



Street Trees

Status	Council
Responsible Division	Technical Services
Objective	To define Council's approach to the provision and management of street trees within the City of Nedlands.

Context

The City's community obtains tremendous benefits from its urban forest, of which street trees are an important component. Evident benefits include the beautifying of streetscapes and suburbs, providing a sense of place, improved community wellbeing, increased property values, shade, significant evaporative cooling and providing habitat for fauna. Though there is an inherent understanding that having trees in the City's urban environment is beneficial, to some extent many of the benefits derived are imperceptible to the community.

Street trees are increasingly being recognised and managed throughout Australia as important community assets as the benefits they deliver are progressively identified, understood and quantified. The extent of benefit provided, in most circumstances, is directly linked to the combined area of canopy cover, which in turn is linked to the number, type and size of street trees.

With the accelerating densification and development of the City, and the associated impacts on the urban forest, there is an emerging significance attached to the City's street trees. Council intends to work to secure the benefits of the City's street trees to ensure they remain accessible into the future.

For the purpose of this policy, a 'street tree' is defined as a tree that has the centreline of its trunk on a road reserve managed by the City. The portion of a road reserve that adjoins a lot or reserve and bounded by the road is referred to as the 'nature strip'.

Statement

To ensure the City of Nedlands preserves its recognised green and leafy character, the City will develop and implement street tree management based on the following principles:

1. Increasing tree canopy cover through establishing street trees where planting opportunities are identified.
2. Preserving the City's existing street trees.
3. Cultivating a diverse and resilient street tree population through identification and planting of a variety of tree species which are assessed as suitable for the district having consideration of:



- biodiversity;
 - susceptibility to plant pathogens;
 - provision of a multi aged population;
 - habitat benefits;
 - shade requirements and temperature moderation;
 - streetscape amenity;
 - lines of sight for road users;
 - climate and soil conditions; and
 - maintenance requirements (including watering).
4. Recognising street trees as assets that will be maintained and renewed with regard to each tree's life cycle to achieve a high level of aesthetic, environmental, economic and social benefits.
 5. Planning on a street by street, ward and district basis for the improvement of streetscapes and localities for the short, medium and long term.
 6. Minimising conflicts with the built environment and providing protection to and from tree growth through assessment of site attributes and appropriate tree selection.
 7. Acknowledging the active partnership between the City and the community in enhancing the maintenance, appearance and utility of streetscapes and of the need to work cooperatively with members of the community in the selection, establishment and preservation of street trees.
 8. Scheduled monitoring to allow management of canopy cover percentage, collective tree health and species performance over time.
 9. Accepting that for reasons of safety and practicality there may be a need to manage existing street trees, that are assessed as hazardous, through a range of arboricultural practices which may include remedial pruning to mitigate hazards and removal and replacement where no other management options are available to resolve the hazard.

Planting

The City will develop and implement a street tree management plan in which the following principles apply:

1. The City will maintain and make available a diverse schedule of approved street tree species, assessed as being suitable for the district, from which adjoining property owners can select street trees. The adjoining property owners' preferred species shall then be planted at the closest practicable spacing such that planting opportunities for that selection are maximised.
2. The City will consult with adjoining property owners about which trees will be planted on the adjoining nature strip, however the City may mandate restrictions on selection in order to comply with the Statement of this policy.



3. The City is to maintain a schedule of tree species considered unsuitable for nature strips and a register of individual street trees considered to pose a heightened risk to public safety and/or property damage.
4. The default street tree species for all residential and commercial nature strips is Marri (*Corymbia calophylla*). The default street tree species for nature strips adjoining land other than residential or commercial are Tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*), Marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) and Jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*). Where the available nature strip area makes planting of the above species impracticable, the default street species are Modong (*Melaleuca preissiana*) or WA Willow Peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*).
5. The City will bear the cost to supply and plant street trees of bag sizes up to 45 litres. Property owners who request the City to plant larger trees shall pay the difference in cost, in respect of the specified maximum size, to supply and plant the trees.
6. Preference shall be given to planting large tree species that are native to the City of Nedlands on undeveloped nature strips that are not irrigated and not adjoining residential and commercial property frontages. Such nature strips should be subject to multiple level tree canopy design, with smaller native trees between large natives.
7. Street trees will be planted following consultation with the owners of adjoining land. However, it is acknowledged that street trees are not optional for adjoining property owners and objections to planting of a street tree may only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Where adjoining owners believe exceptional circumstances apply, planting can be deferred for a single season, to provide the adjoining property owner sufficient time to advocate with Council for a change in Policy, or specific exemption.
8. Property owners are to be encouraged to water all street trees during and after establishment. Communication of watering requirements is incumbent on the City upon planting of every street tree.
8. All new developments that do not have a street tree on the nature strip shall be subject to having street trees planted in the next available planting season or as soon as possible thereafter, as deemed appropriate by the City,

Location and Spacing

The following definitions shall be used in interpreting this section of the Policy:

Canopy Area Potential means the average canopy area that a tree of that species (and variety) will attain after twenty years of moderate growth.

