Tree Management Policy

CITY OF
TEA TREE GULLY
Naturally Better

Record number	D21/83895
Responsible Manager	Manager Parks Manager City Development
Other key internal stakeholders	Director Assets and Environment Director Community and Cultural Development
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1. PURPOSE

Council recognises that trees provide important social, economic and environmental benefits to the community. Increasing canopy cover is a key objective reflected in both Council's Strategic Plan and State Government 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide.

The purpose of this policy is to formalise Council's position in regard to increasing canopy cover through the effective management of trees under Council's care and control.

This policy has been developed in line with relevant legislation and best industry standards and should be read in conjunction with Technical Guidelines, other key relevant documents including Council's Strategic Plan and the Resilient East (RE) Regional Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

2. POLICY

Council aims to achieve its objectives by delivering a Tree Management Framework that will:

a. **Protect –**prioritise endemic remnant trees, age and species diversity, space for trees and habitat.

b. **Plan -** through the setting of targets and the application of effective measuring and monitoring of canopy cover.

c. **Maintain -** trees in a consistent approach; so as to maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits canopy cover provides.

d. **Engage & Promote –** Encourage community participation, education and consultation, promoting trees and their benefits.

Tree Management Technical Guidelines underpinning the Policy requirements will be developed, adopted and maintained. Council's decisions regarding the management of trees will be in line with this Policy and these guidelines.

2.1 Protect

Council will ensure public trees are protected from development activity where practicable through the application of the Australian Standard AS4970-2009 - Protection of Trees on Development Sites and the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016.

Council will investigate unauthorised tree pruning, poisoning, damage or removal and may pursue enforcement action in accordance with the Local Government Act 1999 and/or consider civil action where appropriate in line with Council's Enforcement Policy

2.2 Plan

Council will set clear targets that measure, maintain and enhance canopy cover on public land and across the city. This will be further supported by:

a. Developing programs to determine spread, location and composition of the urban forest
b. Planting trees in locations that support set targets, local biodiversity, climate adaptation, healthy active living and Council wide plans
c. The regular review of resources deemed appropriate to meet current and future demands
d. Tree Planting Technical Guidelines that will inform the species selection and tree planting locations.
e. Undertaking tree audits to assess condition, retention value, risk rating and to identify management requirements, future strategy and planning.

2.3 Maintain

Trees will be inspected at least once every five years to identify and record works to mitigate risk. This will include:

a. Undertaking formative pruning in accordance with Australian Standard 4373 - Pruning of Amenity Trees and the Tree Pruning Technical Guideline in order to maintain appropriate tree structures and reduce future maintenance costs
b. Tree risk assessments using an arboriculture industry recognised method and in accordance with the Council's Enterprise Risk Management Framework, with priority risks being managed accordingly
c. Maintaining trees to provide clearances in accordance with relevant legislation and in line with the appropriate Technical Guidelines.

Council will respond to customer requests by inspecting each separate request and taking appropriate action which may vary from no action, allocating it to the next scheduled routine pruning round or immediate intervention based on a risk based assessment.

2.3.1 Tree Removal

Approval for the removal of tree(s) may only be made by the CEO or a delegated officer of Council and subject to at least one of the following criteria applying:

a. The tree is dead, dying and or diseased
b. Through a risk assessment process determined that the tree presents an unacceptable level of risk to a person or property
c. The tree is a species that has been identified as a weed and not subject to any other protection
d. The tree is unsuitable and does not meet the strategic objectives of this Council or has been identified for removal in a project approved by Council
e. For the purpose of replacing poorly performing trees or trees of low amenity value
f. Any other reasonable consideration that Council's CEO sees as relevant for the specific matter.

Trees will not be considered for removal where the request for removal is primarily related to:

a. Obscures or potentially obscures private views
b. Species type unless inappropriate as determined by CEO or Council's Arborist
c. Nuisance by way of leaf, fruit, bark shedding or other natural process
d. Attracting wildlife that causes nuisance

e. Creating shade
f. Development where reasonable alternatives to conserve tree(s) are available.

2.3.2 Tree Removal for Development Benefit

Where tree(s) are approved for removal by Council's Arborist to accommodate development, Council will place a monetary value on the subject tree(s) using the Urban Tree Amenity Valuation Formula as set out in Attachment 1 of this Policy unless it meets the criteria under 2.3.1 - Tree Removal section of this policy

All costs associated with tree removal will be at the applicant's expense and all payment must be made prior to the commencement of any development works.
The applicant may be expected to pay the following:
a. Amenity Value
b. Arborist report costs
c. Removal costs
d. Reestablishment costs of replacement trees

Any funds that are received through the application of a Tree Amenity Valuation will be deposited into Council's Urban Tree Fund Reserve.

