

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR VEGETATIVE MANAGEMENT**

### **A. POLICY FOR VEGETATION MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY AND DRAINAGE, UTILITY OR TRAIL EASEMENTS**

#### **1. POLICY PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy concerning vegetation management, which includes pruning and removal of vegetation, is to provide for the safety and protection of right-of-way users and their property, to allow for the proper maintenance of roads, trails, sidewalks and utilities, and to protect below ground and above ground utility infrastructure. The City has limited employee and financial resources and cannot reasonably address all vegetation in need of pruning or removal. Vegetation management can be costly. Comprehensive vegetation surveys are expensive and require the use of limited resources including City personnel, finances, equipment and other resources. Accordingly, the Directors of the City departments that are responsible for vegetative management, the Director of Public Works and Director of Parks and Recreation Services (hereinafter collectively referred to as “Director”) must exercise both discretion and professional judgment in determining whether and when to perform vegetation management. The City expects that its agents, employees, and City officials will exercise discretion in identifying conditions requiring pruning or removal of vegetation and in scheduling and establishing priorities for pruning and removal of vegetation.

#### **2. ESTABLISHMENT OF VEGETATIVE INSPECTION PROCEDURES**

The Director shall establish procedures for undertaking vegetative management. Such procedures may include:

- (a) An initial survey of City roads, trails, sidewalks and utilities for vegetative management.
- (b) A schedule for routine vegetative management inspections which may include a seven year minimum rotation throughout the entire community that corresponds to the pavement management schedule.
- (c) A schedule and map of the City’s annual vegetation management program published on the City website.
- (d) Information on the vegetation management program mailed to all residents within a proposed work area normally prior to the start of management activities. This information may include a description of the program, schedule, contact information and City web address for accessing more information about the program. Exhibit A describes a sample information letter.

- (e) Criteria for determining whether a particular City road, trail, sidewalk or utility is in need of vegetative management. Those criteria may include, but not necessarily be limited to the following considerations: improve sight lines, increase safety, and maintain public and private property and infrastructure.
  - (f) Implementation of a training program for City maintenance employees and their designees undertaking vegetative management. Such training may include proper tree care standards, use of equipment and work zone protection.
  - (g) Identification of priority situations and locations for vegetative management.
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**B. PROCEDURES FOR VEGETATION MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY AND DRAINAGE, UTILITY OR TRAIL EASEMENTS.**

The following procedures have been established by the Director in accordance with the “Policy for Vegetation Management within the Public Right-Of-Way and Drainage, Utility or Trail Easements.”

**1. PRIORITY SITUATIONS / LOCATIONS FOR VEGETATIVE MANAGEMENT**

The following are considered priority situations or locations for managing vegetation:

- (a) A fallen tree or tree limb located on a street, trail, sidewalk, above ground utility or boulevard.
- (b) Parts of tree located less than sixteen feet above the street and five feet beyond the curb. (See Exhibit B)
- (c) Parts of tree located less than ten feet above the trail or sidewalk and two feet beyond the edge of pavement. (See Exhibit B).
- (d) Vegetation located between two and six feet above the ground in an intersection sight triangle. (See Exhibit C).
- (e) Vegetation that interferes with a right-of-way user’s ability to see traffic signals and traffic signs.
- (f) Vegetation that interferes with the passage of light from an overhead street light.

- (g) Vegetation that interferes with the maintenance or operation of water, wastewater or stormwater infrastructure.
- (h) Any tree or portion of a standing tree which is determined to be a hazardous tree by the City Forester because it endangers public health, safety or welfare.

**3. PROCESS PROCEDURES:**

The following process procedures are established for managing vegetation:

- (a) A schedule and map of the City's annual vegetation management program shall be posted on the City website. This information shall be kept up-to-date.
- (b) Information on the vegetation management program shall be mailed to all residents within the proposed work area prior to any management activities starting. This information shall include a description of the program, schedule, contact information and City web address for accessing more information about the program. Exhibit C describes a sample information letter.
- (c) The City shall not enter onto private property to prune or remove trees without first obtaining the necessary right-of-entry authorization as shown in Exhibit D.
- (d) Trees and shrubs should be pruned to promote proper growth, as well as improve health and appearance of the vegetation. If the property owner does not grant a right-of-entry to prune outside the right-of-way then the City shall only prune those branches located within the public right-of-way.
- (e) All tree debris will be disposed of off-site by the City. The City shall take care to protect and restore turf to its original condition.
- (f) All vegetation pruning and removal shall be done at no cost to the property owner.
- (g) The City will not replace any vegetation that is removed for reasons included in this policy.

**4. PROCEDURES FOR MANAGEMENT OF VEGETATION LOCATED WHOLLY WITHIN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY:**

The following procedures are established for managing vegetation located wholly within the right-of-way:

- (a) Trees with a trunk diameter greater than six inches (measured at a height of 4 ½ feet above the ground) may be pruned to a height of sixteen feet above the street and five feet beyond the curb, and also pruned to a height of ten feet above trails or sidewalks and two feet beyond the edge of pavement. This prevents branches from interfering with vehicles such as plows, street sweepers, garbage trucks, school buses and pavement and utility maintenance equipment.
- (b) Woody shrubs and coniferous trees with a trunk diameter less than six inches (measured at a height of 4 ½ feet above the ground) and located five feet from the face of curb may be removed if the City believes it will mitigate current or future sightline and right-of-way user interference issues.
- (c) Vegetation located in an intersection sight triangle within the right-of-way, as shown in Exhibit B, may be pruned to create a clear sight line in the area located between two and six feet above the ground.
- (d) Vegetation blocking street lighting, traffic signals and traffic signs may also be pruned.
- (e) Provide notice to property owners by a certified mail prior to the complete removal of any tree or woody shrub.

**5. PROCEDURES FOR MANAGEMENT OF VEGETATION LOCATED ON PRIVATE PROPERTY:**

The following procedures are established for managing vegetation located on private property:

- (a) The City shall identify addresses where pruning outside of the right-of-way is appropriate and provide notification via a door hanger to the property owner as shown in Exhibit E. The City shall describe on the door hanger, as well as demonstrate on the tree with florescent pink flagging ribbon, the branch or branches to be pruned. The City shall also provide the homeowner with a right-of-entry form allowing the City to prune vegetation. This shall occur at least seven days prior to any work being initiated.
- (b) If the property owner provides the necessary right-of-entry authorization then the City may perform the pruning work.
- (c) If the property owner fails to provide timely right-of-entry authorization then pruning shall only occur on vegetation located within the right-of-way. If the property owner chooses to provide a right-of-entry

authorization after the City has pruned in the right-of-way then the City may choose not to make a second trip to prune on private property in order to avoid inefficient operations caused by making multiple job site visits.

**6. PROCEDURES FOR MANAGEMENT OF VEGETATION LOCATED WITHIN A DRAINAGE, UTILITY OR TRAIL:**

The following procedures are established for managing vegetation located within a drainage, utility or trail easement:

- (a) Vegetation located in a drainage, utility or trail easement may be pruned or removed when it impairs the operation or ability to maintain the system for which the easement was created for. If it does not, then a property owner right-of-entry authorization must be secured prior to any work being initiated.
- (b) The City shall notify property owners in writing, mailed by US Post Office certified mail, prior to removing any tree or woody shrub.

**POLICY EXHIBITS:**

- Exhibit A: Information Letter
- Exhibit B: Pruning above Roads, Trails, and Sidewalks
- Exhibit C: Intersection Sight Triangle
- Exhibit D: Right-of-Entry Authorization
- Exhibit E: Door Hangers