

Urban Forest

Policy Objective

To detail the City of Belmont's commitment to preserving and enhancing the growth of the urban forest.

Policy Detail

1. Tree Planting

- a) The City shall implement the key objectives of the Urban Forest Strategy and the actions of the Canopy Plan.
- b) The City shall develop and implement an annual tree planting programme with the view to increase tree numbers and canopy cover within streetscapes and City managed lands.
 - (i) Tree selection will be location dependent and appropriate for the environmental context and in accordance with the City's Street Tree Plan.
 - (ii) The City shall maintain an inventory of City street trees as per a recognised arboricultural methodology or standard, including but not limited to information pertaining to:
 - i. individual amenity value (in Australian Dollars) as calculated by a qualified Arborist using the Helliwell System or other recognised form of amenity value calculation;
 - ii. arboricultural and physical attributes such as lifecycle, tree structure, tree health, useful life expectancy and canopy cover; and
 - iii. the number, location and species of street trees removed and planted annually.

2. Tree Retention and Protection

- a) All trees within City managed lands and areas under the City's control will be protected and managed as per this Policy.
- b) Regarding City trees, the City's preference, in order of priority, is:
 - (i) avoid impact - through appropriate design or construction methodologies; or
 - (ii) minimise impact - the City will require that the risk to the tree is minimised

Where works, including development, are likely to have a significant impact on a City Tree, the applicant shall have tree protection methods in place as recommended within AS 4970-2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites and to the satisfaction of the City.

3. Tree Pruning

- a) Pruning of City trees will be undertaken in compliance with AS 4373-2007 - Pruning of Amenity Trees and will only be considered to:
 - (i) promote and increase canopy cover;
 - (ii) support or extend the tree's useful life expectancy;

- (iii) mitigate an unacceptable risk of harm or damage to infrastructure, property or safety;
 - (iv) alleviate a significant negative impact to adjacent properties.
- b) The City will not prune City Trees:
- (i) for aesthetic purposes;
 - (ii) to maintain or create viewscales;
 - (iii) to reduce shading of solar panels;
 - (iv) to reduce shading of outdoor areas, pools, gardens, lawns or any other surface;
 - (v) to reduce leaf litter, nut drop or for any other nuisance factors.
- c) The Chief Executive Officer may authorise pruning of a City Tree for additional reasons under exceptional circumstances, following consideration of a request received in writing.

4. Tree Removal and Replacement

- a) Removal of a City Tree will only be considered where the tree:
- (i) is dead, dying, diseased or is structurally unsound;
 - (ii) was planted without authorisation from the City or is self-sown and is deemed an inappropriate tree;
 - (iii) presents an unacceptable risk of harm:
 - i. to human life; or
 - ii. to nearby infrastructure (and is supported by a Quantified Tree Risk Assessment methodology by a qualified Arborist);
 - (iv) is required to be removed through the approval of a crossover or development application;
 - (v) presents an unacceptable liability or legal risk to the City if retained;
 - (vi) is strategically removed and replaced to achieve a net increase in canopy cover;
 - (vii) directly contributes to or results in ongoing detrimental health impacts that are confirmed by a medical specialist as being attributed solely to that particular tree and alternative options for managing the issue are not feasible; or
 - (viii) is strategically removed and replaced to facilitate a City Project that provides a broader community benefit.
- b) The Chief Executive Officer may authorise removal of a City Tree for additional reasons under exceptional circumstances, following consideration of a request received in writing.
- c) Replacement tree planting shall occur at the site of removal and/ or at the closest suitable location. Tree planting is to be undertaken in accordance with this Policy and whereby the City shall determine the species of replacement trees dependent on the locality.

5. City Trees and Developments - Offset and Cost Recovery

- a) If a City Tree has been approved for removal, the City shall require pre-payment for:
- (i) works to be undertaken by the City (i.e. tree removal and stump grinding); and
 - (ii) the provision of replacement trees to be planted by the City, or
 - (iii) with agreement with the developer, the amenity value of the tree to be removed

- b) Where a City Tree is removed, replacement planting shall be undertaken at a ratio of 1:3 (removed: replaced).
- c) Where a City Tree is removed, pruned or is damaged without authorisation on City managed land, the City, at its discretion may:
 - (i) take action under Regulation 5(1) of the Local Government (Uniform Local Provisions) Regulations 1996 or other applicable legislation (including the issue of infringement notices);
 - (ii) recover costs associated with the removal (if applicable) and replacement tree/s as per the City's Schedule of Fees and Charges;
 - (iii) recover costs equivalent to the Amenity Value of the tree;
 - (iv) undertake replacement planting as per this Policy.

Reference/Associated Documents

Urban Forest Strategy

Street Tree Plan

Environment and Sustainability Strategy

Belmont on the Move

Canopy Plan

Tree Protection Fact Sheet

Street Trees Fact Sheet

Reference to Internal Procedure

Application for Street Tree Assessment through DA, Building License or Crossover Application

Processing Infrastructure Services Clearance and Crossover Assessments

Dealing with Street Tree Roots Causing a Disturbance or Damage to Infrastructure

Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

'Arboricultural Potential' means Optimal health, size and maturity of a tree as expressed by its individual arboricultural characteristics and its local conditions i.e. soil volume, water, nutrients, management requirements.

'Amenity Value' means monetary value representing the visual amenity provided by individual trees as calculated by a qualified Arborist using an internationally accepted arboricultural method.

'Canopy cover' means broad crown of a tree/s providing shade and cover.

'City Tree' – means tree with the entirety or majority of its trunk located within lands owned, vested or managed by the City.

'Significant Negative Impact' means as a result of a City tree the occupant's use, access, comfort or enjoyment of private property is detrimentally impeded or impaired.

'Street Tree' means tree located within a road reserve.

'Streetscapes' means the appearance or view of a street/ road reserve.

'Tree' – means a woody plant inclusive of its roots, canopy, stems and trunk(s) that is capable of growing taller than 4m in height at maturity.

'Urban Forest' – means the sum of all trees and vegetation within the urban environment.

'Urban Heat Island Effect' means the exacerbated thermal radiation (heat) retention within the urban environment due to a higher proportion of hard/ constructed materials.

'Useful Life Expectancy' means the number of years the tree is expected to continue to mature and provide canopy prior to going into decline.

This Policy is supported by:		
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Strategic Community Plan:	Goal 3: Natural Belmont Strategy: 3.1 Protect and enhance our natural environment Strategy: 3.4 Provide green spaces for recreation, relaxation and enjoyment	
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23/02/21	Review – Minor	12.7
24/05/22	Review – Minor	12.7
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