



City of Spearfish Street Tree Policy

Introduction

The City of Spearfish is known as a “Tree City, USA.” Trees beautify the landscape and enhance the quality of life for all residents. The National Arbor Day Foundation has recognized our City as a “Tree City, USA” since 1984 in honor of the care we provide for our trees. According to the latest Community Threat Assessment Protocol report done in 2013, Spearfish’s urban forest is valued at \$6,633,719 and adds an additional value of \$211,386 annually by reducing energy costs, improving air quality, reducing carbon dioxide, reducing storm water runoff and adding aesthetic value to the community.

Purpose

The purpose of the Street Tree Policy is to provide guidelines for the preservation and protection of our tree heritage and the urban forest of Spearfish. The following pages document guidelines for the planting, pruning, preservation and removal of all trees in city rights-of-ways. These specifications are based on national standards for tree care established by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), the National Arborists Association and the American National Standards Institute. This Street Tree Policy incorporates input from Public Works Department staff, the Parks Recreation Forestry Superintendent, Spearfish Parks Recreation Forestry Advisory Board, City Council, various other Commissions and the citizens of Spearfish. This Street Tree Policy is a reference for use by City staff, private contractors, volunteer organizations and citizens when working in and around trees within City jurisdiction.

Goal

The goal of this Street Tree Policy is to establish a set of workable specification standards for activities affecting our Urban Forest resources. By developing these standards and guidelines for working around public trees, the City will be able to assist responsible parties in maintaining this valuable resource, and to help those parties minimize public safety hazards presented by trees. City staff will work with others to achieve the purposes stated below, while making every effort to require responsible parties to maintain the integrity of our existing trees.

1.0 General

The Parks Recreation Forestry Department shall implement the Street Tree Policy adopted by the City Council.

2.0 Appeals Process

The Spearfish Parks Recreation Forestry Advisory Board will review all appeals pertaining to this policy. If the appellant is not satisfied with the result, the decision can be appealed to the City Council who will have the final decision.

3.0 Definitions

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

- Policy: The City of Spearfish Street Tree Policy (This Document).
- Department: Parks Recreation Forestry Department.
- Superintendent: Parks Recreation Forestry Superintendent.
- Boulevard: The open strip located between the back of the curb and gutter and the front edge of sidewalk.
- Street Trees: Those trees located within the street right of way or boulevard along residential frontage.
- Deciduous ornamental tree: a single stem woody plant that grows less than 35 feet in height at maturity.
- Deciduous shade tree: a single stem woody plant that grows taller than 35 feet in height at maturity.
- Coniferous: a plant that retains its green growth through more than one growing season. The term "evergreen" is often used as a synonym for conifers, such as spruce and pines, which remain green throughout the winter.
- Hedge: a barrier or fence formed by bushes or shrubs growing together.
- Shrub: a self-supporting, deciduous or evergreen woody plant normally branched near the base, bushy, and less than 15 feet in height.

4.0 Objectives

- To plant and maintain the urban forest with trees that will add to the aesthetic value of the community and at the same time not damage adjacent public, private or utility structures or pose a danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. (“Correct Tree, Correct Location”)
- To effectively manage the cost of the urban forest.
- To maintain and prune trees in a manner that promotes the health of the tree and ensures the survival of newly planted trees.
- To provide for a mixed age tree population, and adequate species diversity in order to provide a diverse urban forest ecosystem more able to adapt to changing environmental pressures such as disease, pest infestation, etc.
- To provide residents with a list of acceptable trees for planting in front of their property.
- To maximize tree planting so each planting space in the City is planted, unless conditions prohibit doing so.

5.0 Recommended Tree List (RTL)

The Department shall create a RTL for trees that are approved for planting within the street right of way. The RTL at a minimum shall provide:

- Tree Common Name
- Tree Type (Street, Shade, or Ornamental)
- Tree Type (Deciduous or Coniferous)
- Tree Size
- Tree Spread and Spacing
- Any other data and/or reports deemed appropriate by the Superintendent.

