mature trees and address visible safety concerns	26	55.3%
Plant more trees in low-canopy areas	25	53.2%
Increase species diversity	21	44.7%
Secure grants and community support	21	44.7%
Improve watering and care for young trees	9	19.1%
Improve digital inventory and public reporting tools	3	6.4%

Replacement planting should therefore be the first visible component of the Town's program. It responds directly to the strongest public priority and can demonstrate early, tangible progress.

5. Awareness of Dutch Elm Disease

82.98% (39 of 47) are aware Strasbourg lies within a known DED distribution zone; 17.02% (8) are not.

High awareness is an asset. It means DED-driven removals are unlikely to generate the public backlash that unexplained tree removal usually produces, and it provides a ready-made hook for communicating the diversification case.



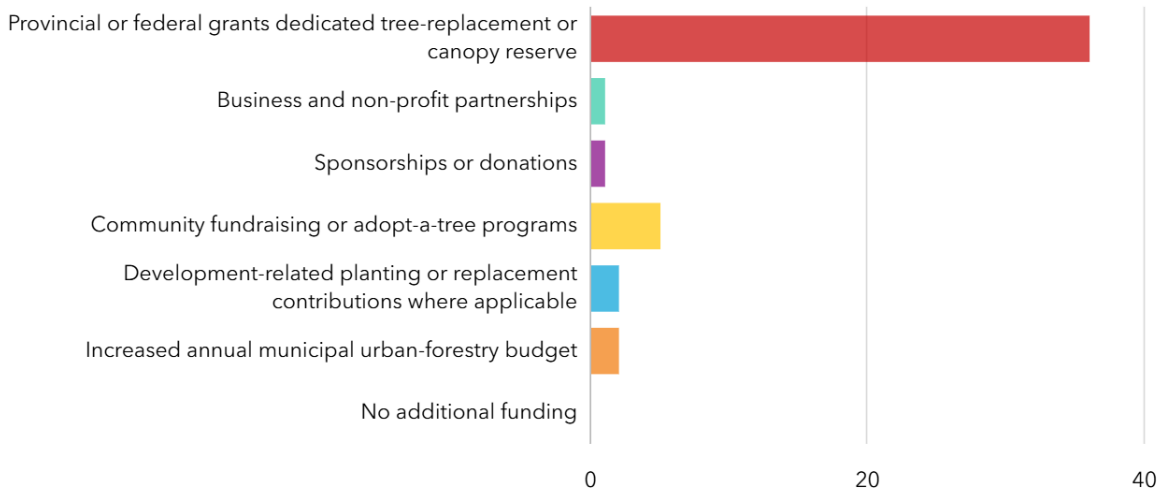
6. Operational Capacity and Funding

Residents recognize that a successful urban forest program requires more than planting trees. It also requires sufficient capacity for inspection, watering, pruning, removal, recordkeeping and replacement care.

Staffing, equipment and tree-care capacity are needed	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	11	23.4%
Agree	27	57.4%
Neutral	8	17.0%
Disagree / strongly disagree	1	2.1%

A total of **38 respondents, or 80.9%, agree or strongly agree** that adequate staffing, equipment and tree-care capacity are necessary. This supports a phased implementation model in which planting commitments are aligned with the Town's ability to establish and maintain new trees.

Residents identified provincial or federal grants as the preferred funding approach:



Funding approach	Responses	Percentage
Provincial or federal grants for tree replacement or canopy reserve	36	76.6%
Community fundraising or adopt-a-tree programs	5	10.6%
Development-related contributions, where applicable	2	4.3%
Increased annual municipal urban forestry budget	2	4.3%
Business or non-profit partnerships	1	2.1%
Sponsorships or donations	1	2.1%
No additional funding	0	0.0%

These results support the Town's pursuit of external funding opportunities, including the pending FCM application. Grants can accelerate planting and inventory improvements; however, the long-term program should also include a realistic municipal commitment to inspection, maintenance, watering and replacement care.

