

Street Tree Policy

Policy Owner:	Parks and Conservation Management
Contact Person:	Coordinator Conservation Maintenance and Trees
Date of Approval:	Draft

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this Policy are:

- Provide guidance for the care, control, management, protection and preservation of City trees;
- To Increase the City's canopy cover;
- To enhance the amenity of the City's streetscapes and reserves through the planting of new trees; and
- To define the circumstances under which the City's trees may be removed or pruned.

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Wanneroo (the City):

- Recognises the significance of trees within the urban setting in terms of creating functional and aesthetic streetscapes and reserves and has the responsibility for the planning, establishment, care, control and maintenance of all City tree's; and
- Will plan for urban enhancement through the retention of suitable trees within proposed road reservations and public reserves.

SCOPE

The Policy applies to all trees that are owned or managed by the City of Wanneroo, such trees shall be referred to as the City's trees. A City tree includes any tree which has a majority equal to, or greater than 50% of its trunk growing from Council managed land.

Council officers, residents/owners, builders, developers, contractors, representatives and event organisers are all required to comply with this Policy.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework for the development of high quality streetscapes that require minimal resource input, thereby increasing environmental values. The Policy will assist the City of Wanneroo in moving toward a greener, more liveable City by increasing tree numbers and ultimately canopy coverage across the City.

The Policy recognises that in the constantly changing/developing urban environment, street tree planting can be in competition with pedestrian, parking and infrastructure needs. The Policy seeks to balance these conflicting demands through appropriate tree species selection, planting location and maintenance practices. There are a range of additional City documents, including Local Planning Policy 4.10: Streetscapes, Local Planning Policy 4.8: Tree Preservation and the City's Street Tree Masterplan, that complement this Policy, and together these documents promote an integrated approach to streetscape planning and management.

The Policy promotes biodiversity values across the City by increasing the range of tree species recommended for planting. Both native and non-endemic species will be encouraged. This practice, coupled with an increase in street tree numbers, will potentially increase wildlife habitat and increase solar passive benefits throughout the streetscapes.

To improve environmental and economic sustainability, trees will be planted that are suited to the growing conditions. This will be achieved by selecting trees that will be adaptable to local conditions and through implementing best practice installation methods.

The Policy advocates the protection of historical single and street tree avenues, along with those that have a significant environmental impact within the streetscape.

Whilst there is a commitment to fund and achieve the vision outlined in this Policy, the City recognises its delivery will be dependent on available funding in any given financial year.

CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The City values its stakeholder's opinion, and encourages consultation and communication in the improvement of its streetscape/urban forest. In accordance with the City's Community Engagement Policy's Key Values and Principles; namely:

- Encouraging participation of people who live, work, visit or support the City of Wanneroo; and
- Ensuring relevant information is readily available and that is accurate, comprehensive and easy to understand.

The City will apply the following practices:

- Internal consultation with the City's relevant service units;
- Increase resident involvement in the ongoing care of its streets and reserves by hosting community planting events;
- Inform affected residents of street tree plantings and removals through various mediums;
- Encourage community consultation in programmed street tree plantings and removals by providing opportunities to comment; and
- Raise community knowledge about the benefits of trees and the place they have in our streetscapes through information leaflets, the City's web-page, social and local media.

IMPLICATIONS

The ongoing implementation of this policy will result in the following financial implications:

- Cost of planting trees to meet the standard outlined in the Policy;
- Cost to developers and external stakeholders in the provision and protection of street trees in accordance with this Policy; and
- On-going operational budget to manage and maintain the City's trees in accordance with this Policy.

IMPLEMENTATION**Planning for Trees**

The City shall give consideration to the use or retention of trees as part of any streetscape in its planning process. Naturally occurring trees, where appropriate, shall be retained within the streetscape.

Selection of new varieties shall suite the character of particular localities.

