



<b>Policy Name: Tree Maintenance Policy</b>	<b>Policy No: S802-01</b>
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Department/Division:	Public Works

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a process that addresses the maintenance and use of trees in municipal parks, municipal rights of way and other municipal owned lands with a goal of promoting a healthy and robust tree canopy within the Town of Pelham.

The specific goals of this Tree Maintenance policy are to develop an integrated set of objectives and procedures that will combine to form a set of overall working guidelines that will:

- a) Ensure that there shall be no net loss of trees on municipal property and that every effort shall be made to increase tree planting and expand the tree canopy within the Town of Pelham.
- b) Ensure that all trees on Town properties are adequately protected from destruction, loss or damage.
- c) Increase species diversity in municipal parks, rights of way and other municipally owned or controlled lands.
- d) Encourage the planting of native trees including Carolinian species whenever possible.
- e) Ensure the orderly development of the Town of Pelham's tree inventory through proper maintenance, tree planting, and tree replacements.
- f) The health and vigor of public trees shall be ensured through regular tree inspection and pruning cycle.
- g) Opportunities shall be provided to educate the citizens of the Town of Pelham on the ecological, aesthetic, economic and social benefits of trees.

## 2. Policy Statement

It will be the policy of the Town of Pelham to protect and maintain municipally owned trees, and to promote a healthy and robust tree canopy within the Town of Pelham.



### **3. Policy Constraints**

The policy will be applied to all municipally owned lands within the Town of Pelham including; road allowances, municipal boulevards, parks, trails, and green spaces.

The policy may be affected by the availability of Town staff, financial resources, regulatory restrictions and requirements from other departments and agencies.

### **4. General Provisions**

4.1 All tree maintenance operations performed on public property shall be carried out by town staff, or a contractor acting for the Corporation of the Town of Pelham.

4.2 All tree maintenance work shall be carried-out by trained persons in accordance to the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations, as well as established Town of Pelham Public Works Operating Procedures.

4.3 All costs incurred as a result of intentionally causing injury or removal of Municipal boulevard trees shall be recovered as outlined in the schedule of Fees and Charges under By-law 37-28(2016).

4.4 Tree removal, replacement or pruning required by a property owner for reasons which are to their benefit only, shall be at the property owner's expense, upon approval from the Director of Public Works or designate.

4.5 Tree removal, replacement, or pruning required for the installation of a new entrance, modification of an existing entrance, and/or utility servicing, shall be at the property owner's expense, upon approval from the Director of Public Works or designate.

4.6 The Director of Public Works or designate may require an ISA Basic Tree Risk Assessment be completed prior to the removal, or pruning of a public tree for the purposes of new entrance installation, modification of an existing entrance and/or utility servicing, at the property owner's expense.



## **5. Climate Change**

While it is difficult to predict exactly what climate change will mean for the health of Pelham's urban forest, some of the trends that have been identified include:

- a) Warmer winter temperatures and longer growing seasons.
- b) Changes in the seasonality of precipitation and extreme events like droughts and heavy rainfalls.
- c) Expanded ranges of insects and increased over-winter survival rates of pests.
- d) Increasing severity of pest and disease outbreaks.
- e) Increased frequency and severity of storm events.

Based on current climate projections and projected impacts, the Town has incorporated a specific goal in the adaptation plan to preserve, protect, and restore the Town's urban and rural forests and includes five actions for adapting to the impacts of climate change.

The Town will endeavour to consider all aspects of climate change when planning any tree selection and planting projects to minimize affects.

## **6. Tree Inspection and Inventory**

6.1 Public trees within the urban boundary shall be inspected at least once every seven years by qualified staff to determine their general state of health and identify required maintenance.

6.2 Staff will maintain an up-to-date inventory of all public trees within the urban boundary. Records shall include: geo-location, diameter, species, total tree height, crown height, and crown width.

6.3 Staff will perform basic tree inspections in locations prior to the initiation of construction projects where trees may be affected.

## **7. Tree Pruning**

7.1 Trees are pruned primarily to prevent damage to human lives and property, and to preserve healthy trees.



7.2 Trees within the urban boundary shall be pruned on a seven year cycle (Schedule A). Trees outside the urban boundary shall be pruned as required.

