

Urban Tree Policy

1. RATIONALE

- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to provide consistent guidelines for the ongoing maintenance of existing trees and plantings on road reserves and Council land within the urban area;
- 1.2 To provide consistent guidelines for the selection, siting, planting and maintenance of future street tree plantings on road reserves and Council land within the urban area;
- 1.3 To provide consistent procedures and approaches for the removal of trees on road reserves and Council land;
- 1.4 To provide guidelines for the assessment of and the ongoing maintenance of Notable Trees growing on road reserves and Council land.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 A Policy is required as the Combined Wairarapa District Plan states that any activity affecting a street tree is a permitted activity where the work is undertaken in accordance with the Council Street Tree Policy.
- 2.2 The Combined District Plan provides for permitted activity status for the maintenance of notable trees on public land; anything beyond the specified activities requires a resource consent.
- 2.3 The main objectives of this Policy are to enhance the image of the town streets and improve the streetscape, while minimising negative effects on public utilities and activities.

3. GUIDELINES:

- 3.1 Due to financial limitations and other physical constraints e.g. (width of berms), Council recognises that it will not be able to accommodate tree planting in many of the smaller streets. Although recognition should be given to any submission requesting street tree planting, residents should be encouraged to undertake street tree planting as a community initiative.
- 3.2 Developers planting streets must use suitable species and follow the procedures and recommendations set down in this policy and NZS4404.
- 3.3 Appendices are attached that identify suitable and unsuitable trees. The list is not exhaustive but should be used as a planting guide when choosing species for a new streetscape (see Appendices A and B)

3.4 The Infrastructure Services Department needs to prepare annual budgets. It is therefore necessary to establish the likely cost of tree maintenance and new plantings. An evaluation together with a valuation method, which is a standard, will give reassurance that both financial and amenity responsibilities to the community are upheld.

4. STREET TREE PLANTING AND MAINTENANCE:

- 4.1 Street tree plantings should be appropriate in size, density and position to ensure traffic visibility and personal safety is not compromised. The size of trees must be taken into account both at the time of planting and at maturity.
- 4.2 New street trees for planting should be chosen from the core list of trees listed in Appendix A.
- 4.3 Council will develop and encourage single species plantings along streets.
- 4.4 Residents are encouraged to undertake street tree planting as a community initiative. SWDC is to advise on appropriate species, and will make the final determination in the event of a dispute. Council's parks and reserves contractor or approved tree contractor is to provide supervision to ensure that correct planting procedures are followed.
- 4.5 Maintenance and pruning will be carried out by Council staff or a Council approved contractor only in accordance with the ongoing maintenance programme.
- 4.6 Before tree removal or major maintenance occurs, residents on the affected streets are to be informed of the intent to carry out this work by way of a letter prior to work commencing.
- 4.7 Council will not undertake nor will allow further plantings of streets where there is a risk of conflict with overhead services.
- 4.8 All tree planting and maintenance will follow the procedures outlined in Appendix C (Tree Planting and Maintenance Procedures).
- 4.9 Developers of subdivisions who establish trees as part of the streetscape (see Appendix A) must on completion of the development supply to the Council a horticultural producer statement to show that the trees have been correctly planted and properly maintained before being handed over the Council.
- 4.10 Any concerns about street trees are to be made in writing to the Group Manager, Infrastructure Services, using the Street Tree Concern Form (see Appendix E)
- 4.11 Residents may submit a written request using the Street Tree Concern Form (see form Appendix E) to have trees maintained, pruned or planted on their street. A decision will be made by the Group Manager, Infrastructure Services who will use his/her professional judgment and discretion.
- 4.12 Any Street Tree Concern Form received by SWDC is to be looked at as soon as practicable and a prompt reply regarding the decision be forwarded to the concerned person(s).