Tree Planting

The City shall undertake tree planting on streets, as part of its annual Winter Street Tree Planting Program. Requests from residents/occupants will also be considered annually as part of the program. The following serve only as guidelines for all street tree plantings. Variations under exceptional circumstances shall be at the discretion of the City:

- Ensure a minimum of one (1) tree is planted in the verge adjacent to each residential property;
- Address gaps in streetscapes;
- Plant at least three (3) metres away from any public utility junction box, manhole, pole or aerial feeder line;
- Trees to be planted at a distance of two point seven (2.7) metres from the private property line or at such alignment as approved under the Utility Provider's Code of Practice;
- Street Trees to be planted at no less than five (5) metre centres. (Spacing's to be dependent upon species type and specific locations);
- Plantings near road intersections and crossovers will be subject to pedestrian and motorist safety assessment by the City;
- Street Tree Selection - mixing of Street Tree species in one street may be appropriate dependent upon the outcome of community consultation where an entire street is to be replanted; and
- All tree planting to be in accordance with the City's Street Tree Masterplan.

Unauthorised or Inappropriate Street Tree Planting.

An unauthorised street tree planting shall constitute any one of the following:

- A tree planted without written approval of the City;
- A tree planted of an inappropriate species for verge planting or under powerlines; or
- A tree planted out of alignment in relation to the City's street tree planting specifications.

Where an unauthorised street tree planting is identified, the City shall determine whether the planting can be retained and whether it conforms to the City's planting specifications and Street Tree Masterplan.

Where the planting is recent, and the tree is of a conforming variety but on the wrong alignment or spacing, the City shall liaise with the resident in regards to relocating the tree if deemed suitable at the cost to the resident, occupant and or developer as long as the species lends itself to transplanting.

Where the planting is recent, and the tree is non-conforming in species and planting specifications, the resident/occupant shall be given the option of relocating the tree on private property prior to the City considering its removal and replacement.

Where the planting is more established, and the variety considered not appropriate to transplanting, street tree removal shall apply.

Tree Pruning under Powerlines

The City (or its contractor) shall undertake the pruning of all street trees affected by powerlines on a programmed basis. Programmed street tree pruning shall include trees on the side of the street affected by overhead powerlines as well as trees affected by electrical feeder lines to individual properties on the opposite side of the street. Programmed pruning shall not normally include trees on the opposite side of the street to powerlines.

Programmed pruning is to be planned each year, on an as needs basis. Programmed street tree pruning shall address at least one of the following requirements to:

- Clear the canopy from interference with overhead powerlines and other essential services;
- Remove overhanging branches considered hazardous to traffic, buildings or structures;
- Underprune low growing branches considered hazardous to traffic or pedestrians;
- Form the shape of developing trees;
- Re-define the frame work of mature trees;
- Rejuvenate vigour from undesired growth;
- Reduce crown density or to redistribute growth to lateral branches; or
- Remove dead, dying, diseased or pest infested limbs and branches.

Residents/Occupants may seek to have a street tree under powerlines pruned in advance or out of the programmed schedule and requests for the City's approval must be submitted in writing to the City for consideration.

Tree Pruning where Unaffected by Powerlines

The City shall crown thin, under prune, property line prune (upon request) and remedial prune selected street trees unaffected by power lines, this pruning will be undertaken in the interests of:

- Public safety;
- Reducing structural risk to the tree; or
- Removing growth abnormality or disease, from the tree.

Requests from residents for the pruning of street trees not located under powerlines to reduce their height (therefore reducing leaf/fruit drop or improving light penetration), shall be made in writing to the City. Requests will be assessed in consideration of the following criteria:

- Species of tree;
- Location;
- Reasons highlighted by Resident;
- Health and condition of tree;
- Value of tree in overall streetscape; and
- Potential for significant nuisance or damage to property.

Where residents/occupants contact the City with a request to prune a tree unaffected by power lines, the following procedures is implemented:

- The tree is physically inspected by the City. An inspection report is completed, containing relevant statistical details;
- The resident/occupier will be advised of the City's decision concerning their request; and
- In the event of a specific issue relating to pruning of significant trees, unaffected by power lines not being adequately covered by this policy/procedure, the matter is referred to Council for consideration and determination.

