



# URBAN TREE POLICY

Council Policy  
C 601-25

<b>Administered By:</b>	Community and Protective Services Parks Department	<b>Policy No:</b>	C 601-25
<b>Approval Date:</b>	June 17, 2025	<b>Effective Date:</b>	June 17, 2025
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<b>References:</b>			

## Policy Statement:

The Town of Crossfield recognizes the vital role that trees play in enhancing environmental quality, supporting community well-being, and contributing to the Town of Crossfield’s quality of life. This policy supports the sustainable growth of the Town’s tree canopy, recognizes the natural life cycle of trees, and outlines clear criteria for the maintenance, removal and replacement of trees, as well as and managing the impacts of private trees on municipal infrastructure.

The Town is also committed to transparent communication with property owners regarding tree management decisions to ensure long-term safety, sustainability, and community trust.

## Purpose:

The purpose of this Urban Tree Policy is to establish consistent standards and practices for the management of trees within the Town’s jurisdiction, including public trees and private trees that impact Town infrastructure. The policy aims to conserve and enhance the urban forest canopy, ensure public safety, and support environmental sustainability.

The Town of Crossfield will maintain a comprehensive tree management program that will include:

- i. Planting new trees;
- ii. Monitoring the condition of existing trees on Town property and;
- iii. Seeking alternative solutions to removing trees that hinder infrastructure or development projects.

## Scope:

This policy applies to all trees located on Town-owned lands, including road rights-of-way, boulevards, medians, and parks, as well as private trees that encroach on or impact Town property or infrastructure.

## 1.0 Definitions

- 1.1 **Arborist** means a person with a diploma or degree involving arboriculture from an accredited college or university, a Registered Professional Forester, or an accredited Certified Arborist under the International Society of Arboriculture.
- 1.2 **Boulevard** means:
  - 1.2.1 The strip of land between the curb and the sidewalk and between the sidewalk and the property line, or
  - 1.2.2 Where there is no sidewalk, the strip of land between the curb and the property line, or
  - 1.2.3 Where there is no curb, the strip of land between the near edge of the road and the property line.
- 1.3 **Council** means the municipal Council of the Town of Crossfield.
- 1.4 **Donated Tree** means a tree proposed to be planted by an individual, group or organization in a Town Park or greenspace, and at no initial cost to the Town.
- 1.5 **Median** means a strip of land, often planted with trees or other vegetation, separating lanes of traffic.
- 1.6 **Park** means areas designated as public parks and open green spaces, including pathways within the Town of Crossfield.
- 1.7 **Parks Department** means a group of individuals employed by the Town on a permanent, temporary or casual basis who are responsible for designing, constructing, maintaining, and managing public parks and recreational areas.
- 1.8 **Private Property** means land owned by individuals or entities other than the Town of Crossfield.
- 1.9 **Road Right-of-Way** means the area of land legally dedicated for public use as a road.
- 1.10 **Tree** means a woody perennial plant, including large shrubs, typically a single stem or trunk growing to a considerable height and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground.

- 1.11 **Town** means the Town of Crossfield, a Municipal Corporation of the Province of Alberta, including its elected officials, officers, employees, contractors, and agents acting within the scope of their duties or employment.
- 1.12 **Town Property** refers to all land owned by the Town of Crossfield, including, but not limited to:
- 1.12.1 Public parks and green spaces
  - 1.12.2 Municipal buildings and facilities
  - 1.12.3 Roads, sidewalks, medians and boulevards
  - 1.12.4 Utility corridors and rights-of-way
  - 1.12.5 Vacant or undeveloped lots held by the Town
  - 1.12.6 Leased lands under municipal agreements

## 2.0 Tree Conservation and Maintenance

### Tree Inventory and Monitoring

- 2.1 The Parks Department maintains an inventory of all public trees and regularly monitors their health.
- 2.2 The Parks Department shall develop tree planting plans on an annual basis that will detail:
- 2.2.1 the locations where new trees are to be planted;
  - 2.2.2 the locations where old trees are to be removed;
  - 2.2.3 the locations, if any, where a potential conflict may arise with future development.
- 2.3 The Parks Department and contracted firms are responsible for monitoring and ensuring the provisions of this Policy are followed.

### Pruning and Maintenance

- 2.4 Trees located on Town Property will be pruned and maintained by the Town or a contracted certified Arborist to:
- 2.4.1 Remove dead or hazardous limbs,
  - 2.4.2 Promote healthy growth,
  - 2.4.3 Maintain vertical and horizontal clearance for infrastructure (e.g. streets, sidewalks, signage, utilities, etc.),
  - 2.4.4 Reduce potential hazards to the public.

## Pesticides

- 2.5 The Town or contracted certified Arborist may apply pesticides, herbicides, or other chemical treatments as part of its regular maintenance of public lands.
- 2.6 When such applications occur on Town Property adjacent to private land, all reasonable efforts will be made to prevent drift or unintended exposure. However, the Town will not be held responsible for any damage to private property, including lawns, gardens, vegetation, or other features, resulting from legally permitted and properly applied treatments on public lands.