4.13 All Street Tree Concern Forms received will be kept on file and a register of such forms will be kept.

5. TREE REMOVAL ON COUNCIL PROPERTIES AND ROAD RESERVES

- 5.1 Council supports the retention of trees on road reserves and Council properties.
- 5.2 When retention is not possible, transplanting of specimens less than two years of age will be considered before removal.
- 5.3 All tree removals must be approved by the Group Manager Infrastructure Services.
- 5.4 The removal of trees on road reserves and Council properties is to be carried out by Council staff or Council-approved contractors only.
- 5.5 Tree removal is only to be considered where:
 - the tree in question constitutes a danger to persons or property;
 - ii. the tree in question impacts on the primary purpose for which the land was originally acquired and restricts that development;
 - iii. the tree in question has a detrimental effect on roadways, footpaths, stormwater or drainage flows, underground or overhead services;
 - iv. the tree in question has reached a stage in its lifecycle where it is not fulfilling the purpose for which it was originally planted;
 - v. there are rogue trees that are detracting from single species plantings, and Council reserves the right to remove any tree it considers to be a rogue tree; and/or
 - vi. the tree in question is in decline from a disease or pest infection which cannot be treated.
- 5.6 Where access is required for infill subdivision or house removals, trees on road reserves are not to be removed without prior written permission from Council.
- 5.7 Trees with a nuisance value because of leaf fall, tree size, loss of vision or shading are to be pruned periodically.
- 5.8 When residents submit a request to have trees removed or concerns remedied using the Street Tree Concern Form (STCD, see form Appendix E), an evaluation of the concerns will conducted by the Group Manager, Infrastructure Services who will use his/her discretion and professional judgment.
- 5.9 Where residents have planted their own tree(s) on the road reserve, Council reserves the right to remove the tree(s) and recover the cost if the tree or trees in question do not meet the requirements of this policy.
- 5.10 Where tree removal has occurred, a replacement specimen which conforms to the schedule of trees listed as Suitable

- Trees for Core Plantings in Streets (Appendix A) is to be selected and planted at the next appropriate planting time.
- 5.11 Where a replacement tree is not a viable option, the stump will be removed and the ground reinstated to avoid hazards for people or property.
- 5.12 As a courtesy the appropriate community board should be advised of the decision at the first opportunity i.e. the next scheduled community board meeting.

6. TREE PROTECTION – NOTABLE TREES

- 6.1 The Standard Tree Evaluation Method (STEM)¹ method of evaluation will be the means for establishing a tree's value and importance.
- 6.2 The evaluation of proposed Notable Trees is to be carried out by an expert in tree matters who is familiar and competent with the STEM system.
- 6.3 The value of Notable Trees is to be recognised, and a commitment made to sustain the health and longevity of these trees by instigating a regular maintenance programme if the trees require it.
- 6.4 Where any work that is required to be undertaken on Notable Trees is not permitted under the Combined District Plan, , the Group Manager, Planning and Environment is to be notified in advance, and no work may proceed without proper authorisation under the District Plan.
- 6.5 Any work that is required on Notable Trees, is to be carried out only by a Council-approved, qualified arborist².
- 6.6 The area of protection of a Notable Tree includes the tree's root zone extending out to the drip line.
- 6.7 Any correspondence relating to any work required or done is to be filed, and a record of maintenance be kept.
- 6.8 After the commissioning of an arborist's report, any recommendations regarding the future health and well-being of Notable Trees are to be actioned as soon as practicable.
- 6.9 Council staff and contractors are to follow the Code of Practice for Working Around Trees (Appendix D) when working within the drip line or adjacent to the canopy of any Notable Tree.
- 6.10 Property owners and developers are required to follow the Code of Practice for Working Around Trees, and the NZ Arboricultural Association Guidelines for Tree Protection Fencing on Development Sites and Guidelines for Tree and Bush Protection on Development sites when working on or near land which contains one or more Notable Trees. Any costs for

¹ The Standard Tree Evaluation Method (STEM) by Ron Flook, 1996 system for evaluating trees would be used by this professional to establish its condition, amenity and notability. STEM is a nationally recognised system used by many councils and recommended by the Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture (RNZIH). STEM has been used in court cases and has proved effective in gaining costs and decisions for tree retention.

² A qualified arborist is defined as a person holding a minimum NZQA arboriculture level 4 qualification *Adopted 24 February 2010* 4

the provision of an approved contractor or arborist to provide supervision or stand-over will be met by the property owner or developer.

NOTE:

Please refer to the District Plan to confirm whether or not any street tree is listed as a Notable Tree].

Appendix A

SUITABLE TREES FOR CORE PLANTINGS IN STREETS

Agonies flexuous – "Western Australian Peppermint"	* Albizzia julibrissen "Silk tree"
Michelia doltsopa "figo Bubbles"	Betula papyrifera "Paperbark Birch"
Amerlancheir canadensis "Junes Berry"	Cercis siliquastrum "Judas Tree"
* Cornus sp. "Dogwoods"	* Garrya eliptica "James Roof"
Embrothrium coccineum "Chlilean Fire Bush"	* Fraxinus ornus "Manna Ash"
Gleditsia tricanthos "Honey Locust"	Melia azedarach "Indian Lilac"
Styrax japonica Japanese "Snowbell"	Zelkova serrata "Chinese or Lacebark, Elm"
Ulmus parvifolia "Chinese or Lacebark, Elm"	Magnolia sp.
* Sophora Microphylla "Kowhai"	Sophora tetraptera"Kowhai"
Fraxinus sp. "American Ash"	* Sorbus sp. "Mountain-ash"
Agonis Juniperina "Juniper Myrtle"	Banksia intergrifolia "Coast Banksia"
Olea europea "Olive" – if fruit not an	* Pseudoparax crassifolius
issue	"Lancewood" – narrow when young
Corymbia Eucalyptus ficifolia "Albany	Metrosideros umbelleta "Southern
red flowering gum" – needs plenty of	rata" – needs adequate rainfall
space frost tender when young	
* Pseudoponax ferox "Toothed	* Callistemon "bottlebrush" visibility
lancewood" -but can be slow	when young
Melaleuca. Sp. "Megalong Valley	Casuarina cunninghamiana "Sheoak"
Bottlebrush"	
Grevittea robusta	Knightia excelsa "Rewarewa" (not
	suitable under power lines)
Corylus colurna "Turkish hazel"	Acercampestre "Field maple"

[NOTE:

This list is not exhaustive and other trees may be considered as suitable if they comply with the established criteria of being effective without causing concerns such as damage to persons, property and or services].

^{*} smaller

Appendix B

LIST OF TREES UNSUITABLE FOR PLANTING IN STREETS

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	MAJOR CONCERN
Prunus nigra	Purple Plum	Disease
Acer pseudoplatinus	Sycamore	Seeds
Aesculus hippocastenum	Horse Chestnut	Wide crown/seed
Phoenix canariensis	Canary Island Palm	Thorns
Laburnum anagryoides	Laburnum	Poison seeds
Camellia japonica	Camellia	Visibility problems
Juglans regia	Walnut	Nuts/spreading crown
Malus sp.	Crab Apples	Disease/Fruit
Maytenus boaria	Mayten	Suckers
Ailanthus altissima	Tree of Heaven	Suckers/Roots
Pittosporum sp.	Lemonwood/Kohukoh	Visibility
	u	
Platinus sp.	London Plane	Anthracnose
Populus sp.	Poplars	Seeds/Roots
Prunus sp.	Cherries	Fruit /Disease
Salix alba/matsudana	Willow/Tortured Willow	Roots
Tilia sp.	Limes	Honeydew/Roots
Ulmus glabra	Wych Elm	Disease
Cupressus sp.	Cypress	Visibility
Chamaecyparis sp.	Lawsons Cypress	Visibility
Pinus sp.	Pines	Excessive growth/Roots
Thuja sp.	Thuya	Visibility
Gingko biloba (female)	Maidenhair	Seeds/Fruit
Acacia sp.	Wattles	Wind/Roots
Robinia pseudoacacia	False Acacia	Thorns/Wind
Myoporum laetum	Ngaio	Wind/Spreading habit
Betula pendula	Silver Birch	Roots/Seeds

Appendix C

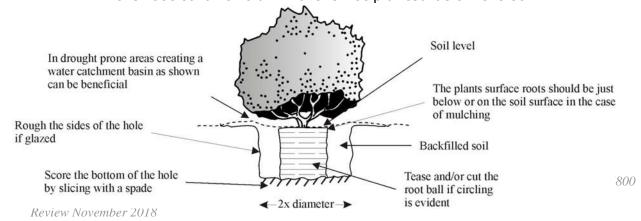
TREE PLANTING AND MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES

1.0 Preparation and Placement

- 1.1 Appropriate root barriers are to be installed where underground services, footpaths, kerbs are likely to be damaged.
- 1.2 Trees are to be planted at least 1000mm away from any kerb.
- 1.3 Trees are to be planted 3 metres away from any sewer or water lateral.
- 1.4 Trees are to be centrally located between streetlights wherever possible and be planted where they will not impact on the light spread from the streetlight.

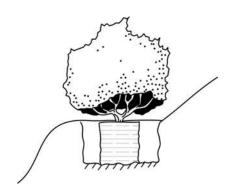
2.0 Planting procedure – trees grown and sold in pots or planter bags

- 2.1 Dig a planting hole the height of the tree's root ball and approximately twice its diameter.
 - a) Place the excavated soil to the side of the hole.
 - b) It is preferable not to dig a hole deeper than the tree's root balls as the tree will settle over time, leaving it too deep. It is acceptable to score the bottom of the hole by slicing with a spade to aid root penetration and drainage.
 - c) Rough the sides of the hole to be sure they are not glazed from digging, which can act as a barrier for water and roots.
- 2.2 Remove the container from the tree's root ball.
 - a) If roots are circling around the root ball exterior it is root bound. Tease the roots by hand and/or cut through the roots with a knife in a few places. This helps prevent circling roots from eventually girdling the tree later.
 - b) It is often necessary to clear the top of the root ball of weeds by hand as well as removing excess potting mix. Place the material in the bottom of the hole.
- 2.3 Place the tree into the centre of the planting hole.
 - a) Do not plant too deep. The planting depth should be such that the top-most roots of the tree are on (in the case of mulching afterwards), or just below the soil surface. It is essential that the root collar or trunk flare is not planted below the soil



surface.

- b) Place a 65mm nova-coil around the base of the tree sticking out of the ground. This is used for watering and fertilizing the tree root ball.
- 2.4 Backfill the hole with the existing soil, firming as you go to settle out any air pockets.
 - a) If the soil is full of rocks, remove the larger rocks. Break up any clumps of soil.
 - b) Incorporate compost and/or fertilisers into the backfill soil if specifically recommended for this type of tree. Otherwise, it is preferable to leave these out to allow the tree to accustom to the local soil conditions.
 - c) For drought prone areas construct a water catchment basin to aid water retention.
- 2.5 Once the hole is filled in, the tree should be gently firmed with your heel.
- 2.6 Remove any tags and labels from the tree that may potentially girdle branches and trunks later.
- 2.7 Provide stakes as outlined below.
- 2.8 Follow up with watering to the depth of the root zone if water is available and the soil dry.
- 2.9 Mulch or create a grass-free area the new tree planting to create a buffer zone to help eliminate damage from machinery. When planting a specimen tree in turf, a turf free circular tree ring should be formed around the plant. Normally, this is 500mm radius out from the trunk. 2.10 When planting on slopes, a bench should be cut into the slope (as shown) for each specimen to aid water penetration and to ensure a straight stem/trunk develops.



2.11 Root balls should be moist at planting time. Ensure trees are watered approximately 12 hours prior to planting.

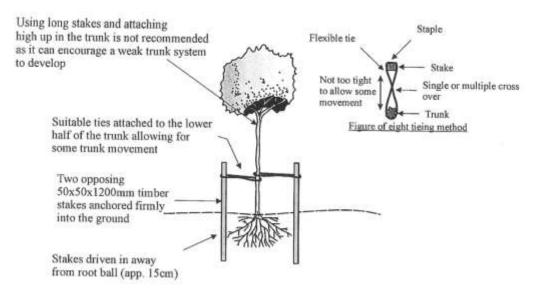
3.0 Planting procedure – bare root trees

- 3.1 Dig a planting hole twice the diameter of the root ball and about as deep as the root collar (point where the roots flare from the trunk).
 - a) The hole needs to be large enough to spread the roots without crowding.
 - b) Place the excavated soil to the side of the hole.
 - c) Rough the sides of the hole to be sure they are not glazed from digging, which can act as a barrier for water and roots.
 - d) Loosen the bottom of the hole with a spade by scoring.
 - e) It often helps to form a mound or cone of soil on the bottom of the hole and spread the roots over the mound.
- 3.2 Carefully remove any packing material. Clip off any dead or damaged roots.

