CORPORATE GUIDELINE: Street Tree Management

OVERVIEW:

This Corporate Guideline details the practical aspects of Council’s Policy Tree Retention and provides clear guidelines for the retention, maintenance and removal of trees within the City of Bunbury on Council controlled Reserves.

The Corporate Guideline seeks to:

- provide guidance in relation to the management of the City’s tree assets;
- increase and retain the City’s tree canopy cover;
- protect and increase the long term viability of City trees on verges including those adjacent to development sites;
- provide safe amenity to pedestrians, road traffic and property;
- enhance the amenity of trees and reserves through the planting of new trees; and
- define the circumstances under which the City’s trees may be removed or pruned.

A street tree is any tree that exists on the road reserve which is the area between a resident’s property line and the road kerb.

Planting, pruning and removal of street trees is the responsibility of the City of Bunbury. The City has 16,477 rateable/non-rateable land assessments and 14,575 street tree assets captured (Feb 2016).

The City of Bunbury actively manages its tree assets to ensure the City’s residents receive all the economic, environmental, and social and health benefits that trees afford our community. These include:

- Reducing air pollution and airborne particulates
- Increasing property values
- Storing and sequestering of carbon from the atmosphere
- Reducing energy costs due to shading in summer decreasing the need for air conditioning
- Providing habitat for native fauna
- Reducing heat reflected from built environment
- Reduced incidence of crime, vandalism and graffiti
- Providing a sense of place and creation of local identity and character.
GUIDELINES:

1. Tree Planting

Street tree planting bolsters ecological linkages in the urban forest. Landscape and Open Space undertakes street tree planting in winter, subject to funding. Property owners may request in writing that a tree be planted on the verge. The species provided is as selected by the City and in most cases this is determined by the predominant suitable tree species in the existing streetscape.

Any request will be assessed by the City and crossovers, intersections, powerlines and existing street trees are all considered as part of the assessment. The applicant is responsible for watering the tree during its establishment.

The below table outlines the clearance required between trees and infrastructure

**Planting Locations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Clearance Required - Metres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private property boundary</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street intersection</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic signals (from pole)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossovers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power pole</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underground services pits</td>
<td>2 from edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storm water inlet</td>
<td>2 from edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus stop</td>
<td>10 - subject to site conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs - Stop, Give Way &amp; Speed</td>
<td>5 if in front or 2 if behind the sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs - Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The below table outlines preferred tree spacing and heights in verges

**Tree Spacing in Verges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verge Width Type</th>
<th>Verge Width Metres</th>
<th>Approximate Tree Height Metres</th>
<th>Approximate Tree Spacing Metres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Narrow</td>
<td>Up to 2</td>
<td>Do not plant</td>
<td>Do not plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Small Trees To 9</td>
<td>5-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Medium Trees to 15</td>
<td>7-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide</td>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>Tall Trees to 22</td>
<td>10-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Wide</td>
<td>Over 10</td>
<td>Very Tall Trees Over 22</td>
<td>13-17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Street Tree Watering**

Street trees installed by the City will receive an initial watering at time of planting and the City encourages property owners to water the street tree during its establishment as per instructions provided at the time of planting.

3. **Unauthorised Street Tree Planting**

Trees planted without the City’s approval are considered unauthorised plantings and will be considered as one of the following:

- A tree planted of an inappropriate species for location
- A tree planted out of desired alignment
- A tree of an undesirable species that has self-germinated

Where an unauthorised tree planting is identified, the City will determine whether the planting will be retained or removed dependent on its suitability for the location. Where an unauthorised planting will not be retained, the resident will be given the opportunity to relocate the tree onto their own property prior to removal.

Trees are not to be privately planted on the verge without prior written approval from the City.

4. **Pruning of Trees**

Pruning is generally only undertaken by the City to further the health and vitality of a tree. Pruning of streets trees unaffected by powerlines does not normally occur, however pruning may be undertaken in the interests of:

- Public safety;
- Traffic and pedestrian hazard;
- Human health hazard;
- Removing growth abnormality or disease; and
- Managing the health and well-being of the tree

Pruning of street trees located near aerial power lines is necessary to prevent trees from growing into the Western Power exclusions zones around the areal lines. The City undertakes these works to comply with Western Power statutory requirements, although, Western Power has authority to prune without consulting the City.

Any tree works are to comply with AS4373 (2007) – Pruning of Amenity Trees and should be undertaken by suitably qualified/trained City of Bunbury staff members or by suitably qualified/trained tree surgeons as appointed by the City.

The following reasons will not warrant consideration for pruning:

- Too tall;
- Ugly;
- Perceived fire risk;
- Due to leaf litter, bark, twigs, flowers, sap, fruit;
• Tree shades lawns, gardens, houses, pools, solar panels etc.;
• Overhanging property boundary;
• A perceived danger that the tree or a limb may fail;
• Unsubstantiated damage to infrastructure;
• Perceived risk of damage to property;
• To enhance or clear views, inclusive of advertising signage;
• The tree attracts birdlife or other fauna;
• The tree causes allergies or health problems;
• The tree is dropping litter on footpath;
• The tree shape and structure is not liked;
• For the installation of non-essential crossovers or verge paving;

Residents are not permitted to prune street trees

Part 8.1 of the **Local Government and Public Property Local Law 2014 - Activities in public places** - states:

“**A person must not** -
(a) damage, injure, prune, remove or kill by felling, poisoning or any other means, a tree on a thoroughfare or verge unless the person is -
   i. acting under authority of the local government; or
   ii. a local government employee or contractor engaged by the local government to undertake work in relation to a particular tree or trees on thoroughfares in the district or on local government property generally; or
   iii. acting under authority of a written law.”