7. Community Participation and Stewardship

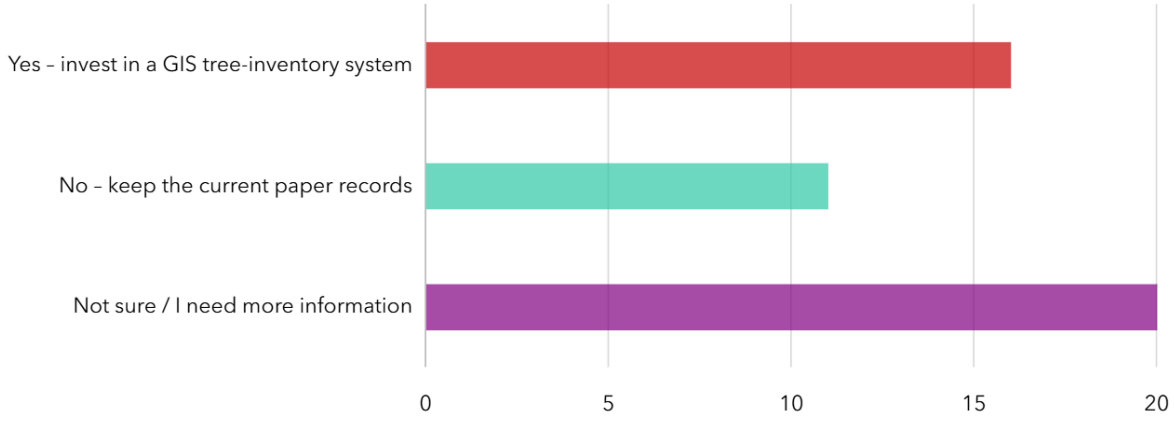
The consultation shows a positive opportunity to build community stewardship over time.

Potential form of participation	Responses	Percentage
Help water or monitor a young public tree through an approved program	16	34.0%
Not at this time	13	27.7%
Participate in a community planting event	9	19.1%
Make or help secure a donation or sponsorship	6	12.8%
Report tree concerns or suggest planting locations	3	6.4%
Join a business or community partnership	0	0.0%

The strongest form of potential participation is helping water or monitor young trees. This suggests that the Town could consider a small, structured stewardship initiative, such as an adopt-a-tree, memorial-tree or young-tree watering program. Clear expectations, safety guidance and Town coordination would be important to make this practical and sustainable.

8. Digital Tree Inventory and Public Information

When asked about a GIS-based digital tree inventory system:



Response	Responses	Percentage
Yes – invest in a GIS tree inventory system	16	34.0%
No – retain current paper records	11	23.4%
Not sure / need more information	20	42.6%

The results do not indicate strong opposition to a digital inventory. Rather, they suggest that many residents would benefit from clearer explanation of how the system supports the Town's day-to-day operations.

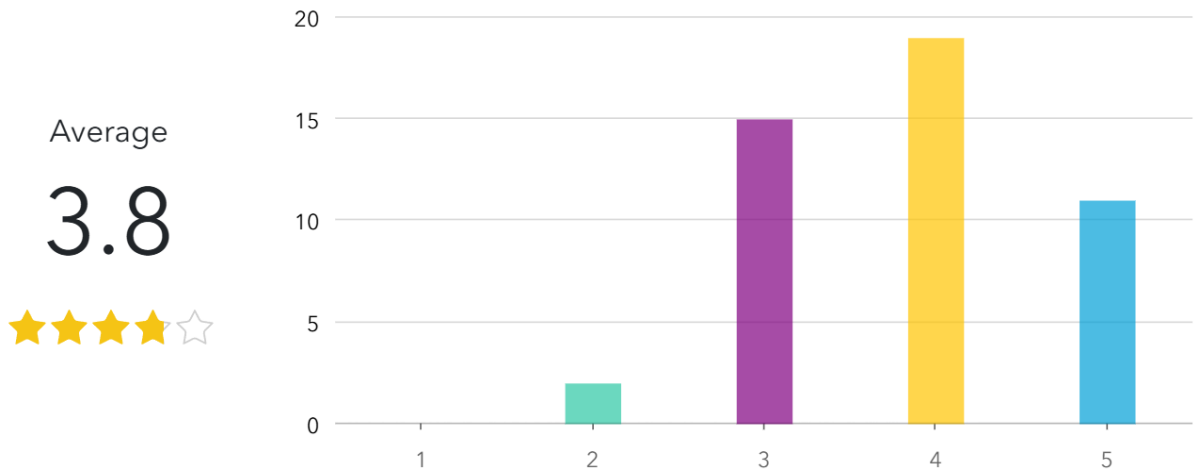
A GIS inventory can help the Town:

- Record tree planting, inspection, pruning, removal and replacement work;
- Identify vacant planting sites and low-canopy areas;
- Track young-tree establishment, watering and survival;
- Support Dutch Elm Disease monitoring and Emerald Ash Borer preparedness;
- Prioritize inspection and maintenance work;
- Strengthen grant applications with clear planting locations, species, costs and measurable outcomes;
- Improve annual reporting to Council and the public.

