

CITY OF ALPENA

COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT

GENERAL SUBJECT: Downtown Street Trees Policy No 34

SPECIFIC SUBJECT: Policy for Planting, Date Issued 3/4/99
Maintenance and Removal Effective Date 3/1/99

Copies to: City Council, City Manager, City Attorney, Department Heads, DDA, ETOS, File.

I. PURPOSE:

For the past 20 years the City of Alpena has recognized the value and encouraged the use of street trees within its downtown. Such trees provide shade and temperature modification; contrast with and complement the hard architectural edges, shapes and materials common in the urban environment; and provide visual relief and a sense of human scale. The City also recognizes that as living things, street trees do grow and may impact adjacent properties or other streetscape elements during their life cycle. Consequently, the City encourages and promotes proper planning in the location of street trees within its downtown. Based on the 1979 City of Alpena Central Business District Improvements Plan, the City supports the maintenance of the downtown street tree program and establishes the following procedures for the planting, maintenance, and removal of downtown street trees.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Design Plan

Installation of street trees within the City's downtown (defined as the boundary of the Downtown Development Authority - DDA) shall be consistent with the 1979 City of Alpena Central Business District Improvements Plan streetscape scheme. Those portions of the DDA not included in the original streetscape plan will incorporate the same design principles and design scheme to maintain continuity within the downtown. The City may alter the use of materials and plant species based on experience of past use, improved technology, and updated horticultural practices.

B. Tree Location

1. All streetscape trees shall be located consistent with the approved downtown streetscape plan.

2. Trees shall be located so as to minimize conflicts with building entryways, existing signage, and other streetscape elements (trees, signs, light standards, curb cuts, etc.) while maintaining as much as possible the 30-foot tree spacing indicated on the 1979 plan. The City shall coordinate plantings with adjacent property owner(s); however, the City will have final say in tree location.
3. A property owner may make a written request to the DPW Director for the planting of a tree, which shall be reviewed by staff from the Department of Public Works and the Engineering and Planning/Building Departments, as required, with comments and recommendation returned to the DPW Director. Staff shall perform an on-site inspection to determine the appropriateness of the proposed tree location relative to adjacent buildings, signage, drives, other street trees etc.

C. Tree Maintenance

1. The City shall be responsible for the maintenance of all downtown street trees. Trees shall be pruned a minimum of once every two years to: maintain shape; remove dead, diseased or damaged wood; maintain a clear zone for pedestrian and vehicular traffic; and reduce or eliminate conflicts with buildings, signs, canopies, and other trees.
2. The City shall maintain the tree grate and the exposed grade beneath the grate with a suitable mulch (stone, pea gravel, bark, etc.) to reduce weeds and the accumulation of trash.
3. No person shall prune any downtown street tree unless authorized by the City to do so.

D. Tree Removal by City

1. Trees removed by the City due to damage, disease, or other maladies shall be replaced with a tree of the same species to maintain the continuity of the streetscape design. Alternative tree species or variety may be used so long as it is consistent with the existing character of the streetscape.
2. The removal of trees without replacement shall not be permitted unless directed by the City Manager.

E. Private Requests for Tree Pruning or Removal

An individual may submit a written request to DPW Director for the pruning or removal of a tree due to its proximity to a building and/or ancillary structures, which inhibits the normal or effective operation of the building or the site upon which it is located.

1. Pruning

The appropriate City department(s), including but not limited to Public Works, Engineering, and Planning/Building, shall inspect the tree; and if pruning is warranted, it shall be completed within 30 working days.

2. Removal

a. The appropriate City department(s), including but not limited to Public Works, Engineering, and Planning/Building, shall perform a site inspection of the tree and its surroundings, and submit a report to the DPW Director. Staff review and recommendation shall consider the following options listed in descending order of preference:

- 1) Leave tree as is.
- 2) Selective pruning of tree to eliminate conflicts with building and/or site.
- 3) Replace tree at existing location with a smaller tree of the same species. A different species may be used so long as the new tree maintains the character of the existing streetscape.
- 4) Adjust the location of the existing tree site so as to reduce or eliminate conflicts. This will require the removal and patching of the sidewalk to relocate the tree grate as well as transplanting the existing tree or replacing it with a new tree if the original cannot be saved.
- 5) Removal of tree grate and patching of sidewalk. New tree and grate to be installed in another portion of the downtown.

b. Report shall be submitted within ten (10) working days to the DPW Director for final determination.

c. All costs for tree removal/replacement shall be the responsibility of the requesting party(s).

F. Appeal Process

1. The decision of the DPW Director or other City staff may be appealed in writing, in whole or in part, to the City Manager. The City Manager shall review the decision and appeal, and affirm, modify, or reverse the decision. A written notice of determination shall be provided within ten working days to the party appealing the original decision and City staff.

2. The decision of the City Manager may be appealed to the City Council in accordance with the established Council procedures.

G. Tree Specifications

1. All trees planted shall be a minimum 3-3½” caliper, balled and burlapped, with straight trunk, well-developed and defined head, an uncut central leader, and horizontal to slightly upright branching habit. All trees shall be inspected by the City prior to planting. Rejected trees shall be replaced, and substitutions inspected prior to installation.
2. Suggested Tree List
 - a. Linden: Greenspire or Little-Leaf
 - b. Thornless Honey locust: Imperial or sunburst
 - c. White Ash
 - d. Bradford Pear: or other approved varieties
 - e. Kwanzan Cherry: or other upright fruitless varieties
 - f. Crabapple: Upright varieties in areas where fruit will not be a problem