Aggregate Tree Canopy Area means the sum of the Tree Canopy Area Potentials for every tree on a particular nature strip.



Nature Strip Area means the area of the nature strip of the adjoining lot as calculated by its width and depth.

The City shall fill all street tree planting opportunities so as to have as near a continuous street tree canopy as is practicable in all areas of the City. This will be achieved through planting trees at the closest practicable spacing such that the opportunities for that selection are maximised. For development removal replacements only species that will create an Aggregate Tree Canopy Area of at least one and half times the Nature Strip Area and preferably two times can be selected. An adjoining property owner may request the planting of an additional tree if sufficient space allows.

1. An installation of paving or synthetic turf, whether authorised or not, shall not affect the requirement for all nature strips to have street trees.
2. An adjoining property owner shall not be permitted to install synthetic turf under the drip line of street trees.
3. Council considers uniform avenues of street trees as desirable in certain situations and may designate locations to introduce this. Though desirable, Council considers the concept of uniform avenues less important than the direct objective of increasing canopy cover and species diversity through planting suitable street trees in suitable locations.
4. Council will consider proposals for uniform tree species within a street provided the proposed species is included on the approved species list and is suitable to plant in the particular location. Council may delegate approval of uniform tree species to the CEO.
5. To facilitate introduction of new street trees inter-tree planting will occur in conjunction with tree replacement, resulting from natural attrition and other causes, to allow for staged removal of existing declining trees.
6. When new trees are planted on the south side of an east/west street, consideration is to be given to ensuring adjoining property owners are consulted in regard to their winter solar access requirements.

Pruning

In relation to street tree pruning Council's primary objectives are to:

1. Promote tree health, structural integrity and form.
2. Maintain statutory clearances for the various infrastructure located in the road reserve;
3. Maximise the benefits delivered by street trees; and



4. Support public safety and minimise the risk of damage to property and injury to people.

In the interests of public safety, of the health of street trees and of managing the City's exposure to liability the following requirements and tree management standards apply to the pruning of street trees:

- a. All pruning of street trees will be in accordance with Australian Standard *AS 4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees* or as otherwise instructed by a suitably competent and qualified arborist approved by the City.
- b. All pruning of street trees requires City approval and pruning is only to be undertaken by persons authorised by the City of Nedlands. The City will apply penalties to any person found to have carried out unauthorised pruning of a street tree.
- c. If an adjoining property owner requests pruning of a street tree abutting their property, and in the opinion of the CEO the pruning is not associated with matters of safety, tree health or boundary encroachment, the ratepayer shall bear 100% of the cost to prune the tree if approved.

Preservation

It is Council's objective to ensure development and building activity considers and accommodates established street trees to the extent practicable. The following requirements apply:

1. The City shall develop and maintain a register of Significant Street Trees.
2. All development applications shall indicate the location of street trees on adjoining nature strips on surveys and site plans.
3. Prior to planning approval Council requires consultation between the City and developers in order that plans are adjusted to accommodate established street trees. Council prioritises tree retention on nature strips adjoining development sites and will only consider removal when no other practicable design alternative exists.
4. Approval for developers to conduct building related activities on the adjoining nature strip, including the storing of materials, shall be conditional to establishment of a fenced Tree Protection Zone to a minimum of 2 metres from the base of street trees prior to commencement of building works. Council may also require developers deposit a bond of sufficient amount to cover the cost of remediating damage to a street tree resulting from building activities.
5. Any person(s), where identified, associated with the unauthorised removal or damage of a street tree may be prosecuted by the City. The City shall provide a mechanism to encourage community members to report unauthorised removal or damage of street trees. Significant measures, including the placement of signage,



may be implemented as a deterrent against future unauthorised removal or damage of street trees.

