

District Tree Policy

South Taranaki District Council



South Taranaki
Alive with opportunity

Executive Summary

This Policy sets out how the Council will provide and maintain, and where necessary, remove trees in road corridors and parks and reserves. It includes a requirement to consult with affected parties on proposals to plant or remove trees.

Council's Role and Responsibility

The Council is responsible for the planting, management and removal of trees on Council administered reserves, civic open spaces and other Council-administered land in urban areas of the South Taranaki District, including road corridors. It is responsible for ensuring compliance with this Policy.

Purpose of the Policy

- To enhance South Taranaki's urban treescapes by planting and maintaining Council-owned trees in a safe and sustainable way by: Recognising the amenity, historical and environmental value of trees, and how they promote community wellbeing;
- Maintaining the integrity of South Taranaki's treescapes while allowing flexibility for tree removal and replacement in order to maintain and create treescapes for future generations; and
- Giving residents a clear understanding of their rights in respect of requests for tree removal and planting.

Objectives

To provide:

- Guidance for Council Officers; and
- Guidance for Council contracted engineering designers and consultant engineers, planners and designers for private subdivision and commercial developments in the urban areas of the South Taranaki District.

Scope

This Policy applies to public spaces owned or administered by the Council, including road corridors, in the South Taranaki District.

Relationship to other Policies and Plans

The District Tree Policy complements Reserve Management Plans (RMPs) and Asset Management Plans (AMPs). Where an RMP has specific policies for the management of trees on a particular reserve, the RMP will take precedence over this Policy. All new management plans will be developed in consideration of this Policy and its intent.

The Long Term Plan (LTP) provides funding for the practical application of this Policy.

This Policy complements the District Plan provisions regarding the maintenance, management and advocacy of Notable Trees and Significant Natural Areas, where those provisions apply to Council-owned trees and land.

Policy

1.0 New trees in the road corridor or Council reserves

- 1.1 No new trees will be planted in road corridors or on Council-owned land by anybody other than the Council, or otherwise only with prior written Council approval.
- 1.2 When assessing the feasibility of such plantings the Council will consider whether or not the proposed planting would:
- a) Compromise future road improvement;
 - b) Obscure visibility for vehicles at intersections, or private vehicle crossings;
 - c) Impede the safety or free passage of pedestrians;
 - d) Hinder access to existing or future underground utility services;
 - e) Have the potential to encroach into overhead utility services;
 - f) Cause future damage to footpaths, kerb and channel, or underground utility services;
 - g) Obscure views from adjacent properties;
 - h) Be aesthetically pleasing;
 - i) Create unbudgeted long term management problems; and/or
 - j) Support Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

Note: A road corridor shares functions with several users, and consequently circumstances may prevent the planting of trees within the street berm.

2.0 Street Trees

The road corridor provides potential road widening opportunities, pedestrian access, and a location for essential services, including overhead and underground services. These functions need to be considered in the planning and planting of trees in road corridors.

- 2.1 The relevant Council Officers will be consulted to, achieve a satisfactory compromise that neither negatively affects services nor reduces the street tree stock,.
- 2.2 Nothing in this Policy overrides Regulations or Codes approved by statute and within the jurisdiction of the relevant Road Controlling Authority (RCA).

3.0 Approved species selection and location of street trees

- 3.1 The List of Preferred Species (Appendix 1) and Tree Planting Specifications (Appendix 2) will be used as the basis for tree selection and street tree planting in urban areas.

4.0 Public consultation

- 4.1 Local residents and adjacent property owners will be consulted before any street tree planting is undertaken.
- 4.2 Replacement trees will be planted at the Council's discretion

5.0 Identification of underground and overhead utility services

- 5.1 Prior to any planting, there shall be a formal identification of any underground and overhead utilities that could be adversely affected by current or future growth of the root system or branches and foliage.
- 5.2 The New Zealand Utilities Advisory Group (NZUAG) Code of Practice shall be consulted where the potential for a conflict of services with proposed plantings exists.

