



## Parks & Recreation

# Memo

To: Eric Hanson, City Administrator  
From: Linda Bruer, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Date: February 2, 2017  
RE: Street Tree Trimming/Planting

---

Staff met and discussed a number of concerns expressed by the community with regard to the city's current street tree care and planting practices. Below are the questions/concerns raised and possible alternatives to current policy.

1. Current: The planting area consists of the grass area between the street and the sidewalk and must be a minimum of five (5) feet wide.

Proposed: No planting of any tree regardless of type/size in the easement (grass area between the street and sidewalk).

Staff: Consider amending the tree planting cost share program to encourage the homeowner to plant a tree from the city's approved list in their front yard rather than the area strictly in the right-of-way between the street and sidewalk. Homeowners would complete an application, specifying the type of tree they intend to plant from the list of approved species. Applications will be reviewed and approved in the order they are received beginning June 1. If approved for a match, the homeowner would plant their tree anywhere in the front yard of their home and be reimbursed by the city up to \$100 upon city inspection and presentation of paid receipt.

As currently the practice, trees could be planted between the street and sidewalk after site inspection and approval by staff.

2. Current: Trees shall not be planted closer than three (3) feet to the curb.

Proposed: Trees shall not be planted closer than 10 feet to any curb and then only a small tree species. (Japanese Maple)

Staff: Again, amend the city's cost share program to encourage planting in front yards; and continue the practice that all plantings between the street and sidewalk will be from the approved species list and site reviewed and approved by staff. Many of the existing street trees were wrong species wrong location selections, which has caused many of the problems the city is currently experiencing.

3. Current: No trees shall be planted within the sight triangle at an intersection that at maturity, have bottom branches lower than 8 feet above the elevation of the adjacent pavement.

Proposed: No tree branches should hang down over any street or intersection or sidewalk at a height of less than 20 feet over the pavement.

Staff: Trees located between the street and the sidewalk shall be maintained by the city with bottom branches maintained at a height 14 feet above the elevation of the adjacent pavement, depending on the species and age of the tree at the discretion of staff.

4. Tree limbs obstructing signage or street lights.

Current: Limbs obstructing signage and street lights in the right-of-way between the street and sidewalk have been trimmed by city; however, limbs in the right-of-way where there is no sidewalk and on those located on private property have been the responsibility of the property owner.

Staff: Branches from trees located in the right-of-way that are obstructing signage or street lights will be addressed as a street maintenance concern and will be trimmed by the city with staff discretion.

As always, we would open to discussion regarding any of the points listed above regarding current street tree care practices.