



TITLE: Urban Forestry Procedure

PROCEDURE NO: CM-71-023

SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE:

AMENDMENT DATE:

Definitions:

Planting

Plantings refer to any tree, shrub, bush or other plant material

Public Trees

All trees within the Urban Forest on property held by Lac La Biche County are classed as public trees. Responsibilities will include care, reforestation, maintenance and total inventory.

Private Trees

A tree/shrub that is located on the premises of a taxpayer's property, including back lane trees & shrubs, being resident or commercial in the business sector. The private tree must adhere to all concerns addressing public safety and insect/disease infestations within the section of the Urban Forest and be controlled should such infestations become threatening to the public trees.

- Trees and/or any other planting provided to private property during development, or through other reforestation programs, by Lac la Biche County, shall be deemed the responsibility of the property owners and therefore, considered a private tree.

Tree Pest Control

The Lac La Biche Parks Department shall enforce the requirements of the municipality under Alberta regulations as well as any municipally enforced policies related to pest control and/or management.

- Any public or private planting, which becomes infected, or has the potential to become infected, with one or more of the pests as identified.
- According to the province of Alberta or any municipally enforced policy(s), shall be referred to the Lac La Biche Parks Department. The decision of, as well as any corrective action prescribed by the Lac La Biche Parks Department.
- All costs associated to the prescribed corrective action is the responsibility of the property owner.

URBAN FOREST INVENTORY:

An inventory of public trees shall be maintained for the purposes of maintaining up-to-date information on removals, new plantings, sewer root problems, and a total inventory by species.

General

All trees planted in Lac La Biche County should be of a species that are suited to this climatic zone, and have been grown in the same zone or next immediate zone to ensure hardiness of all nursery stock species.

Plantings included in the landscape of municipal facilities are considered part of the Urban Forest for the purpose of this policy.

See Appendix A: Recommended Species for Planting

Boulevards

Trees planted on the boulevard shall offer characteristics to provide a natural aesthetic to Lac La Biche County. Trees shall be of a species within the hardiness zone and suitable to the planting site. Caution will be used in selecting fruit bearing trees as boulevard trees to minimize the amount of “potential issues” with fruit on sidewalks. Fruit trees have their place in the landscape. Careful consideration is needed in the selection process. Tree should be a mixture of species, to avoid a total loss of trees from a disease or pest.

See Appendix A: Recommended Species for Planting

Easements

Trees may be planted on easements, however consideration must be given to the purpose of the easement. All trees planted within an easement must be of suitable species for the particular easement to be planted. Most trees that are hardy in this climatic zone will be suitable for planting within the easement given the size and width of the easement has been taken into consideration with the actual mature size of the tree to be planted.

Park Areas

Where possible, trees will be planted in parks to allow for the urban forest to grow. Planting patterns in park settings will be that of group planting as opposed to row planting. In instances where row planting is effective, then row planting will be used, but group plantings would be the recommended design.

All trees that are planted in park areas must be of species that conform to General Specification in this policy. The trees/shrubs should be planted in groupings to complement each other and other species. Consideration of their respective growth habits must be made when choosing the trees to be planted at any particular site and preparation of landscape designs must be made prior to commencement of the work.

Private Plantings on City Property

Citizens are encouraged to plant trees on the frontages of city property in residential areas to help enhance their neighborhood. Often the purpose is to offer additional protection from prevailing winds and privacy to their own yards. However, written approval must be obtained through the Lac La Biche County Parks Department.

Criteria for approval shall be as follows:

- 1.1.1 Written request must be made in writing to the Lac La Biche County Parks Manager.
- 1.1.2 A certified Lac La Biche County employee will conduct a site visit to determine suitability of the planting with long-range plans for that area and the effect of the planting on the surrounding properties.
- 1.1.3 All trees planted must conform to the criteria placed on the planting of trees as determined by this policy.
- 1.1.4 Final placement of the trees will be at the discretion of the certified Lac La Biche County employee with staking done to assist the homeowner in best location of new trees.
- 1.1.5 Prior to commencement of the work proposed, citizens must sign a release acknowledging Lac La Biche County ownership of the tree.
- 1.1.6 Written permission is required by Lac La Biche County Parks Manager and will only be considered upon compliance with the preceding requirements.
- 1.1.7 Failure to comply could result in some or all of the trees planted being removed from the property on which they are located with the cost being the sole responsibility of the property owner.
- 1.1.8 Upon the conclusion of the program, any changes to the property would be included in the Urban Forestry Inventory.