The Town should communicate GIS as a practical work-planning and accountability tool that supports field crews and municipal decision-making.

9. Overall Satisfaction

Solid and above the average. 36.2% rated 3 or below and 23.4% gave top marks. There is no crisis of confidence, and equally no reservoir of goodwill to draw on.



Average rating 3.8 of 5.

Rating	Count	Share
5	11	23.4%
4	19	40.4%
3	15	31.9%
2	2	4.3%
1	0	0.0%

10. What Tree Inventory Tells Us

The 2026 operational tree inventory records **997 surveyed public trees representing 27 species**. The inventory provides important technical context for the consultation findings.

Tree condition

The overall condition of the public tree population is a major strength:

- Excellent: 397 trees, or 39.8%

- Good: 394 trees, or 39.5%
- Fair: 152 trees, or 15.2%
- Poor or declining: 40 trees, or 4.0%
- Dead: 14 trees, or 1.4%

Overall, **79.3% of surveyed trees are in excellent or good condition**. The Town therefore has a strong base from which to pursue proactive management. The 54 poor, declining or dead records should be field-validated and prioritized according to tree defects, site use and potential consequences.

Species concentration and resilience

Although 27 species are represented in the inventory, the tree population remains highly concentrated:

- Green ash: 294 trees, or 29.5%
- Siberian elm: 173 trees, or 17.4%
- Manitoba maple: 155 trees, or 15.5%
- American elm: 72 trees, or 7.2%

These four species represent **69.6%** of the inventory. The three leading species – green ash, Siberian elm and Manitoba maple, account for **62.4%** of all surveyed trees.

Ash species represent approximately **30.6%** of the public tree inventory, and elm species represent approximately **24.6%**. This creates significant potential exposure to Emerald Ash Borer and Dutch Elm Disease.

The consultation result on diversity provides a clear community mandate to address this issue gradually through future planting. The objective should not be to remove healthy trees prematurely, but to reduce future dependence on ash, elm and Manitoba maple through each planting cycle.

Age and size structure

The inventory also identifies two parallel management needs.

Approximately **43.9%** of all surveyed trees are between 11 cm and 30 cm DBH, representing a substantial young and developing tree population. Green ash and Siberian elm are strongly represented within these younger size classes. This means the Town's future canopy could remain concentrated in vulnerable species unless future planting is diversified.

Manitoba maple has a different profile. Approximately **60.6%** of surveyed Manitoba maples exceed 50 cm DBH. These mature trees provide important canopy and community benefit, but they should be included in proactive inspection, pruning and phased succession planning as they age.

11. Key Implications

The consultation and inventory findings point to a consistent municipal direction.

1. **Protect the healthy canopy already in place.**
   With 79.3% of trees in excellent or good condition, routine inspection, pruning and timely maintenance can protect more canopy in the short term than planting alone can replace.
2. **Replace verified losses through an annual program.**
   Replacement of dead or removed trees is the community's strongest priority. The Town is recommended to maintain a current list of removals, vacant planting sites and suitable replacement locations.

3. **Use each planting cycle to improve diversity.**
   Strasbourg is recommended to gradually reduce dependence on ash, elm and Manitoba maple while avoiding the creation of a new species concentration. Species should be selected based on site conditions, mature size, drought tolerance, winter hardiness, utilities, pest resistance and long-term maintenance needs.

4. **Prepare for Dutch Elm Disease and Emerald Ash Borer.**
   The Town can consider continuing annual DED inspections and comply with the provincial elm-pruning restriction. It should also maintain an up-to-date ash inventory, establish Emerald Ash Borer monitoring and response procedures, and prepare cost and public communication scenarios.

5. **Support young-tree survival.**
   Tree planting must be matched with watering, inspection, structural pruning and replacement of failed trees. Long-term success should be measured by survival and maturity, not only planting numbers.

6. **Use the GIS inventory as an operational tool.**
   The updated inventory should be maintained after planting, inspection, pruning and removal work. It can support prioritization, budgeting, grant applications and transparent annual reporting.

12. Conclusion

The public consultation confirms that Strasbourg residents value their urban forest and support a long-term, practical approach to canopy growth. Residents want the Town to replace lost trees, maintain mature trees, improve diversity, plant in low-canopy areas and pursue external funding. They also recognize that successful delivery requires adequate staffing, equipment and long-term tree-care capacity.