



City of Grand Forks
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Council Policy

Urban Forest

Established: March 26, 2018

Contact Department: Public Works

Guiding Principle

A healthy urban forest provides habitat, ecosystem function and amenity values to the City.

Purpose

To provide regulations for the control and management of trees and vegetation on City owned property.

Definitions

In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires:

“**certified danger tree assessor**” means someone who has completed dangerous tree risk assessment training recognized by WorkSafeBC

“**dangerous tree**” means the same as in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation

“**managed open space**” means all City-owned parks, playgrounds, pathways and boulevards

“**recreational trail**” means an informal trail used by the public for accessing natural areas and waterways and not established or maintained by the City.

“**Wildlife Trees**” means any standing dead or live tree with special characteristics that provide valuable habitat for the conservation or enhancement of wildlife.

Scope

This policy applies to City staff and contractors maintaining the City’s urban forest.

Policy Statements

The City will manage its urban forest for the public benefit including, but not limited to:

- Reduction of air pollution
- Dust control
- Wind breaks
- Noise control
- Rainfall interception
- Shade
- Habitat
- Aesthetics
- Soil stabilization and improvement
- Riparian area improvement

Risk management

The City will manage risk in accordance with industry standards for recreational trails and areas. The City will provide minimal oversight of natural areas with no City maintained infrastructure.

To manage risk for trees with the potential to interact with City-maintained public use areas, trails, roads, and infrastructure, and private property, the City will undertake a periodic risk assessment of trees and vegetation to:

- inform planning decisions and management procedures regarding trails, parks, recreation, infrastructure and property protection;
- identify areas with wildlife habitat value and potential danger tree issues requiring further assessment;
- inspect trees capable of causing damage.
- minimize the spread of invasive species.

The City will follow best practices to insure compliance with the federal Migratory Birds Convention Act, federal Species at Risk Act and the provincial Wildlife Act. Tree-cutting will be avoided during the bird nesting season and a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP – includes Arborist, R.P. Biologist, or R.P. Forester) is required to complete an assessment prior to cutting during bird nesting season.

Tree Donations by Individuals

At the discretion of the Manager of Operations or designate, the City will accept donations by individuals for trees. Tree location and species must be approved by Manager of Operations or designate. Fees may apply.

Prohibitions

The City of Grand Forks shall not permit the planting or pruning of any tree on property owned by the City except in compliance with the guidelines set by the Provincial and Federal legislation or this policy.

Tree Selection

The selection of City tree types shall be chosen from the recommended list of trees by the public works department and will take into account the input from the affected neighbors.

Exemptions and Removal Criteria

The City of Grand Forks public works department may remove, transplant or otherwise dispose of any City tree or authorize the removal, transplantation or disposal of any City tree if in the opinion of the Manager of Operations, or designate, the tree:

1. is infected by disease or injurious insects;
2. is planted too close to an abutting tree that it impedes growth of either or both;
3. interferes with the lines, poles, pipes, sewer lines, traffic control devices, streetlighting or other public utilities, and the problem cannot be corrected by trimming;
4. A Wildlife / Danger Tree Assessment evaluation has been performed by a certified danger tree assessor and the tree is deemed with a high hazard rating for life or property;

If a tree does not meet the criteria above, a person may apply in writing to the Manager of Operations or designate for permission to remove a tree. The following conditions must be met:

1. The tree is not a significant neighborhood asset, and the removal does not harm the public interest;
2. Removal will be conducted by a City approved contractor (with the proper insurance and licenses) according to specifications provided by the City; and
3. All removal and replacement costs are covered by the homeowner including the replacement trees in which number, placement, size and species is authorized by the Manager of Operations or designate. If the removal is for the purpose of improving “grey infrastructure” (e.g. new construction, road or utilities infrastructure) and no alternatives exist, then the benefits of removal will need to be weighed against the loss of green infrastructure. A plan to replace or improve “green infrastructure” may be a condition of approval.

Reconsideration

If not in agreement on a tree removal decision, by the Manager of Operations or authorized designate, that the home owner would like the tree removed and it was **not** deemed a hazard by the City’s hazard evaluation, the home owner can request written permission to remove the tree from City Council