Street trees shall not be pruned to improve visibility for advertising signs or in order to provide or restore views from private property. Chipping and recycling of tree pruning's is the preferred method of disposal.

Tree RemovalRequests

Section 6.1 of the City's Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016, prohibits the damage or removal of a street tree, or part of a tree without a licence. Any unauthorised person who removes/prunes/damages a street verge tree commits an offence for which an infringement notice may be issued.

Street tree removals shall generally be on a "remove and replace" basis. Adjoining residents will be advised prior to removal, outlining reasons for such removal(s).

Elected Members will be notified on all planned tree removals in their relevant Ward. Requests from residents for the removal of street trees shall be in writing and will be considered on their merits by the City on the following criteria:

- Safety, health and condition of the trees;
- Reasons highlighted by the residents;
- Value of tree in streetscape/landscape;
- Potential for significant nuisance or damage to property; and
- History of requests and associated actions in the street.

The City shall deal with street tree removal requests based on the above criteria. Where an entire street tree replacement program is implemented, staged removal of existing trees shall be the preferred option.

Circumstances where trees may normally be removed

The City will normally undertake the removal of street trees under the following circumstances:

- The tree is diseased and beyond remedial treatment, or dead;
- The tree has been assessed by the City as structurally weak and/or dangerous, placing the public at risk or jeopardising safety;
- The tree has been irreparably damaged (e.g. by a storm, vehicle accident);
- The tree is hazardous to motorists/pedestrians owing to interference in suitable sightlines presented by the trees alignment or spacing;
- The tree is affected by road widening, service modification/relocation or other infrastructure works and all other options to retain the tree have been deemed by the City to be inappropriate;
- The tree is dangerously in contact with overhead power lines or distributor wires to properties and where, for reasons of growth habit pertaining to the variety, selective pruning is not practical with the only option being severe lopping;
- The tree precludes reasonable development of an adjoining property and there is no reasonable alternative to removal; or
- The tree is not an approved specie/variety and is unacceptable to the City.

Circumstances where street trees will NOT normally be removed

The following are not considered sufficient reasons for the removal of street trees:

- The tree obscures or potentially obscures views (other than traffic/pedestrian sight lines);
- The tree variety is disliked;
- The tree variety causes nuisance by way of leaf, fruit and/or bark shedding or the like;
- The tree causes allergies;
- The tree is in the way of a non-essential crossover or verge paving option;
- The tree shades private gardens; or
- The unsubstantiated 'potential' damage if the tree fails or from growth damage.

Existing Street Trees adjacent to a development

Where a new or altered crossover or driveway is proposed such that it will require the removal of a street tree or be located within 1.0 metre of an existing street tree, the City or nominee shall also assess the tree to determine whether a street verge tree is likely to be adversely affected as a result of the proposed development or whether the street tree can be removed.

If the street tree removal is not approved, the City shall advise the applicant, in writing, that retention of the street tree is required and that the development access be redesigned. If removal of the street tree is approved, the officer shall advise the applicant that the street tree will be removed by the City at the applicant's expense and a replacement tree to be planted by the City, at the applicant's expense.

Crossovers shall be located a minimum of 1.0 metre from a street tree. Reduction to 0.5 metre may be considered, depending on availability of alternatives, tree species and location, sight lines and traffic safety.

Where approval is given to remove a street verge tree, the removal costs as determined by the City. Where approval for the removal of an existing street verge tree has been granted, a suitable replacement tree as determined by the City's Street Tree Masterplan shall be planted by the City at the applicant's expense. In both instances such payment must be received prior to the works being carried out.

Should an existing street verge tree be damaged as a result of development works, the applicant/builder shall reimburse the City for any arboriculture works required to ensure its survival. The extent/cost of this work shall be determined by the City.

Where an existing street verge tree is pruned/removed without authorisation, legal action may be taken at the discretion of the City

Tree Watering

The City shall undertake the watering of all City trees, for the first two (2) years of the tree/s establishment. Residents/occupants shall be encouraged to water the adjacent street tree during the establishment period.