6.0 Ongoing maintenance of street trees

- 6.1 Routine inspection and maintenance of street trees is intended to ensure their good health, form and safety. Although the trees are maintained as naturally as possible, the urban environment can sometime necessitate severe pruning to clear power or necessary sight lines. Arborists may also carry out pruning to shape and form trees or remove dead or diseased branches.
- 6.2 Consideration will be given when pruning to minimising the loss of views, shading or debris drop. Reserve trees that encroach over private property may be pruned back at the request of the property owner.
- 6.3 Trees will be removed if they are obviously of little aesthetic value, unhealthy, inhibiting the growth of a planned replacement or more valuable tree, or pose a hazard to safety.
- 6.4 Adjacent property owners will be advised prior to the removal of any tree. Once a decision has been made to remove a tree, adjacent property owners will be given a minimum of five (5) working days' notice of the work being undertaken unless urgent removal is required for public safety.
- 6.5 The South Taranaki District Council Street Trees Inventory lists the existing trees within the urban environment. The inventory also indicates which streets are suitable, or not, for future street tree planting.
- 6.6 Any significant tree removal programme will require consultation with affected parties and approval from the Council prior to implementation.
- 6.7 Any resident who wants a tree removed or pruned must make application to the Council, and each case will be considered on its merits.

7.0 Tree pruning

- 7.1 The Council will prune trees on its reserves and road corridors in accordance with recognised arboreal practice, generally to:
 - a) Abate a nuisance; or
 - b) Ensure the trees do not create a hazard for traffic or pedestrians.



- 7.2 Where trees are near overhead cables, pruning shall be considered in preference to removing the trees altogether. However, if they are identified as being of low value and high maintenance, some consideration may be given to removal:
- a) If trees are considered a safety hazard and removal of the upper crown is deemed acceptable in order to alleviate the hazard and retain the tree(s); or
 - b) To prevent interference with navigation, radio or telecommunications facilities; or
 - c) To prevent undermining of a flood protection or erosion control structure; or
 - d) To prevent or mitigate damage to pipes or power lines; or
 - e) To manage risk with larger senescent trees; or
 - f) To meet the specification for the removal of inappropriate tree species; or
 - g) To prevent or stop damage to Council or private assets; or

8.0 Tree topping

- 8.1 Generally, the Council will not 'top trees', that is, reduce their height. In exceptional circumstances crown reduction may be considered:
- a) To maintain specified clearances over roads, driveways and around street and traffic lights;
 - b) For the clearance of overhead cables or to meet other statutory requirements;
 - c) If the tree or trees form part of a formally planted and maintained hedge; or
 - d) When tree topping or regular height reduction has been carried out on a particular tree in the past and other management options are not considered reasonable.

9.0 Tree removal

- 9.1 The Council currently maintains a number of ageing trees in its reserves and road corridors. All trees have a finite lifespan. The Council values trees and wants to maintain its supply of trees around the District, and shall accordingly plan for their replacement.
- 9.2 The Council will develop a replacement programme for all maintained trees, beginning with street trees. The timing of replacement for each tree will depend on factors such as species type, life expectancy, health of the tree, potential of the species to cause undesirable nuisance factors, time of year, and the particular location.
- 9.3 The Council will phase replacement of trees in any one street, park or reserve to allow for gradual removal of ageing trees to avoid the loss of all mature trees at once.
- 9.4 Trees will not generally be removed from a reserve to preserve views, remove shading, or for the control of leaf litter.
- 9.5 Trees that are dead, dying, or storm damaged will be removed as a priority.



10.0 Cost Sharing

If overhead cables are installed after a tree has been planted and/or below a height of 5 metres, the owner of overhead cable(s) will be asked to contribute 75 per cent of the cost of pruning or removal.

11.0 Commemorative trees

Commemorative planting of trees is a way of honouring a particular person or remembering an event or time. It is important that it is managed effectively to ensure that the right type of tree is planted at the right time and in a good location. This means that commemorative planting not only meets the personal needs of the sponsor but also contributes to the amenity of the location by ensuring healthy specimen trees are well located and complement the surrounding environment.

11.1 For people who would like to have an identifiable tree, specimen trees will be available for planting in parks and reserves approved by the Council on a case by case basis, so the types of trees available for selection may vary depending on the numbers available, the suitability of the site for a particular species and the specification of species in planting designs.

11.2 Where a commemorative tree is requested and that request is accepted by the Council, all costs associated with the purchase and planting shall be borne by the person requesting the tree.