## **3.0 Tree Planting**

- 3.1 The Town aims to require the placement of Trees on public properties as part of its replacement program with consideration for species diversity, site conditions and long-term sustainability as selected from an established Alberta list of species which favour native plants and in accordance with the Town of Crossfield Land Use Bylaw.
- 3.2 No person shall plant trees on Town Property or cause Trees to be planted on Town Property without prior written authorization from the Town.
- 3.3 Trees planted on Town Property should be considered in accordance with the following:
  - 3.3.1 All plantings located within Town owned road right of ways and boulevards shall be approved by the Parks Department prior to installation.
  - 3.3.2 Plantings located on or within Town Property which have not been approved by the Town may be removed by the Town, with the cost of the removal being billed to the person(s) responsible for the unauthorized planting.
  - 3.3.3 Trees planted within a Road Right of Way may be replaced, at the Town's discretion, in the same location, elsewhere in the same subdivision, or on another Town property.
  - 3.3.4 Trees located on Town property shall be replaced at the following minimum sizes, at the discretion of the Town:

- i. Coniferous trees – 1.83 m (6.00 ft) in height at the time of planting
- ii. Deciduous trees – 3.05 m (10.00 ft) in height and with a minimum of 50 mm caliper measurement at the time of planting

3.3.5 All plant material and installation techniques must meet current City of Calgary guidelines and specifications.

3.4 Tree replacement shall be replaced on a 1:1 or higher ratio whenever feasible, either on the same site or elsewhere in Town.

3.5 All Tree plantings in new development will be located on the property owner's side of the property line unless previously approved in writing by the Town.

3.6 Acceptance of trees into municipal responsibility shall occur only after the following conditions have been met:

3.6.1 The trees have survived through at least one full growing season following planting.

3.6.2 They are free from visible defects, disease, or stress.

3.6.3 They meet the Town's approved specifications and standards.

Once the inspection is complete and all conditions have been satisfied, the Town will issue written confirmation of acceptance as part of the FAC process. From that point, the trees will be considered Town assets and maintained accordingly.

## 4.0 Tree Removals

4.1 Trees located on Town Property will be considered for removal based on the following conditions:

4.1.1 The Tree is dead.

4.1.2 The majority of the crown is dead, and the tree is past the stage where it can be effectively treated.

- 4.1.3 When it is necessary for insect and disease control as defined by the *Alberta Pest and Nuisance Control Regulation* as amended from time-to-time.
- 4.1.4 If the Tree has been damaged and there is no chance for the tree to remain healthy.
- 4.1.5 Trees have been found to have major decay in the trunk and are not successfully compensating for the decay on their own.
- 4.1.6 A history of repeated extensive damage has been recorded to the Town property (e.g., sewer, sidewalk, roadway) and it is in the best interest of the Town to have the tree removed.
- 4.1.7 Above or below ground utility repairs, or overhead utility clearance requires removal or trimming of trees.
- 4.1.7 Trees may only be removed for construction purposes when no reasonable or cost-effective alternatives exist to preserve them.
- 4.2 If a Tree has been inspected and is deemed a 'high risk' hazard to recognized industry standards, the removal of the Tree will be expedited as quickly as possible.
- 4.3 Tree removal will only take place after it has been evaluated by a qualified Town employee or qualified contracted service provider.
- 4.4 The Town may remove tree limbs immediately or within an appropriate timeframe based on the level of risk posed by the tree.
- 4.5 Trees that have been removed may or may not be replaced due to surrounding area circumstances and future development.
- 4.6 Tree removals may be completed on an "as time permits" basis.

## 5.0 Donated trees

- 5.1 The Town welcomes the donation of trees from residents, community groups, and businesses as a way to enhance the urban forest and support public spaces.
- 5.2 All tree donations are subject to the following conditions:

- 5.2.1 Donated trees must be of a species and size approved by the Town and suitable for the proposed planting location.
- 5.2.2 All planting locations must be pre-approved by the Town to ensure alignment with site conditions, infrastructure, and urban design standards.
- 5.2.3 The Town's Parks Department will oversee or coordinate the planting to ensure it meets proper arboricultural practices.
- 5.2.4 The following minimum sizes are recommended:
  - i. Coniferous trees 1.83m (6.00 ft) in height at the time of planting.
  - ii. Deciduous trees 3.05m (10.00 ft) in height and with a minimum of 50 mm caliper measurement at the time of planting.
- 5.3 Once planted and accepted, donated trees become the property of the Town and will be maintained as part of the municipal urban forest.
- 5.4 The Town retains the right to prune, relocate, or remove the tree in the future, as needed, for public safety, infrastructure, or forest health reasons.
- 5.5 The Town recognizes that newly planted trees are subject to various environmental factors that may affect their survival, and the Town will not replace any donated trees that die within two (2) years of planting.

## **6.0 Trees on Private Property**

- 6.1 Tree maintenance (including trimming trees, shrubs, overhanging branches or intruding roots) on private property remains the responsibility of the property owner to prevent interference with pedestrians on sidewalks or vehicles using the street or alley and prevent conflicts with public infrastructure or services.
- 6.2 Where a tree located on private property causes or risks causing damage to public infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks, underground or above ground utilities, roadways, pathways, etc.), obstruction of public spaces, and/or safety hazards to the public, the Town reserves the right to require the property

owner to mitigate the issues at their expense, which may include, but is not limited to trimming/pruning, installation of root barrier, or removal of the tree.

- 6.3 While the Town will make reasonable efforts to avoid unnecessary harm to trees on private property, it will not be held responsible or liable for any damage to such trees that encroach into Town Property or interfere with Town infrastructure during repair, maintenance, or replacement of municipal infrastructure above or below ground. The Town may trim, cut, or remove the encroaching portions up to the property line as needed to complete repairs, maintenance, or replacement of municipal infrastructure, without compensation to the property owner.