If the property owner does not want the tree being offered, they can:

- 1.1.1 Indicate their wishes on the release and send it back to the Lac La Biche county or,
- 1.1.2 Not send the release back to Lac La Biche County.
- 1.1.3 Lac La Biche County will remove this property from their planting schedule and a tree will not be planted on this property.
- 1.1.4 Upon the conclusion of the program, any changes to the property would be included in the Urban Forestry Inventory and forwarded to the property's tax file for future reference.

TREE PRUNING

Street Tree Pruning

Pruning will be undertaken by Lac La Biche County in order to keep the Urban Forest in the best possible condition as established by good arboriculture standards.

Upon completion of the tree inventory, the street tree-pruning program will proceed to make best use of both fiscal and human resources in the areas of Lac La Biche in the most need of having the trees pruned.

Review of the information available in the inventory will be made annually to establish the course of action required to maintain the Urban Forest through a five-year period.

Prior to the commencement of any street tree pruning, public notification will be undertaken using the "Lac La Biche Website" indicating areas to be affected.

Boulevard trees adjacent to sidewalks will be pruned to a minimum height of thirteen feet to allow for ease of pedestrian Access and access for maintenance equipment.

Tree Pruning in Parks

Lac La Biche County will undertake this service as necessary to maintain those trees located in the parks to good arboriculture standards.

Back Alley Pruning

The purpose of back alleys and lanes are to act as a right of way for public utilities and back yard access. Back alleys/lanes are not recognized green spaces and therefore, the Lac La Biche County does not consider plantings located in the back alleys/lanes as part of the Lac La Biche Urban Forest as it relates to this policy.

All complaints and inquiries related to the encroachment of trees, branches, shrubs, etc., in back alleys/lanes would be referred to the Lac La Biche County Parks Department. Certified County employees will make regular inspections of the back alleys to determine an annual course of action for the pruning and removal of trees in the back alleys.

Requests for Pruning

Requests for pruning should be made in writing to the office of Lac La Biche County Parks Manager.

- 1.1.1 Using a Lac La Biche County street offset map, a site inspection will be completed by a County employee from Lac La Biche County Parks Department to establish whether the planting is located on public or private property.
- 1.1.2 If it is deemed to be a private planting:
 - 1.1.2.1 The planting in question is considered the responsibility of the property owner.
 - 1.1.2.2 All costs associated to the removal of the planting will be the sole responsibility of the property owner.
- 1.1.3 If it is deemed to be a public (County) tree:
 - 1.1.3.1 An assessment of the planting will be made
 - 1.1.3.2 Should the assessment find that corrective pruning, etc., is required, Lac La Biche County will schedule the work within a reasonable time line.
 - 1.1.3.3 Corrective action to be taken will be indicated and communicated to the complainant.
 - 1.1.3.4 If required, all costs associated to the necessary corrective action will be the responsibility of the County.
 - 1.1.3.5 Upon the conclusion of the evaluation, any change to the tree would be included in the Urban Forestry Inventory.

REQUESTS FOR REMOVALS

As requests are received, consideration will be given to each individual tree on the merits of the request and the impact its removal would have on the surrounding neighborhood. Removal shall be considered as the last option in all cases. Removal shall be made in writing to Lac La Biche County Parks Manager

Any and all tree removals from the Urban Forest are included under this policy. This policy applies to any and all construction and/or repair work that would require the removal of any tree within the Urban Forest. Projects being completed by Lac La Biche County are not exempt under this policy.

- 1.2 Using a Lac La Biche County Street Offset Map, a site inspection will be completed by a County Employee of the Lac La Biche County Parks Department to establish whether the planting is located on public or private property.
- 1.3 If the planting is deemed to be on private property:
 - 1.3.1 The tree in question is considered the responsibility of the property owner.
 - 1.3.2 All costs associated to the removal of the planting will be the sole responsibility of the property owner.
- 1.4 If it is deemed to be a public tree:
 - 1.4.1 An assessment of the tree will be made
 - 1.4.2 Should it be established that the tree is healthy and of no immediate hazard to public safety, all viable options to save the tree will be discussed with the property owner and will be done on a case-by-case basis. Any required maintenance for the tree will be at the sole cost to the County.
 - 1.4.3 Should it be established that the tree is not healthy and of immediate hazard to public safety, the tree will be removed at the sole cost to the County.
 - 1.4.4 If it is not deemed a hazard tree and the complainant request for removal continues, the value of the tree will be established.
 - 1.4.5 The minimum reforestation surcharge shall be set at \$250.00 to a maximum of \$1,000.00.
 - 1.4.5.1 New trees 1 to 5 years \$250.00
 - 1.4.5.2 Well established trees 5 to 15 years \$500.00
 - 1.4.5.3 Well established trees 15 to 20 years \$750.00
 - 1.4.5.4 Well established trees 20 years and older \$1,000.00
 - 1.4.6 The property owner shall be informed that he/she shall be responsible for all costs associated to the removal of the tree, remediation of the site as well as the established reforestation surcharge.
 - 1.4.7 Written confirmation is required from the complainant indicating their acceptance of all costs associated to the removal of the tree, remediation of the site as well as the established reforestation surcharge.
 - 1.4.8 Once payment is received in full, removal of the tree will be scheduled.
 - 1.4.9 Upon the conclusion of the evaluation, any change to the tree would be included in the Urban Forestry Inventory.

