

**City of Wetaskiwin  
Council Policy**

**Urban Forest  
Sustainability**



Policy Number:	CO-020
Effective On:	July 22, 2024
Approval History:	July 22, 2024
Review Frequency:	Every 4 Years
Responsibility:	Municipal Services
Cross-Reference:	

**Policy Statement**

The City of Wetaskiwin is committed to promote and protect the Urban Forest. This policy will establish a framework for the consistent protection, management, and sustainability of the City’s Urban Forest for future generations.

**Definitions**

“City” means the City of Wetaskiwin.

“City Owned Property” means a parcel of land including any buildings, structures, and devices, or where the context so requires, a chattel owned by the City or for which the City has assumed responsibility. Examples include natural and park areas, road rights of way, and City facility grounds.

“City Trees” means all trees on City owned property.

“Natural Area” means land or water dominated by native vegetation in naturally occurring patterns. Such areas could include grasslands, forests, wetlands, or riparian areas but does not include parks.

“Naturalization” means an alternative landscape management technique; natural processes of growth and change are less restricted, and the landscape can become more natural than ornamental by restricting mowing and by planting native vegetation found locally on similar landscapes.

“Park Area” means any City owned lands, developed and managed by the City and designated as City Parks or City Playgrounds. This does not include parks or playgrounds under the ownership or authority of area School Divisions or other private property.

“Private Trees” means all trees located on land that is not City owned property.

“Riparian Area” means the area or transition between land and water (river, stream, lake, etc.).

“Tree Canopy” means the uppermost layer in a forest, formed by the crowns of the trees in the Urban Forest. The tree canopy is typically represented by the percentage of ground area covered in a defined area.

“Tree Diversity” means a range of tree species and ages which support a healthy

## Urban Forest.

“Urban Forest” means the trees and associated vegetation located within City limits, whether planted or naturally occurring within both private and public property. Examples include trees and associated vegetation in parks, natural/naturalized areas, the river valley, ravines, trails, and road rights of way.

## Standards

### 1. Urban Forest

- a. The City shall undertake various programs supporting an Urban Forest Management Plan that are consistent with other applicable plans, bylaws, standards, and programs. The City shall ensure these are supported through the respective annual operating or capital budgets as approved by Council.
- b. The status of the Urban Forest including City tree related programs, inventory, and general health, will be reported through the Public Works annual departmental report.
- c. The City shall maintain a minimum 30 percent tree canopy, within City boundaries to support the growth and sustainability of the Urban Forest.
- d. The City shall encourage owners of private trees to follow and support the urban forest policy.

### 2. City Trees

- a. City Trees shall be planted in accordance with the Municipal Engineering Standards.
- b. The City shall maintain an inventory of City Trees which include tree quantities by species and condition. This inventory will be updated annually by including trees planted in new developments, new plantings, relocations, removals, and replacements. The inventory of trees located within natural areas shall be determined by area estimation or other determination at the discretion of the City Manager.
- c. Normally, the City shall avoid removal (cutting down or termination) of City trees unless it is necessary to do so in support of this policy, bylaws, safety reasons, pest infestation, diseases, or other City programs. Administrative procedures shall include a formal and consistent process for the assessment and potential termination of a City tree.
- d. The City shall take all reasonable and timely steps to notify adjacent property owners that are directly affected by any planting

- or removals of trees on City property.
3. Tree Protection areas include construction zones and areas identified as historical.
  4. Pruning cycles will be set and established in accordance with the Public Works – Parks Service Levels, as approved by council.
  5. Standards for requests to remove or trim public trees by private citizens.
    - a. A citizen can request a public tree be trimmed through the Public Works Department. The request will be compared to the trimming schedule and will be prioritized based on several criteria that include;
      - i. The reason for the request, (ex. Is the tree damaged?) and/or;
      - ii. When the tree is scheduled for trimming.
    - b. A citizen can request that a public tree be removed, however, this will not be considered for any reason other than the following:
      - i. The tree is diseased, and/or;
      - ii. The tree has structural damage.
  6. When a tree is removed for any purpose, a new tree shall be planted. The trees can be located elsewhere in the City.
  7. The City shall work towards plant diversification where no more than 20 percent of one tree type is in the total tree population to prevent uniform disease susceptibility.
  8. All tree maintenance will be done in accordance with good horticultural practices noted in the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A300 Tree Care Standards.
  9. The following are the expectations when dealing with Dutch Elm Disease:
    - a. Elm tree removal: No person shall remove, cause, or permit the removal of an elm tree unless the stump of the elm tree is;
      - i. Removed to a depth of at least 10 centimeters below the surface of the soil; or
      - ii. Treated in a manner acceptable to the Public Works Department.
    - b. Elm tree pruning: Unless otherwise ordered by the Public Works Department, and a person who owns or occupies land shall keep every elm tree pruned so that the elm tree is free of wood that is dead or dying.

- i. Unless otherwise ordered or permitted by the Public Works Department, a person shall not prune, cause, or permit the pruning of an elm tree after March 31 and before October 1 in any year.
- c. Boulevard Elm Trees: Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy a person shall not:
  - i. Remove or damage any elm tree on a boulevard; or
  - ii. Prune, cut, repair, or perform any other work on any elm tree on a boulevard; unless ordered or permitted to do so by the Public Works Department.

<b>Approved By:</b>		<b>Responsible:</b>	
City Manager	Date	General Manager Or Manager	Date