11.3 A plaque for a commemorative tree shall only be installed with the permission of the Council. All associated costs shall be borne by the person making the request.

12.0 Notable trees

Notable trees are considered in the Council's operative District Plan, and only Council-owned notable trees are within the scope of this Policy.

13.0 Residents planting trees

13.1 Residents or developers are not allowed to plant trees on Council-owned land without written permission.

13.2 If trees are planted without permission, the Council reserves the right to remove the trees at the cost of those who planted them. This may include recovery of the associated costs of damage to services.

14.0 Damaging trees

14.1 Members of the public are not permitted to damage, prune or remove street trees. Possible consequences include prosecution under the Summary Offences Act 1981.

14.2 Residents will be encouraged to:

- Minimise mower contact with the base of trees to prevent bark damage; and
- Refrain from placing lawn clippings around the tree base; and
- Prevent compaction around tree roots by not parking vehicles near them; and
- Report vandalism or storm damage of trees to the Council.

15.0 Definitions

Authorised Officer means any person appointed by the Chief Executive of the Council for purposes of acting as an Authorised Officer under this policy.

Council means the South Taranaki District Council.

Road reserve means land that has the legal status of road.

Berm means the portion of the road reserve left after the carriageway is installed.

Road Corridor means all of the land from boundary to boundary on each side of a legal road, including the berm and carriageway.

Road Controlling Authority (RCA) means - Local roads the RCA is the South Taranaki District Council. For State Highways the RCA is the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA).

16.0 Review of Policy

16.1 This Policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years to ensure the policy is effective and efficient at achieving the objectives.

16.2 The Council may from time to time by publicly-notified resolution, alter any appendices attached.

Appendix One: List of preferred species

For a consistent pattern of planting, the species of street trees regarded as suitable for each area are listed below. It is important to know that this list is not exhaustive and other tree species will be considered for specific plantings and local landscaping effect.

Tree species selection will also take into consideration the importance of native trees and their connection to local Iwi.

Botanical Name	Common Name
Hāwera , Manaia and Waverley	
Small:	
Camellia sasanqua	Camellia
Prunus serrulata (selected varieties)	Cherry Tree
Pseudopanax crassifolius	Lancewood
Medium:	
Albizzia julibrissen	Silk Tree
Alectryon excelsus	Titoki
Sophora microphylla	Kowhai
Sophora tetraptera	Large Leafed Kowhai
Melia azedarach	Indian Bead Tree
Metrosideros umbellatum	Southern Rata
Olea spp (olive)	Olive
Zelkovia carpinifolia	Caucasean Elm
Large:	
Agathis australis	Kauri
Alnus cordata	Italian Alder
Alnus glutinosa	English or Black Alder
Magnolia grandiflora	Evergreen Magnolia
Metrosideros umbellatum	Southern Rata
Quercus ilex	Evergreen or Holly Oak
Schinus molle	American or Peruvian Pepper Tree
Ulmus parvifolia	Chinese or Lacebark Elm
Ōpūnake /Ohawe/ Patea	
Small:	
Camellia sasanqua	Camellia
Pseudopanax crassifolius	Lancewood



Medium:	
Melia azedarach	Indian Bead Tree
Metrosideros umbellatum	Southern Rata
Olea spp (olive)	Olive
Sophora tetraptera	Large Leafed Kowhai
Large:	
Araucaria heterophylla	Norfolk Island Pine
Lagunaria pattersonii	Norfolk Island Hibiscus
Metrosideros excelsa	Pohutukawa
Quercus ilex	Evergreen or Holly Oak
Kaponga / Eltham	
Small:	
Camellia sasanqua	Camellia
Prunus serrulata (selected varieties)	Cherry Tree
Pseudopanax crassifolius	Lancewood
Medium:	
Alectryon excelsus	Titoki
Sorbus spp	Rowan or Mountain Ash
Sophora microphylla	Kowhai
Sophora tetraptera	Large Leafed Kowhai
Large:	
Alnus cordata	Italian Alder
Alnus glutinosa	English or Black Alder
Liquidambar spp	Sweet Gum
Magnolia grandiflora spp	Evergreen Magnolia
Magnolia deciduous (selected cultivars)	Magnolia

Note: In appropriately protected streets and/or reserves in all centres, fruit trees especially Plum Hāwera, Malus varieties (crab apple) Cydonia oblonga (quince) and Eriobotrya japonica (loquat) could be considered as suitable small street specimens.