Unauthorised Interference, Removal, Pruning or Damage to City Trees

Section 6.1 of the City's Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016, prohibits the damage or removal of a street tree, or part of a tree without a licence. In cases where there is reasonable proof of unauthorised interference, removal, pruning or damage to a City tree, the remedies provided for in the Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law may be applied.

Tree Protection at Adjacent Development Sites

City trees need to be protected at development sites in order to preserve the amenity of streetscapes and neighborhoods.

Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) Requirements at Development Sites

For all demolition and construction works the developer/owner is responsible for the protection of all City trees that are to be retained on City managed land adjacent to the property by adhering to the following guidelines:

- A fence must be installed to create a TPZ at the cost of the applicant;
- The type of fencing must be in line with the Australian Standard for Protection of Trees on Development Sites;
- At minimum, the TPZ will cover two metres by two metres around the trunk – any lesser exceptions must first be approved by the City; and
- The TPZ should not obstruct roads or footpaths unless approved alternatives are in place.

Bonds and Payments

Where development has the potential to impact on City trees, a bond for the protection of the tree will be held through the Street and Verge Bond process prior to the development commencing.

The costs associated with removal, pruning and/or damage of a City tree include the following elements:

- Removal Costs – amounting to the fees incurred by the City for physically removing the tree/or part thereof;
- Amenity Value – calculated in accordance to the City's amenity tree calculation, either the Helliwell method or other City approved valuation system; and
- Reinstated Tree Costs – The level of reinstatement required will be determined by Council (and listed in the Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges) and will take into consideration the location, the significance, the biodiversity provision, and the amenity of the tree. Reinstatement tree costs will include costs for watering for 2 years.

The contributory costs for tree removal shall be 10% of the three cost elements above.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parks and Conservation Management is responsible for publication, implementation, and compliance of this Policy and will provide interpretations in the event of the need for clarification or when there is a dispute.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

All disputes in regard to this policy will be referred to the Director Assets in the first instance. In the event that an agreement cannot be reached, the matter will be submitted to council for referral.

Any decisions in respect of the grant, renewal, transfer, amendment, suspension or cancellation of a license under the City of Wanneroo Public Places & Local Government Property Local Law 2016 are to be dealt with in accordance with Division 1 of Part of the Local Government Act.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS POLICY?

All City of Wanneroo Elected Members and Administration.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW PROVISIONS

Policy documents must be reviewed at least every five (5) Years, though changes to related legislation, government policies or City objectives may trigger a review of the document before its calendar review date.

DEFINITIONS

DEFINITIONS: Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only.	
Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)	This is the recognised method for measuring the diameter of the trunk of a tree. The measurement is taken at 1.4 metres from the ground level. Refer to Australian Standard 4970-2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites for more detailed information.
Helliwell Method	This is a recognised system that allows for a monetary value to be placed on the visual amenity provided by an individual tree asset.
Tree	<p>This is defined as a woody perennial plant generally having a single stem or trunk which will grow to a height of approximately 4 metres or more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Tree is any tree which has a majority equal to or greater than 50% of its trunk growing from Council managed land. • Street Tree is a tree that is located within the road reserve. • Reserve Tree is a tree that is located within a park, reserve or natural area.
Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)	This is an area above and below ground that is set aside for protection of trees roots, trunk and crown in order to provide for the viability and stability of a tree that is to be retained at a development site.
Urban Forest	This is a population of trees and other plants growing within an urban setting for the purpose of improving the liveability of that urban setting whilst providing social, economic and environmental benefits to the community as a whole.
Vandalism	This means the unlawful destruction, damage or injury to City owned tree assets which can include, but not limited to, poisoning, pruning, causing malicious damage to, removal and/or ringbarking.
The City	The City of Wanneroo

RELEVANT POLICIES/MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES/DOCUMENTS OR DELEGATIONS

- Local Planning Policy 4.8 – Tree Preservation
- Local Planning Policy 4.10 - Streetscape
- Street Tree Masterplan

REFERENCES

- City's Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016
- City's Street and Verge Bond

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Manager Parks and Conservation Management

Version	Next Review	Record No: