

WORKS

W 5.5 Street Tree Policy

Responsible Department
Resolution Number
Resolution Date
Next Scheduled Review
Related Shire Documents
Related Legislation

Engineering Services
C.4193
21/04/2021
2023

Local Government Act 1995, Utility Providers Code of Practice for Western Australia,

OBJECTIVE

To ensure appropriate management of Trees within the Shire of Northam with regard to the planting and removal, where necessary, of verge trees with those needs to be undertaken in the long term interest of the community as a whole and in conjunction with the Shire Street Tree Management Plan & Guidelines.

SCOPE

To define the circumstances under which the Shires trees can be removed.
To define guidelines for appropriate species to be planted forming entry statements to specific town sites within the Shire of Northam.

POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Shire of Northam recognises the significant contribution that street trees make in providing a high quality public realm where people are encouraged to partake in a wide range of activities, meet others and to linger in comfortable surroundings. This policy is intended to cover the provision of street trees in the Shire of Northam including major parks and gardens.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To “green” the towns within the Shire of Northam by the extensive provision of street trees that are pleasing in appearance and provide extensive shade for the comfort of citizens and provide a range of habitat for fauna.
- 2.2 To add value to the public and private realms by reinforcing the character of the Shire as a desirable place to live or visit.

- 2.3** To provide guidance for the care, control, management, protection and preservation of the Shires Trees.

3. POLICY STATEMENTS

- 3.1** The Shire of Northam values the contribution of trees to achieving a high quality urban environment and will seek to plant streets with trees whenever there is an opportunity to do so within the urban design outcomes for the area. Such plantings will complement any heritage building façade.
- 3.2** Trees may be selected for individual streets that support the urban design role of each street in the Shire's activities.
- 3.3** A diverse range of tree species will be used to reinforce street identity, attract a variety of fauna life to the towns, create visual interest and enhance the amenity of the public realm.
- 3.4** Trees will be planted to form green corridors linking the park lands and major public and civic places.
- 3.5** Historic trees and avenues will be preserved and replaced in recognition of their cultural significance to each town. Adjacent future plantings will be placed to preserve the integrity of these trees and avenues.
- 3.6** All street trees will be managed to maintain them in a healthy state and minimize any adverse impacts of the trees on the public realm.
- 3.7** While exotic deciduous trees will be used in some locations, every attempt will be made to use native trees to reflect and support the growing diverse nature of the Shire's community.
- 3.8** While trees will always be selected that have minimal impact on services such as electricity and water, the Shire of Northam strongly encourages service utilities to minimize the impact of their operations on the street trees of the Shire.

4. PLANTING OF STREET TREES

Trees are an integral part of the fabric of the urban and country environment. Their contribution is both physical and psychological. The Shire of Northam is committed to promoting and maintaining its tree planting/streetscape program.

4.1 Responsibility

The Shire of Northam is responsible for the planting of all trees within reserves under its control, care and management, including road reserve tree plantings, revegetation of denuded sites and various community tree planting projects.

4.2 Type

In the interests of vehicular and pedestrian safety, as well as keeping services clear, street trees on verges shall be of a specific species, planted with a particular alignment.

Trees shall be of a particular variety/species as outlined in the Shire of Northam's "Street Tree Management Plan" and designated tree list.

5. REMOVAL OF STREET TREES

5.1 Natural grown, or Shire planted trees can be removed with the approval of the Executive in cases where:

- they are likely to cause damage to public or private property;
- they constitute a threat to personal safety, trees that are diseased, the tree is decaying, infested or dead, or is a traffic hazard; or
- when in appropriate instances, they need to be removed for road widening or because they interfere with sewerage or underground services or Western Power supply lines.

Responsibility for cost of removal in such instances to rest with the Council.

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 attracts unwanted fauna activity such as birds and bees.
- The tree is in the way of a non-essential crossover or verge paving option;
- The tree limits sunlight reaching solar panels;
- The tree shades private gardens; or
- The unsubstantiated 'potential' damage if the tree fails or from growth damage.

However, consideration will be given to heavy pruning options in these circumstances.

5.2 Private planting, without Council approval, to be removed:

- for reasons described in 5.1 above, or where they are obstructing a proposal entranceway, and no other means of access is available; or
- the tree/s do not conform to the list of approved street trees.

In such circumstances, the responsibility for cost of removal to be that of present owner of property if it can be established that the person was responsible for planting the tree. Where proof of planting cannot be established, Council meet the cost if the criteria for removal is satisfied.

Private planting, with Council approval

- Any verge treatment with approved plantings shall be the responsibility of the landowner to maintain.
Any damage caused to Shire or privately owned property caused by the tree shall be rectified at the cost of the landowner responsible for the maintenance of the approved verge treatment and plantings

5.3 Trees on common boundaries of roads and private properties:

- Cost of removal to be borne by Council where the tree/s are within the definition and satisfy the criteria set out in 5.1 above.
- Cost of removal, or agreed proportion thereof, to be met by applicant in all other circumstances.

5.4 The Shire (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.