Unless berms are wider than the model, use of large category specimens should be limited to roadside reserves or esplanades.

Excluded species:

Botanical Name	Common Name
Acacia dealbata\	Silver wattle
Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore
Berberis spp	Barberry
Casuarina spp	She-Oak
Chamaecyparis lawsoniana	Lawsons Cypress
Cupressocyparis leylandii	Leyland Cypress
Cupressus macrocarpa	Monterey Cypress
Cornus capitata	Strawberry Tree
Cotoneaster spp	Cotoneaster
Cyathea medullaris	Black ponga
Eucalyptus cinerea	Silver Dollar gum
Euonymus japonicas	Japanese Spindle Tree
Juglans spp	Walnut
Ligustrum ovalifolium	Privet
Paraserranthes lophantha	Brush Wattle, Albizza
Pinus radiata	Monterey Pine
Populus spp	Poplar
Salix spp	Willow
Solanum mauritianum	Woolly Nightshade
Syzigium smithii	Monkey Apple

Appendix 2 Tree Planting Specifications

Planting Distances

Street trees should, in most instances, be recognised as medium term specimens of 20 – 25 years. Trees that have the potential to outgrow their location may need to be removed before maturity as their eventual natural size could not be supported in an urban environment. Where this occurs, residents of the affected street shall be notified in writing prior to the removal.

Trees should not be planted closer than:

- One metre to underground services, measured from the exterior of the root system. All plantings closer than two metres measured from the exterior of the root system shall be planted in conjunction with a root trainer to mitigate disturbance to the infrastructure by future root growth.
- Eight metres to a light standard, measured from the tree centre.
- Three metres to a private entrance crossing, measured from the tree centre.
- 15 metres from a street intersection, measured from the tree centre.
- Directly beneath over-head utility services, measured from the tree centre.
- Five metres from any bus stop or school speed sign, measured from the tree centre.
- One metre from the carriageway, measured from the tree centre.
- The minimum required tree pit for a street tree shall be 1m³.

Specifications

All street trees, unless otherwise specified shall be first class nursery specimens of a minimum grade of PB95. Grades shall be supplied as follows:

- 1.5 - 2.5 metre specimens shall have a minimum calliper of 30 – 50 mm.
- 2.5 - 3.5 metre specimens shall have a minimum calliper of 50 - 70 mm.
- 3.5 - 5.0 metre specimens shall have a minimum calliper of 70 – 100 mm.

Plants shall be true to label and supplied undamaged and well hardened off. Planting holes shall be excavated in accordance with the following specification:

- Street trees: Grade PB95 – 1 metre x 1 metre x 1 m minimum.
- Park reserve trees: Grade PB95 – 2 metre diameter x 600 mm depth.
- Grade PB150 – 2.5 metre diameter x 600 mm depth.

A minimum of two 50 mm x 50 mm 1.6 metre wooden stakes shall be driven to 600 above finished level on opposite sides of the plant hole before installing the tree.

All trees shall have a minimum 8 x 10 g slow release fertiliser tablets inserted at the base of the planting hole at 100 mm below the root ball to stimulate growth.

The base and sides of all plant holes shall be loosened by “forking over”. After placement, the tree shall be backfilled with good quality topsoil compacted to a final level equal to nursery level.

All newly planted trees shall be thoroughly watered after planting and 150 mm loose organic mulch placed. The mulch shall be a minimum 1 metre diameter from the base of street trees extending to a 2 metre diameter for reserve and park trees.

Trees shall be fastened to stakes with doubled soft 2.0 mm wire passing through protective rubber or plastic tubing or any other methodology approved in writing by the Parks Curator. Staking and tying should be directed to stabilising tree roots, rather than giving support to the tree's trunk.



History of Policy

Action	Description	Decision date	Decision number	Commencement
New	Adoption of new District Tree Policy	14/07/2014	71/14	15/07/2014
Amendment	Review and renewal of Policy	12/11/2018	237/18	13/11/2018