- 3.3 Place the roots in the hole at a level so that the surface soil will be at the same level as it was where the plant was previously growing. This is indicated by the slightly darker area of the trunk, and should be just above the highest root.
 - a) The root collar or trunk flare should be above the soil line.
 - b) If a mound has been created, set the tree on top of the mound so that the roots cascade down over the sides.
 - c) Spread the roots gently with your hands if needed.
- 3.4 Gently backfill the hole, gently firming with your hands as you go to settle out any air pockets.
 - a) Make sure the tree is standing straight up.
 - b) Ensure soil is settled well around the roots.
 - c) If the soil is full of rocks, remove the larger rocks. Break up any clumps of soil.
 - d) Incorporate slow-release granular fertilisers into backfill soil if required.
 - e) For drought prone areas construct a water catchment basin to aid water retention.
- 3.5 Once the hole is filled, the plant should be gently firmed with your heel.
- 3.6 Remove any tags and labels from the tree that may potentially girdle branches and trunks later.
- 3.7 Provide stakes as outlined below.
- 3.8 Follow up with watering to the depth of the root zone if water is available and the soil dry.
- 3.9 Mulch or create a grass-free area the new tree planting to create a buffer zone to help eliminate damage from machinery. When planting a specimen tree in turf, a turf free circular tree ring should be formed around the plant. Normally, this is 500mm radius out from the trunk.
- 3.10 It is vital to keep the roots of bare plants moist prior to planting. Keep them covered and out of the sun.

4.0 Staking

- 4.1 The height of the stake will depend on the height of the tree. Generally it will be 1200mm but for larger trees may be 1500mm. The dimensions of the stakes are generally 50 x 50mm.
- 4.2 Two stakes are used, on opposite sides of the tree.
 - a) Stakes should be a minimum of 150mm away from the root ball.
 - b) Stakes should be firmly driven into the ground and checked for stability.



- 4.3 Ties should be on the lower half of the tree.
 - a) Ties should have some stretch to allow for movement.
 - b) Ties should be non-abrasive and not able to cut into the tree.
 - c) Suitable ties include 40mm wide hessian, rubber or seatbelt webbing.
 - d) Wire is unsuitable unless sleeved in hose-pipe to prevent the wire from cutting into the trunk.
 - e) Ties can be secured to the stakes with nails or staples, or tied in a figure-of-eight as shown.
- 4.4 Check the ties during the growing season and loosen as necessary to avoid constricting the tree's growth.

Appendix D

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR WORKING AROUND TREES

1. Scope

- 1.1 This code of practice applies to work carried out by any SWDC staff member or contractor working in parks and reserves, near street trees, and near any notable tree listed in the Combined Wairarapa District Plan on public land.
- 1.2 Work means any construction, excavation or maintenance activity which has the potential to affect or damage the root system, trunk, branches and canopy of a tree.

2. Trees under or near power lines

2.1 The Approved Code of Practice for Safety and Health in Tree Work: Part 2: Maintenance of trees around power lines must be followed.

3. Root zone protection

- 3.1 All notable trees must be cordoned off around the root protection zone prior to the commencement of work. The cordon must remain in place until completion of work or the commencement of the defects liability period, whichever is later. The protective fencing must be erected under the supervision of an approved SWDC staff member, parks and reserves contractor or Council-approved arborist.
- 3.2 The cordon should be a protective fence which is clearly visible and strong enough to protect the tree trunk, branches and tree roots from any accidental damage and machinery impact. High-visibility post and plastic mesh fencing systems are not resistant to impact and are easily moved or breached. They are not usually adequate protection for trees.
- 3.3 The fence should have weather-proof signage explaining its purpose and to stop it being moved. The signs should indicate the following:
 - that the fence is not to be moved without approval from the appropriate person;
 - that it is a tree-protection zone; and
 - that no storage, heavy equipment, machinery, trenching, digging, driving or run-off are permitted within the zone.
- 3.4 "Root protection zone" a tree's root zone can often extend well beyond the canopy of the tree, and in some cases may cover an area two to three times that of the canopy. It is possible to work within this larger root zone, as long as there is an area of root zone that is protected at all times. This area can be defined as any ground within the drip line of the tree or within half the height, whichever is greater.
- 3.5 At no time should material be deposited or stored, even on temporary basis within the root protection zone of any notable tree(s).