6.0 Modifications to the RTL

- The Superintendent may make changes, add or delete trees species, or add criteria to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public or to ensure the health of the Urban Forest.
- The RTL is available on the City's website and will be made available to the public for review upon request

7.0 Street Tree Designation

The City has previously designated specific species as acceptable species to plant as street trees in the RTL. Upon policy adoption, the different species of trees may be planted as long as the:

- The species is listed as a street tree in the RTL and that species is approved by the Superintendent during the application process.
- Hedges and shrubs will not be acceptable substitutes for proper street tree species.

8.0 Tree Removals

The City will maintain a cost share program for removals of the tree and stump with the Property Owners of Spearfish. The City will participate in a 50/50 cost share for the standard removal of boulevard trees. The cost share program will be on a first come first served basis until annual budgeted funds are depleted. Large scale removals will be handled on a case by case basis. Any trees removed must be replaced.

8.1 Street trees will be removed if:

- The tree is declared a hazard by the Superintendent or one of his/her representatives.
- The tree is declared dead or diseased.
- The tree has caused recurring damage to curbs, gutters, or sidewalks, and no other type of care will prevent further damage.
- The tree is not consistent with the RTL for the area and the resident requests that it be removed. The Superintendent will have the final decision as to the tree being removed.

- The tree has damaged private property, including retaining walls, block walls, foundations, driveways, etc., and no other type of care will reasonably prevent further damage.
- Tree removal and replacement being done for the purposes of construction, reconstruction or development will be exempt from the cost share features of this policy and will remain the sole responsibility of the developer/owner.

8.2 Street trees will not be removed if:

- The tree drops leaves, pods, flowers, etc., or birds roosting in the tree create a mess.
- The tree roots intrude into a private sewer lateral.
- Tree roots are coming to the surface in the front yard or right-of-way.
- Tree roots have damaged private planters, paving, etc. constructed in the right-of-way.

9.0 Tree Pruning:

All tree pruning and maintenance of the tree is the responsibility of the adjacent Property Owner as per City of Spearfish ordinance 19-71 (C).

9.1 Pruning by Residents:

- Property Owners who want to prune their own street tree must obtain a permit and receive proper pruning technique instruction through the Parks Recreation Forestry Department prior to beginning. Improper pruning by a Property Owner may result in the tree being removed and replaced entirely at the Property Owners expense.
- The Property Owner may prune a street tree only if the Property Owner does not need to leave the ground. In the case where the Property Owner must leave the ground, a licensed contractor must be hired. All pruning must be in accordance with International Society of Arboriculture and American National Standards Institute standards.
- A licensed contractor must either be an International Society of Arboriculture or South Dakota Certified Arborist or be under the direct supervision of a certified arborist. All trimming must be in accordance with International Society of Arboriculture and American National Standards Institute standards.

9.2 Department Pruning:

City of Spearfish staff will prune trees when:

- Trees pose an immediate threat to the health, safety and welfare as determined by the Superintendent.
- Tree pruning, if completed by City Staff, may be billed to the homeowner or levied against the resident's property tax.
- Trees will not be pruned because of leaves, pods, flowers, etc., or birds roosting in the tree create a mess.

10.0 Tree Planting

The City will maintain a cost share program with Residential Property Owners for the purpose of planting street trees. The City will match up to \$125 per tree with a maximum tree purchase price of \$250 per tree. Property owners may purchase trees priced more than \$250, but the City match will remain at \$125 per tree.

- Planting services performed by a contractor will be at the expense of the Property Owner. The cost share program will be on a first come first served basis until annual budgeted funds are depleted. Property Owners must complete the application process for the tree planting program.
- By request of the Property Owner, a tree species as identified in the RTL for that area will be purchased, selected, and planted by City staff or other licensed contractors approved by the Superintendent, where trees have been removed or in vacant areas.
- Deciduous shade trees to be planted will be at a minimum 1 ½" caliper measured 6" above the root flare. Deciduous ornamental trees will be a minimum of 1 ¼" measured 6" above the root flare. On-going care, maintenance, and watering will be the responsibility of the adjacent Property Owner.
- Deciduous shade trees shall be planted at a minimum spacing of 20 linear feet between trees. When calculating the total number of linear feet of boulevard space, sight triangles, driveways, and approaches shall not be included.
- Trees are not permitted within 35 feet of a corner intersection, as measured from the property corner.