2.4 Engage & Promote

Strategies and programs will be developed that promote, educate and encourage community participation so as to communicate the importance and benefits trees provide. Council will further engage with the community in various ways to achieve key objectives including:

Tree Planting
This Policy states that Council will seek to establish at least one street tree in the adjacent Council owned verge area for every property within the City of Tea Tree Gully, where site conditions allow.

This is a key program to contribute to the overall strategic objective to increase tree canopy cover across the City.

Tree Canopy Cover
Council will undertake studies and measurements to understand and monitor tree canopy cover across the City in order to form a view as to which parts of the City may be experiencing net tree canopy loss due to natural factors (e.g. loss of aged trees, drought, disease or biosecurity impacts), or other causes (infill development, impact of construction and civil works).

Council will obtain suitable data sets to allow an informed and specific tree canopy cover target to be considered by Council as part of a planned City of Tea Tree Gully - Environmental Management and Climate Resilience Plan to be developed.

3. OPERATIONAL SERVICE LEVELS

Council's Operational Service Level reflects the minimum commitment to the community in relation to some specific service delivery factors. These commitments are subject to operational resourcing, seasonal factors and prioritisation of works based on risk, environmental and operational programming factors.

3.1 Provision of street trees

Council will seek to establish at least one street tree in the adjacent Council owned verge area for every average property within the City of Tea Tree Gully, where site conditions allow.

This is a key program to contribute to the overall strategic objective to increase canopy cover across the city.

Council will plant at least 2,000 street trees and at least 5,000 open space and biodiversity plants annually on Council owned verges, reserves and biodiversity sites. These targets will be reviewed every three (3) years.

3.2 Pruning of street trees

Council will provide a rolling program to provide formative and clearance pruning of street trees and generally plan to prune all street trees at least once every five years.

3.3 Customer requests

Council will provide a reactive tree inspection, assess and assign service to prioritise tree pruning and damaged tree requests according to risk management principles. Trees with potential risk to persons or property will be inspected within 24 hours.

4. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

Tree Canopy Cover

Urban Tree Canopy provides a range of social, economic and environmental benefits and includes all trees and vegetation located throughout the local government area; irrespective of the tree species origin (native, exotic), location (street, park, garden, school) or ownership (public, private, institutional).

Technical Guidelines

Technical Guidelines will provide operational direction for Council employees and contractors. The guidelines will be adjusted as needed to meet legislative or technical compliance, recognising the range of statutory and industry best practice inputs received from time to time. Discretionary changes to Technical Guidelines that may impact the level or type of services offered to the community will be considered in line with Council's Community Engagement Policy and input from Council and/or relevant council committee.

5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

5.1 Other references

Council's documents including:
   a. Urban Landscape Directions and Urban Landscape Guidelines
   b. Community Engagement (Public Consultation) Policy
   c. Enforcement Policy
   d. Risk Management Policy and Framework

e.   Fees and Charges Register
f.   Open Space Strategy 2011-2030
g.   Order Making Policy
h.   Pest Plant and Animal Control Policy
i.   City of Tea Tree Gully Development Plan
j.   Resilient East Climate Adaptation Plan
k.   Planning and Design Code

Technical Guidelines
a.   TG01 Road Vegetation Clearance
b.   TG02 Tree Planting
c.   TG03 Tree Pruning
d.   TG04 Tree Removal
e.   TG05 Tree Risk Assessment
f.   TG06 Tree Screen Management

External documents including:
a.   Australian Standard - Protection of trees on development sites (AS4970:2009)
b.   Australian Standard - Pruning of amenity trees (AS4373:2007)
c.   Independent inquiry into management of trees on public land - report endorsed by the Local Government Association State Executive Committee
d.   Trees: Legislation and Risk Management Guidelines for Local Government as published by the Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme
e.   SA Power Network – Powerline Friendly Trees – Guideline 2018
f.   Local Government Act 1999
g.   Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016
h.   Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017

6.   STRATEGIC PLAN/POLICY

6.1 Strategic Plan

The following strategic objectives in Council's Strategic Plan 2025 are the most relevant to this report:

Objective	Comments
Community	
People feel a sense of belonging, inclusion and connection with the City and the community	Trees provide a sense of place and connection to nature.
There are opportunities for people to volunteer, give back and share their skills with others	The policy provides opportunities for community participation.
Environment	
Environmentally valuable places and sites that are flourishing and well cared for	The policy supports culturally aware tree management practices to support care of place and sites.

