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| Policy number | Policy 255 |
| Policy title | Trees |
| Strategic outcomes supported | EN6 – Appropriate, inviting and sustainable green spaces for everyone that are well maintained and managed. EN7 – Increased vegetation and tree canopy. |

POLICY OBJECTIVE:

To provide for the management of trees that are managed by the Town.

POLICY SCOPE:

This policy applies in relation to road reserves, parks and public spaces and assets managed by the Town.

DEFINITIONS:

Full cost, in relation to the removal of a tree means Helliwell or other appropriate valuation system, plus costs of removal, replacement & establishment, maintenance for 3 years.

Significant canopy means more 25m² of canopy cover.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Pruning and Maintenance

1. The Town is responsible for the maintenance of trees situated within the Crown Land road reserves, parks, public spaces and assets managed by the Town. Pruning is undertaken by qualified arborists in a way to ensure the long-term survival of the trees and protect them for future generations.
2. The Town has a planned approach to tree pruning whereby the Town is divided into pruning precincts. Programmed pruning includes lifting the canopies to enable pedestrian movement and allow clear sight lines for road users.
3. All requests for pruning and maintenance of a Town tree are to be submitted in writing to the Town.
4. Tree root encroachment and suspected damage to adjoining infrastructure shall be assessed on a case by case basis and actioned accordingly.
5. The Town may arrange for a detailed Arborist Assessment or further investigation as required.
6. Trees will be pruned clear of Western Power infrastructure as per compliance requirements.
7. Requests for pruning of Town trees overhanging a property boundary will be assessed on an individual basis. If work is approved it will be undertaken by the Town's contracted service provider.

8. The Town will prune trees only for the following reasons:
 - a. To remove or avoid conflict with public utility services;
 - b. To promote and improve the health and form of the tree and to allow for improved health of understorey planting;
 - c. To remove or avoid a hazard to pedestrians, cyclists or motor vehicles;
 - d. To ensure CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles can be maintained;
 - e. To remove or avoid damage to adjoining property; and
 - f. To allow access to a building site that would otherwise harm the tree.
9. The cost of pruning a verge tree(s) necessitated by adjacent property development shall be the responsibility of the developer;
10. Any unauthorised pruning, removal or deliberate damage of Town tree assets is an offence and prosecution can occur under the *Activities on Thoroughfares and Trading in Thoroughfares and Public Places Local Law 2000*.
11. Pruning and maintenance shall be undertaken in accordance with AS4373-2009 Pruning of Amenity Trees and Guidelines for the Management of Vegetation near Power Lines (Government of Western Australia);

Tree Planting

12. Trees are increasingly being recognised and managed throughout Australia as important community assets as the benefits they deliver are progressively identified, understood and measured. 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 trees.
13. The Town undertakes an annual tree planting program during the winter months or until appropriate soil moisture conditions as a result of rainfall has been achieved.
14. Suitable planting locations will be selected by the Town for the program in accordance with the Urban Forest Strategy.
15. Tree planting to ensure continuity of street tree provision will take precedence over adjoining property owner's refusal to accommodate street trees.
16. Adjacent land owners will be informed of the Town's intention to plant trees within the road reserve at least 2 weeks prior to planting.
17. Species selection will be determined by the Town in accordance with the Urban Forest Strategy.
18. Large-growing species will be planted wherever possible due to the increased contribution to canopy coverage targets outlined in the Urban Forest Strategy.
19. Local, native species will be planted wherever possible due to the ecosystem services they provide, as outlined in the Urban Forest Strategy.

20. In addition private property owners can request that the verge adjacent their property be listed for consideration within the Annual Tree Planting Program. The Town will provide and plant, at no charge, one or more street trees on the road verge. It is a requirement the applicant waters the tree(s) a minimum of once per week for at least three (3) successive summers following the planting.
21. Applications for street tree planting shall be made in writing to the Town and the request will be considered within the planting program. Requested locations are checked to determine the species and amount of trees that can be planted.
22. Requests for street trees will be received at any time throughout the year but planting will not be undertaken until appropriate soil moisture conditions as a result of rainfall has been achieved (i.e. Autumn/Winter) and is subject to appropriate available stock. Street trees shall be located with due consideration to services, sightlines and alignment of existing vegetation.