Removal

Street trees will not be authorised to be removed unless one or more of the following circumstances applies:

1. The tree is dead or in decline, and no further remedial techniques are appropriate;
2. The tree is listed on the City's unsuitable tree species list;
3. The tree poses an unmanageable hazard and endangers persons or property and pruning or other techniques cannot effectively remedy that hazard. For the avoidance of doubt, private property (such as vehicles) located on nature strips underneath street trees shall not be considered to constitute an 'unmanageable hazard';
4. The tree is diseased or damaged to an extent that remedial techniques are unlikely to restore it;
5. To facilitate private development where, following consultation between the City and the developer, no practicable design alternative exists which allows retention of the tree. The City will not approve designs that propose removal of street trees listed on the register of Significant Street Trees and Council will not accept objections to refusal of designs resulting in removal of a significant street tree;
6. Where a development is approved that necessitates the removal of a street tree the developer shall replace the tree and bear 100% of the cost for the City to remove the tree, and:
 - a. the developer must plant a minimum of two suitable replacement trees from the approved species list;
 - b. where a number of frontages are created due to subdivision, then a minimum of one tree shall be planted on each frontage; and
 - c. replacement trees shall be a species that fulfils the Aggregate Tree Canopy Area provision. Where it is not practicable to plant the full replacement on the verge adjoining the development, trees to create the required replacement coverage shall still be provided by the developer and the City will plant in the closest suitable alternative location.
7. To facilitate a Council approved works program (i.e. road works, drainage, utilities etc.).



8. Council may consider requests for removal and replacement of a street tree that is considered unsuitable for nature strips on the basis of:
 - it being of a species associated with a propensity to endanger persons or property;
 - it being of a species having an association with an elevated risk of establishing as an environmental weed;
 - a tree posing unacceptable risk due to a history of significant branch failures; and
 - each request being considered individually.
9. Other than where a tree is considered to be unsuitable in accordance with the preceding provisions, removal and replacement of street trees shall not occur and penalties will be imposed for any damage, modification or removal of street trees without the City's authorisation.
10. All adjoining property owner requests/proposals for street tree removal, irrespective of the reasons, shall be lodged in writing.
11. Any verge tree above 5 metres in height which is not dead, diseased or dying must be presented to Council for decision.
12. Other than where there are imminent safety risks, Administration shall notify ward Councillors of all proposed street tree removals not requiring formal Council approval at least two weeks prior to removal and the reasons why in accordance with the preceding provisions. Accepted forms being the weekly CEO Update, or an email to Councillors.
13. Where a street tree removal is undertaken by a third party exercising other statutory powers, Councillors will be informed in writing. Accepted forms being the weekly CEO Update, or an email to Councillors.

Council considers some inconvenience arising from street trees as a necessary consequence of living in an urban environment where trees deliver significant community benefits. Council will only consider an issue with management of a street tree when the proprietor and Administration cannot agree and the issue concerns safety and well-being, significant inconvenience and the tree is listed on the Significant Street Tree Register.

The City will not approve requests for street tree removals that rely solely on the following reasons:

- Leaf, flower, nut or bark falling or accumulating or being blown by the wind;
- Enhancement or protection of views;
- Reduction or eradication of shading to gardens, lawns, pools or dwellings;
- Requests for the planting of alternative species on the basis of individual preference or a desire to re-landscape; or
- Installation of an area for parking a vehicle on the nature strip.



In the interests of public safety, removal is only to be undertaken by personnel authorised by the City of Nedlands.

Public Awareness

Council will promote the importance of the City’s street tree assets and the benefits they deliver. Regular communication including information about planting, streetscape improvement and maintenance activities, will be published in the local media and via other appropriate sources.

Tree Health and Public Safety

In the interest of street tree health, public safety and potential liability issues, structures such as, but not limited to, swings, cubby houses, ladders etc. are not permitted to be constructed in street trees.

Document Control Box			
Document Responsibilities			
Owner:	Chief Executive Officer	Owner Business Unit:	Office of the Chief Executive Officer
Inception Date:	27 July 2010 (Report CM18.10)	Decision Maker:	Council OCM
Review Date:	23 April 2024 (Report TS14.04.24) 22 February 2022 (Report TS01.02.22) 27 October 2015 (Report CPS24.15) 24 July 2012 (Report CP31.12)	Repeal and Replace:	N/A
Compliance Requirements:			
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995 Part 5 Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 Energy Operators (Powers) Act 1976 Water Services Act 2012 Thoroughfares Local Law Council Plan Urban Forest Strategy 2018-2023 Nature Strip Development Policy Street Trees Procedure Street Tree Management Plan</i>		