A community that is protected from public and environmental health risks	Global and local research shows urban forests help reduce a number of chronic and acute public diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, depression and skin cancer.
We are resilient to climate change and equipped to manage the impact of extreme weather events	Trees are recognised globally as one of the key measures in helping communities address both climate adaptation and mitigation.
Our tree canopy is increasing	This policy is the key driver to support canopy growth.
Economy	
A local economy that is resilient and thrives, where businesses are supported to grow and prosper, provide local jobs and sustain our community and visitors and utilize technology to improve the liveability of our city	Research shows that trees help attract business investment. People spend more time in areas where trees are present which contributes to economic development objectives.
Places	
Streets, paths, open spaces and parks are appealing, safe and accessible	Trees provide an important visual appeal to areas such as streets .Tree planting locations are selected to optimise public accessibility (e.g. footpath construction)
Neighbourhoods are easy to move around and are well connected with pedestrian and cycle paths that offer an alternative to cars	Trees shade paths, link areas and therefore support movement and alternative forms of transport. Tree planting locations are selected to optimise public accessibility (e.g. footpath construction)
Buildings and places are energy efficient, well designed and display a uniqueness of character and identity	Trees reduce energy use in buildings, add character and identity to areas.
Leadership	
Leadership and advocacy is focused on the long term interests of the community	Trees are an intergenerational assets and a key contributor to a wide range of social, economic and environmental community benefits.
Planning considers current and future community needs	The urban forest is recognised by agencies such as the United Nations as a critical urban assets in the development of cities to meet future needs.
Decision making is informed, based on evidence and is consistent	This policy recognises the scientific evidence demonstrating the importance of trees and provides a robust framework to ensure consistent decision making.

6.2 Organisation Plan

Our Strategic Plan is supported by an Organisation Plan which focuses on four key themes of organisational excellence. The themes most relevant to this report are: Customer Care; Learning & Growth; Future Capability; Sustainable Operations.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This Policy will be implemented by the Chief Executive Officer or relevant portfolio Director and managed in accordance with Council's scheme of delegations.

City of Tea Tree Gully

Tree Amenity Valuation

Where a public tree is to be removed in accordance with Council's Tree Management Policy and in relation to a development, the property owner or representative shall pay the associated costs prior to the removal which will be calculated in accordance with this Tree Amenity Valuation Method.

The costs associated with removal of a public tree include:

A – Removal Cost	Amounting to the estimated costs incurred by Council for physically removing the tree.
B – Amenity Value Cost	Calculated in accordance with Council's Amenity Formula.
D – Reinstatement Cost	In accordance with the City of Tea Tree Gully Fees and Charges register.

Total Costs for Tree Removal =

Removal Cost + Amenity Value Cost + Reinstatement Cost

A -   Removal Cost

The Removal Cost will be based on the current estimated cost of tree removal. It includes the physical removal of the tree and the stump. Indicative minimum costs are provided in the City of Tea Tree Gully - Fees and Charges Register. Additional costs may include traffic management, crane hire or other site-specific costs associated with removal.

B -   Amenity Value Cost

The following formula has been prepared to assist with calculating the monetary amenity value of a tree within the City of Tea Tree Gully. When another tree will replace a young with a 6 cm trunk diameter or less, there will be no amenity value charge.

This Amenity Valuation Methodology has been based on similar models used by other Councils particularly in South Australia and the Eastern States.

Tree Amenity Value (V) = Base Value ($) x Species Factor (S) x Aesthetic Factor (A) x Locality Factor (L) x Condition Factor (C)

Base Value ($)

The Base Value of a tree is determined by matching the trunk diameter at breast height (DBH) with its corresponding base value in the table below:

DBH cm	Base Value	DBH cm	Base Value	DBH cm	Base Value
6	$ 309.92	50	$21,522.33	100	$ 86,089.33
8	$ 550.98	55	$26,042.03	105	$ 94,913.49
10	$ 860.89	60	$30,992.16	110	$104,168.09
15	$ 1,937.00	65	$36,372.74	115	$113,853.14
20	$ 3,443.57	70	$42,183.77	120	$123,968.63
25	$ 5,380.58	75	$48,425.25	125	$134,514.58
30	$ 7,748.04	80	$55,097.17	130	$145,490.97
35	$10,545.94	85	$62,199.54	135	$156,897.81
40	$13,774.29	90	$69,732.35	140	$168,735.09
45	$17,433.09	95	$77,695.62	145	$181,002.82

Species Factor (S)

A tree is assessed according to its known natural life span and its rate of growth in a particular environment. For example, a long-lived tree will be scored higher than a short-lived tree. Significant features to the tree will also modify how the tree is scored. The assessment regarding species factor is made by a qualified Arborist.