7.3 Pruning will be completed for the following reasons:

- a) To remove dead, split, dangerous and broken branches. Branches are considered dangerous when they are decayed, hollow or split to the point of being structurally unsound;
- b) To lighten crown loads when a structural defect is present;
- c) To remove low hanging live branches to a height of 2.4m when they interfere with pedestrian traffic;
- d) To remove low hanging live branches to a height of 4.3m when they interfere with vehicular traffic;
- e) To remove branches that obscure clear vision of warning signs, traffic signs or traffic movement;
- f) To avoid interference with street lights, overhead wires, roofs and other structures;
- g) To reduce encroachments to sidewalks, roads, drainage structures and ditches;
- h) To increase structural stability by removing branches that forms an acute angle of attachment.

7.4 When pruning is undertaken in woodlots and other natural areas, the limbs and brush are left onsite in a safe manner, in a location not to impede drainage, to decompose naturally.

7.5 The Town of Pelham Public Works Department will acknowledge the receipt of tree work requests within two business days. Emergency work will be completed as soon as practicable. Non-Emergency work will be completed within one month of receipt. Aesthetic pruning shall be completed based on available resources on a lower priority basis.

## **8. Tree Planting – General**

8.1 Trees shall be planted in an area that least interferes with underground or overhead utilities and municipal infrastructure to ensure their full growth potential and vitality. No tree shall be intentionally planted in a manner that will interfere or disturb utilities above ground.

8.2 Tree species shall be selected and planted in accordance to the Town of Pelham Municipal Engineering Design Manual. Carolinian and native species will be selected whenever possible.



- 8.3 No tree shall be planted inside the daylight triangle of any intersection.
- 8.4 No tree shall obstruct driver sight lines or endanger pedestrian safety.
- 8.5 Street trees shall primarily be planted on the municipal side of the property line.
- 8.6 Trees planted within the 'municipal right-of-way or boulevard' shall be deciduous in nature and hardy to zones 4 or 5.
- 8.7 Trees planted in municipal parks or on other municipally owned lands can be deciduous or coniferous and hardy to zones 4 or 5.
- 8.8 Trees shall be nursery stock with a minimum caliper of 50mm. Substitutions may be permitted with authorization from the Director of Public Works or designate.
- 8.9 Tree stakes must be removed before the tree ties girdle the tree trunks. Tree stakes shall be removed no greater than two years after planting.

## **9. Tree Planting – Replacement**

- 9.1 Two trees shall be planted for every tree removed due to health or safety reasons. Two trees shall be replanted in the area of removal. If not plausible the second tree shall be planted on any municipally owned land.
- 9.2 Two tree shall be planted for every tree removed resulting from construction or utility servicing activities.
- 9.3 When the Town of Pelham removes a tree and the replacement tree cannot be relocated in the area of removal, the replacement tree shall be planted on any other municipally owned land.
- 9.4 The Town of Pelham Public Works Department endeavours to replace all trees removed within the following calendar year.



## **10. Tree Removal**

10.1 Public trees should be preserved whenever possible.

10.2 No tree shall be removed unless it is apparent that the tree is dead or dying and/or when a tree poses a safety hazard to people or property.

10.3 A healthy tree may be removed when new construction is proposed in the vicinity and it is substantially more economic to remove the tree, or if there are no suitable alternatives available.

10.3 A tree will not be removed for reasons such as: falling leaves, fruit, seeds, twigs, the presence of wildlife, shade, or other non-threatening natural occurrences.

10.4 When trees are felled in woodlots and other natural areas, the wood and brush are left onsite in a safe manner, as to not impede drainage, to decompose naturally.

10.5 The Town of Pelham Public Works Department endeavours to remove dead or dying trees on municipal property as soon as practicable. Trees requiring the use of a contracted service provider, which pose no immediate threat to persons or property may be removed the following year as part of the annual tree maintenance contract.

## **11. Stump Removal**

11.1 Once a tree is removed the stump shall be ground below grade and restored with topsoil and sod within twelve months of removal.

11.2 Stumps are not to be removed from woodlots, natural areas, or unmaintained roadside locations.

## **12. Invasive Species**

12.1 Both public and private trees face significant threats from invasive insect pests and diseases.



12.2 The Town of Pelham will implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to manage pests and disease in an ecological manner. Plans are based first on prevention and when needed, a control (biological, cultural, physical or mechanical intervention), saving registered pesticide application as a last resort.

12.3 The Town of Pelham Public Works Department endeavors to consider all invasive insect pests and disease when selecting tree species, and increasing tree diversity to minimize the effects.