SEWER ROOTS

Often time's residents will submit complaints to the County indicating they have roots in their sewer lines causing poor drainage and other issues. Tree roots are attracted to moisture and in the past sewer lines were made with materials that tree roots could penetrate. Tree roots of some species can travel a significant distance to find moisture and therefore it is very difficult to find the tree that is the cause of the sewer issue. It may not be the most obvious tree and thus difficult to pinpoint if there are a number of trees in the area. Removing one tree will not prevent this from occurring again in the future, as other tree roots will also enter the system. For some time now, the County has been using piping materials that are impervious and therefore root problems in these lines rarely occur. Removing trees does not solve this problem and diminishes the Urban Forest, therefore the Lac La Biche County Parks Department and the Lac La Biche Utilities Department need to work cooperatively to find the appropriate action.

REFORESTATION

The purpose of reforestation in the Urban Forest Environment is to replace trees and supplement the existing forest population with additional trees where the population is low. Where possible, Lac La Biche County will endeavor to maintain a positive tree planting to removal ratio. Each year the Lac La Biche County will plant new trees in designated areas within Lac La Biche County.

WATER PROGRAM

Proper watering is the most important factor for successful planting of trees and shrubs. To ensure adequate watering, newly planted trees will be watered a minimum of 7 times per year in the first year. In the second year, trees will be watered a minimum of 5 times a year. The minimum watering amounts depend on precipitation and additional watering may or may not be required.

Street Trees

Where street trees are added or replaced on boulevards, efforts will be made to involve the homeowner as a partner in the tree planting. When planting new trees, County crews will water trees at time of planting and encourage the homeowners to water these trees on a regular schedule after the planting. In cases where homeowners would prefer not to have a tree on the boulevard, an assessment will be completed by a County Employee would be done, but the final decision would be based on the urban forest requirements.

Park Trees

Newly planted park trees will have a scheduled water maintenance program to ensure the success of the tree. The minimum seven times in the first year and five times in the second year program would apply. Where possible in new development, irrigation to tree beds would be installed.

DESTRUCTION AND USE OF CHEMICALS

No person shall apply or administer in any form any chemical that would cause death to any tree held by Lac La Biche County.

No person shall cut, prune, or alter the appearance of any publicly owned tree, which would cause death or put the tree at risk of public safety.

If a person is found to have improperly pruned, but or alter a public tree, that person will be held responsible for the cost of repair, replacement, or maintenance of the tree and may include referral to the R.C.M.P.

COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGED TREES

The County may endeavor to achieve compensation to the full value of any tree(s) that are willfully damaged or become damaged as a result of an accident, through execution of legal statutes dealing with destruction of public property.

AUTHORITY

Administrative Authority

The office of Lac La Biche County Parks Department will execute the authority over the Urban Forest and the administration of the Urban Forestry Management Program.

Appeal Authority

Appeals regarding decisions made through this policy must be made in writing to Lac La Biche County Parks Manager.

Failing satisfactory response from the Parks Manager, an appeal may be made to the Chief Administrative Officer.

Any subsequent appeals to the decision made by the Chief Administrative Officer should be made in writing to Lac La Biche County Council.

Given the value of the Urban Forest to our Community, removals shall always be considered the last option in all cases.

APPENDIX A – Recommended Species for Planting

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Botanical Name</u>
Silver Maple	Acer Saccharinum
Black Ash	Fraxinus nigra
Brandon Elm	Fraxinus nigra “Fall Gold”
Green Ash	Fraxinus pennsylvanica
Machurian Ash	Fraxinus mandshurica
Little Leaf Linden	Tillia cordata
Basswood	Tillia americana
Bur Oak	Quercus macrocarpa
Amur cherry	
Hawthorn	
Ohio Buckeye	
Russian Olive	
Hackberry	

Note: The American Elm is probably the best available species for boulevard planting, however, given the current approach and threat of Dutch Elm Disease, it is not recommended that this species of tree continue to be planted in Lac La Biche County until such time effective control measures are developed or it runs its course and is no longer a threat.

“Original Signed”
Chief Administrative Officer

May 11, 2018

