



City of Grand Forks
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Council Policy

Urban Forest

Established: May 7, 2018

Rescinded: N/A

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 wildlife / danger tree assessor" means a person who has completed the *Wildlife Danger Tree Assessor's Course*, administered by the Wildlife Tree Committee (WTC).

"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 improvement
- Aesthetics
- Biodiversity
- Soil stabilization and improvement
- Riparian area improvement

The City will maintain and periodically review an Urban Forest Plan to meet these policy goals.

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 comply 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.

Tree Removal

The Tree Management Procedure directs the pruning, removal, or transplanting of any City tree by public works or authorized persons. It considers:

1. staff decision making and authorizations
2. tree management triggers
 - a. disease or injurious insects
 - b. interference with another tree
 - c. interference with municipal or utility infrastructure
 - d. high hazard rating as determined by a certified wildlife / danger tree assessor
3. replacement plan
 - a. ratio of trees removed to trees planted
4. tree management requests by residents
 - a. neighbourhood significance
 - b. removal and replacement costs
 - c. impact on service provided by green infrastructure
5. reconsideration of staff decisions.

References

- Urban Forest Plan
- Tree Management Procedure

Amendments

- N/A