



WILDWOOD®

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Bowlin and City Council Members

From: Rick C. Brown, Director of Public Works / City Engineer

Date: March 5, 2019

Re: City Street Tree Removal and Replacement Policy

On August 27, 2007, the City Council adopted a policy on Street Tree Removal and Replacement, which has been attached as **Exhibit 1**.

Each year, with the objective of retaining healthy, attractive street trees, the Department removes and replaces several dozen existing street trees that have died from disease, storm damage, or other reasons, at considerable expense to the City. Under the policy, the Department will remove and replace an eligible street tree at no cost to the property owner, assuming the property owner agrees to water the new tree. The cost to remove a dead street tree and grind the stump can cost about \$1,000. The cost to plant a new tree generally runs about \$300-\$500 per tree. We have about 9,000 street trees within the City of Wildwood.

Recently, the Department has received requests to remove healthy sweet gum trees, due to concerns that the gum balls produced by the tree are a nuisance. The Department has typically denied these requests, as we have felt that tax dollars should not be spent to remove an otherwise healthy tree. In these situations, we would allow the property owner to remove the tree at their expense. Based on our most recent count, we have around 400 sweet gum street trees in Wildwood.

It is important to note that in the next five (5) years, we anticipate our costs for street tree removal and replacement to increase significantly as the emerald ash borer spreads through Wildwood and kills all ash trees. Due to the emerald ash borer, we expect to replace over 1,200 ash trees that line our streets at a cost that will likely exceed \$1,000,000.

Therefore, to provide clarity and address concerns that have arisen with the existing policy, the Department has developed a revised policy (see **Exhibit 2**) with the following changes:

- Sweet Gum Trees - After much discussion by the Admin / Public Works Committee regarding requests to remove otherwise healthy sweet gum trees, the Committee ultimately felt the policy should not promote the removal of healthy trees, as doing so would contradict our existing ordinances which are designed to preserve the urban forest

and restrict the removal of trees on private property. Therefore, the policy was not revised to accommodate this request.

- Re-Planting - Street trees will be replaced only twice. The first replanting will be at the expense of the City. If the tree dies after replanting, a second replanting will be approved if the homeowner or HOA agrees to pay half the cost for the replacement tree.
- Size - New street trees shall be a minimum of 2 to 2.5-inch caliper at 6 inches above the root.
- Tree Lawn Width - Street trees will not be replanted where the tree lawn width is 3 feet or less.

Recommendation

The Department is recommending approval of the revised street tree policy attached as **Exhibit 2**.

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Admin / Public Works Committee at their March meeting. Therefore, the Department is requesting approval of the policy by the full City Council. If approved, the Department will prepare an enabling resolution, which would be presented to the City Council at the March 25th meeting.

I will be available for any questions or comments at the March 11, 2019 work session of the City Council.

RCB

Exhibit 1 – Existing Policy

August 27, 2007

City Street Tree Removal and Replacement Policy

It is a City Goal to maintain neighborhoods with exceptional curb appeal. To achieve this goal, it is an objective of the Department of Public Work to retain healthy, attractive street trees within the City's street network. Each year, it becomes necessary to remove certain trees due to storm damage, disease or other causes. In such instances, this Department Policy establishes the procedures for street tree removal, replacement and restoration within the City right-of-way:

1. Definition, Street Tree: A woody plant that grows mostly upright as a single or multi-stem that may eventually attain a height of fifteen feet or more, and that was planted within the City right-of-way by the City of Wildwood, or by others as specifically required by the City of Wildwood Subdivision and Development Regulations on streets dedicated to the City of Wildwood for maintenance.
2. Only Street Trees as defined under this policy are subject to the procedures of the policy. Trees planted without the approval of the City of Wildwood are not the City's responsibility.
3. Once the Department is advised of a street tree requiring removal and replacement, the Superintendent of Streets shall inspect the street tree to determine if it is eligible for removal and replacement under this policy.
4. If a street tree is determined to be an immediate public safety hazard, the hazard shall be eliminated within 24 hours.
5. If a street tree is determined to be generally eligible for removal and replacement, the removal of the tree shall be prioritized and scheduled accordingly.
6. Tree removal shall include the removal of the entire tree to a depth 8 inches below grade. The removal location shall be restored with grass seed and fertilizer. The adjacent homeowner shall water the restoration area to establish new turf.
7. A new street tree shall be planted at a location as close to the old tree location as practical, unless otherwise agreed to by the City of Wildwood. New tree locations shall not interfere with existing traffic signs, street lights or other existing structures authorized in the right-of-way.
8. The new street tree species shall be selected by the City of Wildwood and shall follow any existing planting scheme for the street or neighborhood. If no planting scheme exists, the City shall seek the input of the adjacent property owner on the selection of the new street tree species. The new street tree species shall be listed on the Wildwood Tree Manual Appendix C: General List of Acceptable Species for Landscape Plantings. Species not on the list may be used with approval from the Director of Planning.
9. Replacement street trees shall be planted between October 15th and May 15th.
10. The adjacent homeowner shall provide watering, pruning and other general care to ensure the vitality of the newly planted street tree.
(Re-adopted October 11, 2010)

Exhibit 2

August 27, 2007

City Street Tree Removal and Replacement Policy

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9. Replacement street trees shall be planted between October 15th and May 15th.
10. The adjacent homeowner shall provide watering, pruning and other general care to ensure the vitality of the newly planted street tree.
11. [Street trees will be replaced only two times by the City. The first tree replacement will be completed at the expense of the City. If the first replacement tree dies, the City will replace the tree for a second time if the homeowner \(or HOA\) is responsible for half the cost of the replacement.](#)
12. [New street trees shall be a minimum of 2 to 2.5-inch caliper at 6 inches above the root.](#)
13. [Street trees will not be replanted where the tree lawn width is 3 feet or less.](#)

(Re-adopted October 11, 2010)

Exhibit 1

List of Acceptable Species for Street Tree Plantings

Bald Cypress	Pin Oak
Callery Pear (No Bradford)	Red Maple
Corktree	Red Oak
Flowering Dogwood	Redbud
Ginko	Sugar Maple
Hackberry	Swamp White Oak
Honeylocust, Thomis	Yellowwood
Japanese Pagoda	Washington Hawthorn
Katsuratree	Willow Oak
Kentucky Coffeetree	Winter King Hawthorn
Kousa Dogwood	Zelkova
Littleleaf Linden	