4. Excavation for landscaping, road and footpath creation/maintenance, underground services or construction

- 4.1 All excavation works within the root protection zones of notable trees must be undertaken under the supervision and direction of an approved SWDC staff member, parks and reserves contractor or Council-approved arborist.
- 4.2 Where possible excavation in the root protection zone should be avoided ie by the use of an alternative route.
- 4.3 All excavations that are within the root protection zones of any notable trees must be dug by hand, using hand tools only (i.e. hand held spade) to a minimum depth of 500mm below ground level.
- 4.4 All attempts will be made to retain all roots over 35mm in diameter uncovered by excavation. All roots exposed must be kept damp, covered from direct sunlight and protected from damage by a suitable material such as hessian or shade cloth.
- 4.5 Roots greater than 35mm in diameter require the consent of the council-approved arborist and can only be removed by the arborist.
- 4.6 When a root greater than 35mm is consented for removal, the arborist must only prune back to the excavation face by the use of hand held tools and the root must be immediately covered to protect it from desiccation and further damage. The excavation face must be covered with geotextile mat and weed cloth, and pinned into place until backfilling occurs, upon which it must be removed.
- 4.7 No storage of construction materials/machinery/equipment/spoil/waste is allowed within 3 metres of the root protection zone, or where there is a risk of spills or run-off reaching and damaging the root protection zones.
- 4.8 No operation of machinery must occur within 3 metres of the cordoned off root protection zone without prior approval from an approved SWDC staff member, parks and reserves contractor or Council-approved arborist. If machinery has to operate within this zone the arborist shall determine a site-specific solution to protect the tree roots from compaction and root damage.

5. Canopy, branch and leaf protection

- 5.1 When operating plant or machinery near the tree-protection zone care must be taken to avoid damage to the trunk and branches of the
- 5.2 If the tree needs to be pruned to allow scaffolding installation, cranes, materials storage or vehicle movements, this must only be done by an approved SWDC staff member, parks and reserves contractor or Council-approved arborist.
- 5.3 Nothing (eg notice boards, telephone cables, taps or other services) is to be attached to any part of a tree.

Appendix E



19 Kitchener Street, Martinborough
P.O. Box 6, Martinborough
Phone (06) 306 9611 Fax: (06) 306 9373 or
enquiries@swdc.govt.nz

STREET TREE CONCERN DOCUMENT

Applicant to Complete Name: Date: Address: Phone number/s: Email: Physical address of tree: Concerns / comments regarding tree:

(Please use separate sheet if necessary)	
Proposed action to be taken:	
(Please use separate sheet if necessary)	
Signed (Applicant):	
Council Use Only	
Recommended action to be taken (Council Officer to complete):	
Signed (Amenities Manager):	

Council Officer's recommendation approved by Group Manager Infrastructure and Services: YES / NO		
Signature:	Date:	
Additional Comments:		

Appendix F



19 Kitchener Street, Martinborough P.O. Box 6, Martinborough Phone (06) 306 9611 Fax: (06) 306 9373 or enquiries@swdc.govt.nz

APPLICATION TO PLANT STREET TREES

NOTE 1: An urban street tree is a tree planted on the berm in Council-owned

road reserve.

NOTE 2: Single-species planting is encouraged along the full length of the

street.

Applicant to Complete	
Name:	Date:
Address:	
Phone number/s:	
Email:	
Street where tree/s are requested to be planted:	
Name / type of tree/s to be planted:	
Proposed number of trees to be planted:	

- Please attach a map showing proposed location of the tree/s
- Please include on a separate sheet of paper any other information you feel is relevant to the requested planting

Date wanting to plant:

Signed (Applicant):
Council Use Only
 Consultation with affected property owners along street Maintenance program to be attached and considered as part of final approval Please refer in particular to Sections 3.1, 4.3 and 4.4 of the Urban Street Policy
Recommended action to be taken (Council Officer to complete):
Signed (Amenities Manager):
Council Officers recommendation approved by Group Manager Infrastructure and Services: YES / NO
Signature: Date:
Additional Comments:

File R825-13