Parties who breach the regulation and/or this Local Law may also be responsible for the amenity value, replacement and establishment costs of a suitable replacement tree.”

5. **Significant Trees Register**

The City maintains a Significant Tree Register as part of the City of Bunbury Municipal Inventory 2001.

6. **Tree Removals**

Council may consider the removal of trees for the following reasons:

a) The tree is dead;

b) Location of the tree is recognised as inducing severe allergenic or health responses based on assessment on a case by case basis;

c) The tree is dying from disease that cannot be successfully treated unless it is defined that they must remain in the landscape for habitat provision or other purposes;

d) The tree is structurally weak or dangerous, placing public at unacceptable risk;

e) The tree is deemed to affect vehicle or pedestrian visibility;
f) The tree interferes with essential services i.e. Western Power, AlintaGas, Aqwest, Water Corporation;

g) The tree is causing or likely to cause significant structural damage to property or infrastructure i.e. road surfaces, walls, fences, buildings, footpaths, kerbing and drainage.

h) Where development approval has been granted. The applicant is required to pay removal costs, amenity value calculated in accordance with the City’s Amenity Formula and reinstatement costs prior to removal.

*Note: In the case of clauses d, e, f and g removal will only be considered after alternatives have been identified and evaluated e.g. root barriers, redesign of structure, crown pruning, root pruning, tree relocation.*

Trees may not be considered for removal under the following circumstances:

i) When the removal is requested to improve or create views;

j) Where a tree is considered to have some significant value i.e. an historic tree, conservation value, a rare species or form of species, and its removal will detract from the aesthetics of the area;

k) Where proposed development can be altered to avoid conflict with existing trees;

l) Due to the creation of natural litter e.g. leaves, twigs, flowers, sap, fruit;

m) Due to unwanted shading of lawns, gardens or infrastructure;

n) Due to unjustified property damage claims;

o) Due to causing minor allergenic or irritant responses.

Requests for tree removal from the public will only be considered when a Tree Removal Application Form has been submitted and in accordance with the *Corporate Guideline Tree Retention.*

6.1 General tree removal procedure:

The following process will be followed after a Tree Removal Application Form has been received:

i) Acknowledgement sent to the applicant informing receipt of application;

ii) Initial inspection by a qualified City of Bunbury officer or person appointed by the City of Bunbury to undertake the inspection;

iii) Where a tree is removed under the Tree Retention Policy a replacement tree shall, wherever possible, be provided in its place or nearby. The replacement tree species is that provided by the City and specified for the street.

iv) The City may request, at the applicants expense, offset planting or retention of trees in other locations.

7. Tree Removal For Development

If a City tree prevents the impending development of an abutting property, and all possible design solutions have been deemed exhausted by the authorised officer, permission for the removal of a City tree may be granted by the authorised officer under this guideline. If
approved, the associated cost of the tree (as calculated using the City’s Amenity valuation method) is to be paid to the Local Government or representative prior to removal.

Procedure:
The following process will be followed after a Tree Removal Application Form has been received:

i. Acknowledgement of receipt of application;

ii. Initial inspection by a qualified City officer or person appointed by the City;

iii. Where the development cannot be altered to accommodate the tree, the tree is valued and costs are to be paid to the City prior to removal.

The costs associated with the removal of a tree include:

a) Removal Costs: amounting to the fees incurred by the City for assessing and removing the tree;

b) Amenity Value: calculated in accordance with the City’s Amenity Formula; and

c) Reinstatement Greening Costs: calculated in accordance with the greening required to replace the loss incurred by removal as determined by Council, taking into consideration the location, significance and the amenity of the tree. Reinstatement costs to include a 2 year maintenance fee and any treatment or Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) measure deemed appropriate to establish replacement tree.

The VALUATION of a tree is calculated using the City of Bunbury tree valuation formula:

Tree Value = Basic Value x Tree Size x Aesthetics X Locality x Species x Special Species X Form X Condition X Habitat X Significance

8. Development

Street trees can be killed or damaged by a wide range of construction activities and a need to be protected at development sites in order to preserve the amenity of streetscapes. All developments, where trees are affected, will include a suitable advice note and/or condition of approval and bonds may be held.

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:

- 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
- The size of the TPZ will be determined by the use of the tree tec formula [http://www.treetec.net.au/TPZ_SRZ_DBH_calculator.php](http://www.treetec.net.au/TPZ_SRZ_DBH_calculator.php)
- At minimum, the TPZ will cover two metres by two metres around the tree trunk- any lesser exceptions must first be approved by the City of Bunbury
• The TPZ should not obstruct roads or footpaths unless approved alternatives are in place

9. Intentional Damage

Part 8.1 of the Local Government and Public Property Local Law 2014 - Activities in public places - states:

“A person must not -
(a) damage, injure, prune, remove or kill by felling, poisoning or any other means, a tree on a thoroughfare or verge unless the person is -
i. acting under authority of the local government; or
ii. a local government employee or contractor engaged by the local government to undertake work in relation to a particular tree or trees on thoroughfares in the district or on local government property generally; or
iii. acting under authority of a written law.”

Parties who breach the regulation and/or this Local Law may also be responsible for the amenity value, replacement and establishment costs of a suitable replacement tree.”

10. Native Vegetation

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1986, which is administered by the Department of Environmental Regulation, a permit may be required to remove native vegetation or a person wishing to remove a tree must qualify to clear under an exemption. For further information regarding native vegetation, please contact Department of Environmental Regulation.

LEGISLATION AND OTHER REFERENCES:
- City of Bunbury Policy – Tree Retention
- City of Bunbury Significant Tree Register
- Environmental Protection Act 1986
- Local Planning Policies
- City of Bunbury Local Government and Public Property Local Law

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<th>Manager Landscape and Open Space</th>
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