Tree Removal

23. Owing to the hazardous nature of the task, owners, residents, developers/builders or occupants are not permitted to remove street trees or any other Town managed trees themselves.
24. The Town recognises the significant contribution made by street trees to both the aesthetic and environmental aspects of existing streetscapes within the Town.
25. It also recognises that in some cases, tree retention may not be possible due to the condition, location or species of the tree, or the achievement of other Town objectives for broader community benefit.
26. Applications for street tree removal shall be made in writing to the Town.
27. The Town wishes to avoid removal of street trees. In accordance with this policy, the Town may remove, or approve a request from an adjacent property owner or their authorised agent for the removal of any street tree which:
 - a. Is causing significant damage to adjacent property, infrastructure, underground or overhead services;
 - b. Is dead, or due to pest and disease, poor health and growth, and will not return to full vigour
 - i. Being dead - having less than 10% photosynthetic material or live tissue present in the canopy mass;
 - ii. Being diseased and unlikely to respond to treatment within the scope of approved modern arboricultural management practices
 - c. Has been assessed by the Town is structurally weak and dangerous placing the public at risk;
 - d. Has been irreparably damaged by a storm or mechanical means;
 - e. Is incompatible with its environment or the direction of the Urban Forest Strategy;
 - f. Is a hazard to road reserve users and/or traffic safety.
28. Individual cases where trees with significant canopy are proposed for removal may be referred to Council for final determination.

29. Where the Town refuses a request to remove a street tree, a review of that decision may be requested in accordance with the relevant policies and management practices relating to the review of decisions.
30. Applicants should take all measures to design developments to retain and protect street trees.
31. Removal of street trees for new crossovers will only be considered where all other design options have been exhausted.
32. The full cost of removal and replacement of a verge tree(s) necessitated by adjacent property development shall be the responsibility of the Developer in accordance with the amount shown in the Schedule of Fees and Charges contained within the Annual Budget.
33. Street trees will not be removed for the following reasons:
- The tree obscures or potentially obscures views (other than traffic and pedestrian sight lines)
 - The tree variety is disliked;
 - The tree variety causes nuisance by way of leaf, fruit or bark shedding or the like;
 - The tree causes allergy or health problems. The Town may consider removal of the tree, subject to appropriate evidence from a medical practitioner confirming that allergy or health problem.
 - The tree is in the way of a non-essential crossover or verge paving options; and
 - The tree shades private gardens, solar installations or the like.
34. Any decision to remove a mature living tree from a road verge is to be communicated to the owners and occupiers of four (4) properties on either side of the tree, on both sides of the road, not less than two (2) weeks prior to the intended removal, unless the removal is or becomes urgent in the view of the Town.
35. Subject to clause 26(e), a tree that is clearly dead can be removed without community consultation, unless:
- The tree has evidence of habitation or recent habitation of species that is classified as threatened or endangered; or
 - The tree is of cultural heritage significance as defined in the *State Heritage Act 2018*.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

Nil.

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| Policy manager | Manager – Infrastructure Operations |
| Responsible officers | - |
| Approval authority | Council |
| Next Evaluation Date | |

REVISION HISTORY

| Version | Approved, Amended, Rescinded or Reviewed | Date | Authority | Resolution Number | Key Changes/Notes |
|---------|--|------|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|
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| 1 | Approved | 12/08/1997 | Council | - | Item 14.3 |
| 1 | Reviewed | 15/08/2006 | Council | - | Item 4.1 |
| 1 | Reviewed | 09/07/2013 | Council | - | Item 10.1 |
| 1 | Reviewed | 11/08/2015 | Council | - | Item 10.1 |
| 2 | Reviewed and Amended | 20/08/2019 | Council | 148/2019 | Item 10.1 |
| 3 | Reviewed and Amended | 29/06/2020 | Council | | |