Group	Characteristics	Example Species	Score
1	• trees of short life span (less than 50 years) • fast growth rate	*Prunus, Acacia, Robinia*	**0.5**
2	• trees of short life span (less than 50 years) • slow growth rate	*Malus, Crataegus, Eugenia, Pyrus, Grevillea, Melaleuca, Hakea*	**0.6**
3	• trees of medium life span (50 -150 years) • fast growth rate	*Populus, Liquidamber, Eucalyptus, Corymbia, Angophora, Salix, Casaurina, Celtis, Acmena*	**0.7**
4	• trees of medium life span (50 - 150 years) • slow growth rate	*Brachychiton, Fraxinus, Gleditsia, Jacaranda, Shinus, Phoenix, Melia, Robinia, Lophostemon, Agonis, Meterosideros, Syzygium*	**0.8**
5	• trees of long life span (more than 150 years) • fast growth rate	*Cupressus, Platanus, Ficus, Pinus, Eucalyptus (Endemic species)*	**0.9**
6	• trees of long life span (more than 150 years) • slow growth rate	*Ulmus, Quercus, Ginko, Araucaria,*	**1.0**
Modifiers	• Environmental Weeds • dangerous (poor branch attachment) • undesirable characteristics (e.g. allergenic)	*Salix, Fraxinus rotundifolia, Pittosporum undulatum*	**-0.1**

Group	Characteristics	Example Species	Score
	• a rare species in the locality • a special precious cultivated variety • a 'significant tree' registered by the National Trust • has special historical or other significance		+0.1
	Trees named are supplied only as examples used in the City of Melbourne conditions **Species Factor (S)**		

Aesthetics (A)

The Aesthetic Factor of a tree valuation is determined by the impact on the landscape if the tree were removed. This category is closely tied to the Locality Factor (L).

Aesthetic Factor	Score
Contributes little to the landscape	0.5
One of a group of close plantings	0.6
Wide plantings	0.7
Irregular spacing between trees; regular spacing one side	0.8
Street or pathway plantings, regular spacing both sides	0.9
Solitary feature specimen tree	1.0
Aesthetics (A)	

Locality (L)

The Locality Factor is determined by the tree's geographical situation. Trees located in a main street or boulevard environment score highest because of the stressful growing environment in which the tree has to survive. As the location becomes more rural, the significance of the Locality Factor for the tree diminishes.

Locality Factor	Score
In undeveloped bushland or open forest	0.5
In country rural areas and country roads	1.0
In suburban areas and residential streets.	1.5
In high density growth suburbs.	1.75
In Commercial precinct areas; significant streets or main roads.	2.0
In commercial precinct areas and secondary streets.	2.25
Commercial Centers, Main Street and Principal Boulevards	2.5
Locality (L)	

Tree Condition (C)

The Tree Condition Factor is determined by an Arborist inspection of the condition of the tree talking into account the following factors.

Assessment Criteria	Criteria Condition	Score
Trunk	• solid and sound	5
	• sections of bark damaged/missing	3
	• extensive decay, hollow trunk	1
Growth	• >15cm twig elongation this season	3
	• 5-15cm twig elongation	2
	• <5cm twig elongation	1

Assessment Criteria	Criteria Condition	Score
Structure	• healthy, stable and sound	5
	• some deadwood and dead limbs	3
	• extensive dieback and deadwood	1
Pests and Diseases	• no pest/disease infestation	3
	• minor symptoms of infestation	2
	• advanced symptoms of infestation	1
Canopy Development	• full balance canopy	5
	• full but unbalanced, lop-sided	3
	• unbalanced and lacking full canopy	1
Life Expectancy	• >50 years	5
	• 10-50 years	3
	• <10 years	1
Total Score		

Total Score	Tree Condition	Factor
6 – 9	Very Poor	0.2
10-13	Poor	0.4
14 – 18	Fair	0.6
19 – 22	Good	0.8
23 - 26	Excellent	1.0
	Tree Condition Rating (C)	

D – Reinstatement Costs

The level of reinstatement required will be determined in accordance with the City of Tea Tree Gully - Fees and Charges Register (Tree Replacement Fee) https://www.teatreegully.sa.gov.au/files/assets/public/council-documents/documents/fees-and-charges-register-2021-2022.pdf