


POLICY MANUAL

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| | POLICY TITLE | DATE | MOTION NO. |
| | County-Owned Trees and Boulevard Maintenance | July 16, 2025 | C25-154 |

PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for the maintenance of trees and Boulevards within Starland County, and to ensure fairness in the delivery of services.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Starland County is committed to the consistent, fair, and transparent management of municipally owned trees and boulevards in accordance with the principles set out in the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) and relevant best practices for municipal service delivery.

This policy outlines the responsibilities of both the municipality and private property owners in relation to tree and boulevard maintenance, to ensure public safety, protect infrastructure, and maintain community aesthetics.

This policy is intended to ensure that services are delivered equitably, that decisions are reasonable and evidence-based, and that all parties affected by municipal action are treated respectfully and in a manner that is consistent with administrative fairness, as outlined by the Alberta Ombudsman.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Boulevard** – the space between the sidewalk and the curb for the road
2. **County-owned Tree** – a tree located on county-owned land, which was planted with authorization from the municipality or acquired through the amalgamation of municipalities.
**This does not include trees located in Tolman Bridge East and West Campsites, as they lie within Provincial jurisdiction.
3. **Privately-owned Tree** – a tree located on or over the property line of privately owned parcel(s) of land
4. **Pruning** – the act of removing branches from a tree to accomplish a specific purpose

GENERAL MAINTENANCE

1. Property owners are responsible for the general upkeep of all boulevards that border their property, including grass mowing and ensuring the boulevard is clear of objects and vehicles.
2. Should a landowner wish to place decorative objects or plants, the landowner must ensure that all placements are movable should the county provide notice.



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- Any immovable object (e.g. Objects weighing over 40 kg, vegetation planted by the landowner directly in the soil or in a raised bed which cannot be easily moved) shall be removed by municipal employees at any time. The landowner will be charged the costs incurred by the county to remove any objects or vegetation.

TREE MAINTENANCE

- Municipal tree maintenance includes:
 - Tree removal
 - Tree trimming
 - Tree planting
 - Fertilizing
 - Disease or pest diagnosis
 - After hours emergency service, such as tree damage during a windstorm

Pruning

- County staff or contractors will prune County-owned trees for the following reasons:
 - Hazard Pruning – top priority pruning completed for safety reasons, such as the tree/limb having the potential to fail (break or fall), or if the tree exists in a location which may cause personal injury or property damage should it continue to remain as is
 - Crown Raising – removal of lower branches to provide clearance for traffic, sightlines, and pedestrians
 - Crown Cleaning – removal of dead, dying, diseased or broken branches
 - Crown Thinning – removal of obstructing, weak or crossing branches to improve light penetration, air circulation, and the structural integrity of the tree.
- County-owned trees should only be pruned by county staff.
- Where a Privately-owned tree or bush is overhanging a sidewalk or pathway, the property owner is responsible for maintaining a vertical clearance of 2.5 meters for pedestrians and other users.

Removal

- County staff will remove County-owned trees when it is deemed by staff to be necessary. Removals will be prioritized based on severity of the hazard.
- Reasons for removal include:
 - The tree is dead, diseased, or damaged beyond repair.
 - There is evidence the tree has caused major damage to or is interfering with underground utilities or hard surfaces.

Removal cont.

- The tree poses an immediate hazard to the public and/or property



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- The location of the tree interferes with the development of municipal infrastructure improvements
3. Trees will NOT be removed for the following reasons:
- Poplar fluff, excess shade in a yard, quantity of seeds or leaves falling onto public or private property
 - Aesthetic reasons or to improve a view
 - Honeydew from aphids falling on sidewalks or vehicles
 - To facilitate use of a boulevard for a construction laydown area
 - To improve sign visibility of a business
 - Roots encroaching on a private lawn
 - A homeowner disagrees with the placement of a tree

POLICY AMENDMENTS

