

City Tree Policy

Responsible Directorate:	<i>Assets</i>
Responsible Service Unit:	<i>Parks & Conservation Management</i>
Date of Approval:	<i>10 December 2024</i>
Council Resolution No:	<i>AS06-12/24</i>

1. 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 trees.
- Will plan for urban enhancement through the retention of suitable trees within proposed road reservations and public reserves.

2. OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE

The Objectives of the City Tree Policy (the Policy) are:

- Provide guidance for the care, control, management, protection and preservation of City trees;
- To increase the City's tree canopy cover;
- To enhance the amenity of the City's streetscapes and reserves through the planting of new trees;
- To define the circumstances under which the City's trees may be removed or pruned; and
- To provide guidance for enforcement of provisions in the Public Places and Local Government Property Law 2015.

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 livable City by increasing tree numbers and ultimately canopy coverage across the City.

The Policy recognises that in the constantly changing/developing urban environment, 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 4.8: Tree Preservation;
- Urban Forest Strategy; and
- Public Places and Local Government Property Law 2015.

These documents complement the Policy and 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.

3. KEY DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Administration	The operational arm of the City which includes the Employees and is headed by the CEO.
City Trees	<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> <p>The following are considered City Trees managed in accordance with the Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any tree which has a majority equal to or greater than 50% of its trunk growing within Council managed land. • Street trees, any tree planted or self-sown in the road reserve, of an appropriate species and in an appropriate location, for the purposes of contributing to the streetscape. • Reserve tree is a tree that is located within a park, reserve or natural area.

Council	The body constituting of all Elected Members sitting formally as a Council under the Act.
Crown Land	Public land owned by the State of Western Australia and managed by the City pursuant to a Management Order.
Development Application (DA)	DA is a process of seeking approval from local council to carry out development such as building work.
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.
The City	The City of Wanneroo.
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 livability 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.

4. SCOPE

The Policy applies to all trees that are owned or managed by the City of Wanneroo, such trees shall be referred to as City 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.

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

5. IMPLICATIONS

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

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

6. IMPLEMENTATION

Planning for Trees

Administration 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

Administration shall undertake tree planting within parks, reserves and streetscapes, as part of its annual 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 streetscape 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;
- Streetscape 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;
- Streetscape tree selection - mixing of 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 approved species by Parks & Conservation Management Team.

Unauthorised or Inappropriate Street Tree Planting

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

- A tree planted without written approval from Administration;
- 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 tree planting is identified, Administration shall determine whether the planting can be retained and whether it conforms to the City's planting specifications. Where the planting is recent, and the tree is of a conforming variety but on the wrong alignment or spacing, Administration shall liaise with the resident in regard 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 administration 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

Administration (or its contractor) shall undertake the pruning of all City managed trees affected by powerlines on a programmed basis. Programmed 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 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;
- Under prune low growing branches considered hazardous to traffic or pedestrians;
- Form the shape of developing trees;
- Re-define the framework of mature trees;
- Rejuvenate vigor 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. Requests for out of programmed pruning must be submitted in writing to administration for consideration.

Tree Pruning were Unaffected by Powerlines

Administration may undertake crown thinning, under pruning, property line clearances (upon request) and remedial pruning of selected City 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 City trees not located under powerlines to reduce their height (therefore reducing leaf/fruit drop or improving light penetration), shall be made in writing to administration. 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 Administration with a request to prune a tree unaffected by power lines, the following procedure is implemented:

- The tree is physically inspected by Administration. An inspection report is completed, containing relevant statistical details;
- The resident/occupier will be advised of administrations 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.

Circumstances where City trees shall not be pruned;

- The tree obscures or potentially obscures views (other than traffic/pedestrian sight lines);
- The tree shades private gardens, lawns, solar panels, solar hot water installations or the like; or
- To reduce tree debris, which includes leaf, flower, fruit, bark or the like.

Chipping and recycling of tree pruning's is the preferred method of disposal.

Tree Removal

Requests

Part 6.1 of the City's Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2015, prohibits the damage or removal of a city tree, or part of a tree without a license. Any unauthorised person who removes/prunes/damages a city tree commits an offence for which an infringement notice may be issued.

City 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 City trees shall be in writing and will be considered on their merits by administration 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.

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

Circumstances where City trees may normally be removed

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

- The tree is diseased and beyond remedial treatment, or dead.
- The tree has been assessed by Administration 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.