- Where overhead power lines or other obstructions are located in the public right-of-way and street trees are required, ornamental street trees may be used after approval by the Superintendent.
- Street trees must have organic mulch, such as woodchips or bark, placed around the tree to a depth of three inches and a radius of two feet from the trunk of the tree.
- If a tree is removed by the Department or Property Owner, a replacement tree shall be planted in accordance with this policy.
- Developers, who are required to plant street trees, shall conform to this policy. They are not eligible for the cost share features of this policy.

11.0 Unauthorized Tree Planting and Notice of Removal

- 11.1** If the Department discovers an unauthorized tree planting not in conformance with this policy, and the Superintendent determines that this tree meets the criteria for tree removal, the tree may be removed without notice if the tree is an imminent hazard. Otherwise, a written notice shall be provided to the Property Owner to notify of its removal at least seven days prior.
- 11.2** Existing trees planted prior to adoption of this policy will be evaluated on a case by case basis based upon the removal criteria and available funding.

12.0 Performance of Work

The City or a designated contractor will perform all plantings. Removals must be done by a licensed contractor. Tree pruning may be performed by the resident, designated contractor, or City Staff as mentioned within this policy (section 9.0).

13.0 Purchase and Reimbursement Process

13.1 Tree Removal Process

Before any tree removal is done, the following steps must be followed:

- Obtain three quotes for tree removals from a list of qualified contractors provided by the City
- Complete the STREET TREE PLANTING PRUNING REMOVAL PERMIT

- Submit the completed STREET TREE PLANTING PRUNING REMOVAL PERMIT along with the three quotes to the Superintendent
- Superintendent will contact the qualified contractor with permission to perform the removal and notify the Property Owner
- Billing for the service will be handled by the Contractor billing ½ the cost to the Property Owner and invoice ½ the cost up to cost share limitations, less sales taxes, to the City and the balance being billed to Property Owner.

13.2 Tree Planting Process

- Property Owners must submit the completed STREET TREE PLANTING PRUNING REMOVAL PERMIT.
- A site evaluation will be performed by the Superintendent
- If approved, the Superintendent will meet with the Property Owner to determine the species of trees.
- The City will select, purchase, and plant the tree(s) unless Property Owner decides to contract with an approved contractor. If contracted, contractor must make arrangements to obtain the tree from the City.

14.0 Forms

The Superintendent shall implement any forms, applications, technical specifications and/or documents necessary to carry out this policy.



STREET TREE PLANTING PRUNING REMOVAL PERMIT

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER(s): _____

Email: _____

PERMIT IS FOR:

Planting _____ Pruning and Maintenance _____ Removal _____

Reason for permit: (new planting, diseased, damaged, line/utility/sidewalk clearance, dead)

If Planting, List Desired Species (From the Recommended Tree List):

Property Owners will be required to pay \$125 per tree. The maximum tree purchase price will be \$250 per tree. Planting services performed by a contractor will be at the expense of the Property Owner.

Species Selected: _____ Size (Minimum 1½" Caliper): _____

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Location and Description (include a sketch showing property boundaries, structures, sidewalks, driveways and existing trees).

Who is performing the work:

- **Contractor (Planting, Pruning, Removal):** _____
- **Homeowner (Pruning only):** _____
- **City (Planting only):** _____

Contractor Contact Information: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Email: _____

This permit is issued accordance with the City of Spearfish Ordinance Chapter 19 "Vegetation". The Property Owner agrees to comply with this ordinance.

Click on the "SUBMIT" button or mail to

Attn.
Tyler Ehnes
Parks, Recreation, Forestry Supt.
City of Spearfish
625 5th Street
Spearfish, SD 57783

For Office Use Only

Approved By: _____ **Date:** _____

Completion Date: _____ **Species Planted:** _____

Mulch: _____ **Water:** _____ **Protector:** _____ **Door Hanger:** _____