City of St. Albert
CITY COUNCIL POLICY

Urban Forest Management

AUTHORITY	APPROVED	Res. No. mm dd	REVISED	Res. No. mm dd
City Council				C544-2014 12 01

Purpose

To establish a framework for the consistent protection, management, and sustainability of the City's Urban Forest for future generations.

Policy

Consistent with its brand identity, the City considers the Urban Forest an important asset that enhances the quality of life for the community.

The City shall ensure the Urban Forest is properly managed through implementation of an Urban Forest Management Plan that aligns with other City bylaws, policies, community long term plans, programs, and the Municipal Engineering Standards.

Definitions

"City" means the City of St. Albert.

"City Owned Property" means a parcel of land including any buildings, structures, and devices, or where the context so requires, a chattel owned by the City or for which the City has assumed responsibility. Examples include natural and park areas, road rights of way, and City facility grounds.

"City Trees" means all trees on City owned property.

"Heritage Trees" means trees identified in the Heritage Trees of Alberta (2008) as amended.

"Natural Area" means land or water dominated by native vegetation in naturally occurring patterns. Such areas could include grasslands, forests, wetlands, or riparian areas but does not include parks.

"Naturalization" means an alternative landscape management technique; natural processes of growth and change are less restricted and the landscape is allowed to become more natural than ornamental by restricting mowing and by planting native vegetation found locally on similar landscapes.

"Park Area" means any City owned lands, developed and managed by the City and designated as City Parks or City Playgrounds. This does not include parks or playgrounds under the ownership or authority of area School Divisions or other private property.

"Private Trees" means all trees located on land that is not City owned property.

"Tree Canopy" means the uppermost layer in a forest, formed by the crowns of the trees in the Urban Forest. The tree canopy is typically represented by the percentage of ground area covered in a defined area.

"Tree Diversity" means a range of tree species and ages which support a healthy Urban Forest.

"Urban Forest" means the trees and associated vegetation located within City limits, whether planted or naturally occurring within both private and public property. Examples include trees and associated vegetation in parks, natural/naturalized areas, the river valley, ravines, trails, and road rights of way.

"Urban Forest Management Plan" means a long term strategic plan for managing the Urban Forest in the City of St. Albert.

Responsibilities

1. Council shall review and consider the budget to ensure this policy is resourced appropriately as proposed by the City Manager.

2. The City Manager or delegate is responsible for the effective application of this policy through an Urban Forest Management Plan and associated administrative policies, standards, procedures, and practices.

Standards

1. Urban Forest

    a. The City shall undertake a variety of programs in support of an Urban Forest Management Plan that are consistent with other applicable plans, bylaws, standards, and programs. The City shall ensure these are supported through the respective annual operating or capital budgets as approved by Council.

    b. The City Manager shall report to Council on an annual basis the progress and status of the Urban Forest including City tree related programs, inventory, and general health.

    c. The City shall carry out industry standard practices for the determination of tree canopy percentage within City boundaries. Through an Urban Forest Management Plan, the City shall establish minimum tree canopy percentage to maintain and also set future

tree canopy target percentages to support the growth and sustainability of the Urban Forest.

d. The City shall recognize that the overall tree canopy in St. Albert includes all private and City trees.

2. City Trees

a. City trees shall be planted in accordance with the Municipal Engineering Standards.

b. The City shall maintain an inventory of City Trees which include tree quantities by species and condition. This inventory will be updated annually by including trees planted in new developments, new plantings, relocates, removals, and replacements. The inventory of trees located within natural areas shall be determined by area estimation or other determination at the discretion of the City Manager.

c. Normally, the City shall avoid removal (cutting down or termination) of City trees unless it is necessary to do so in support of this policy, bylaws, safety reasons, pest infestation, diseases, or other City programs. Administrative Procedures shall include a formal and consistent process for the assessment and potential termination of a City tree.

d. The City shall undertake reasonable and timely steps to notify adjacent property owners directly affected by planting or removal of trees on City property.

3. Private Trees

a. The City shall provide public information to promote the planting, care, and health of private trees in support of preserving and enhancing the Urban Forest.

4. Heritage Trees and Official Flora

a. The City shall, where possible, protect and maintain heritage trees located within St. Albert recognizing their historical significance.

b. The City shall establish and maintain a designated location showcasing the official flora of the City as defined by Council Policy C-CC-09 City Emblems and Symbols.

Cross References: Dutch Elm Disease Bylaw 5/98; Policy C-CC-09, City Emblems and Symbols; Policy C-EUS-01, Environmental; Parks and Open Spaces Management Plan (2007), Public Works Long Term Department Plan (2009), Municipal Engineering Standards (2013), Environmental Master Plan (2014), Heritage Trees of Alberta (2008)