Circumstances where City trees will **NOT** normally be removed

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

- The tree obscures or potentially obscures views (other than traffic/pedestrian sight lines);
- The tree variety is disliked;
- The tree species causes nuisance by natural debris production, which includes the dropping of leaf, flower, fruit, bark or the like;
- The tree causes allergies;
- The tree is in the way of a non-essential crossover or verge paving/treatment option;
- The tree shades private gardens lawns, solar panels, solar hot water installations or the like;
- The unsubstantiated ‘potential’ damage if the tree fails or from growth damage;

- The tree variety is too large in size (other than situation where tree is causing significant damage to infrastructure); or
- The tree attracts birdlife or other fauna.

Existing City Trees adjacent to a development

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

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

Crossovers shall be located a minimum of 1.5 metres from a City tree. A reduction by 0.5 metres may be considered, depending on availability of alternatives, tree species and location, sight lines and traffic safety.

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

Should an existing City 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 administration.

Where an existing city tree is pruned/removed without authorisation, legal action may be taken at the discretion of Administration.

Tree Roots and Infrastructure

Tree growth is strongly influenced by below-ground conditions. Tree root growth is opportunistic and will proliferate wherever moisture, aeration, nutrition and soil structure are favorable. Tree root growth in the urban environment is highly modified and is not governed by property boundaries. Administration will consider the need for tree root abatement measures such as tree root pruning, exploratory trenching and or tree root barriers in certain circumstances where deemed required and at administrations discretion. Administration will comprehensively investigate claims of property damage that are alleged to be a result from City trees.

Requests from residents to investigate alleged tree root damage or abatement shall be made in writing to Administration. Administration will seek to resolve tree root conflicts in the following manner:

- All claims of alleged tree root damage from city trees will be investigated;
- Administration will consider the need for tree root abatement measures such as exploratory trenches, tree root pruning or tree root barriers in certain circumstances where deemed required and at Administration's discretion;

- Minor infrastructure repairs such as small areas of paving or concrete may be undertaken at Administration's discretion;
- Minor infrastructure repairs will only be undertaken after administration receives a signed copy of a 'Release Agreement' authorising works on private property;
- Administration will not undertake repairs of any walls, fences, large concrete areas or any damage to a dwelling; and
- Tree removal will only be considered if no practical arboricultural or engineering solution can be determined to mitigate proven damage.

Tree Watering

Administration shall undertake the watering of all City trees, for the first two (2) years of the tree/s establishment. Residents/occupants are encouraged to water the adjacent street tree during the establishment period. Establishment period is first two years from date tree is planted. If resident/occupant would like to contribute to the watering of the tree, tree/s are to be watered a maximum of twice weekly with no more than 40 litres per tree.

Unauthorised Interference, Removal, Pruning or Damage to City Trees

Part 6.1 of the City's Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2015, prohibits the damage or removal of a city tree, or part of a tree without a license. 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 2015 may be applied.

Tree Protection at Adjacent Development Sites

City trees need to be protected at development sites 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 administration; 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/s will be held through the Street and Verge Bond process prior to the development commencing.

The bond for protection of City trees adjacent development shall be 10% of the Helliwell Tree Value with a minimum of \$1,000, the bond will be held for the duration of the works. When a tree pruning or removal application is approved as part of a development application (DA), all associated costs for the value of the tree must be agreed to in writing by the property owner

or representative and paid prior to the pruning or removal of the tree(s).

The value of City trees will be calculated by Administration or an approved Arborist using the Helliwell Tree Valuation Method.

The costs associated with removal of a tree include:

- Removal costs: amounting to the fees incurred by the City for physically removing the tree.
- Tree value: calculated in accordance with Helliwell Tree Valuation Formula.
- Reinstatement tree planting fee: calculated to cover the cost to the City to reinstate a new tree, where planting can be undertaken in accordance with planting specifications.

The costs associated if pruning is required:

Associated costs must be agreed to in writing and paid by the applicant prior to the pruning occurring. The costs associated with pruning shall be based on Schedule of Rates in current Tree Maintenance Contract.

7. 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.

Community Safety and Emergency Management are responsible for supporting this policy by enforcing the provisions of the Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2015 in consultation with Parks and Conservation Management.

8. DISPUTE RESOLUTION (if applicable)

All disputes regarding 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 2015 are to be dealt with in accordance with Division 1 of Part of the Local Government Act.

9. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

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.

10. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Local Planning Policy 4.8 – Tree Preservation
- Urban Forest Strategy

11. REFERENCES

- City's Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2015
- City's Street and Verge Bond

12. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Manager Parks and Conservation Management

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Next Review	Record No.
AS02-12/18: December 2018	December 2023	18/550071
December 2024	December 2027	24/274202