Tree Management Policy

Scope

The City of Ryde urban forest comprises all the trees within the City irrespective of whether the trees are in parks, bushland areas, along road verges and nature strips, or in private gardens.

Trees have many environmental, economic and social benefits. The urban forest is a community asset that needs to be planned for and managed as an important part of the City's public infrastructure system together with other parts of the built environment such as footpaths, roads and buildings. The urban forest should be managed and expanded.

One of the challenges identified in the Ryde 2021 Community Strategic Plan is to *"plan and design a growing and liveable city through considered urban renewal and land use, while protecting and enhancing the natural assets …"* This Tree Management Policy responds to that challenge by promoting a vision of the urban forest for the future and by setting out principles for the management of the urban forest within the City of Ryde.

Purpose

This policy will inform the manner in which the City of Ryde will manage its tree assets and work towards providing a sustainable approach to urban forest management. This policy reflects a shift in approach by the City of Ryde away from dealing with trees on an individual, ad-hoc basis to managing trees as a collective canopy. The aim of this policy is to reinforce the City of Ryde's commitment to the sustainable management of the urban forest through the following policy principles:

- recognition of the urban forest as an intergenerational asset within the City that needs to be managed to preserve its value to the community
- recognition of the asset value of trees in an urban environment and a commitment to management strategies that consider this value
- recognition of the need to manage and enhance the urban forest within the City and to proactively respond to pressures on tree resources from population and economic growth, demographic changes and the effects of climate change
- the importance of a framework for forward planning management of the urban forest in both public and private domains and
- continuous collaboration within Council to achieve best outcomes for the City of Ryde's urban forest.

This policy applies to all lands within the City of Ryde.

Tree Management Policy - Council Policy		
Owner: City Works and Infrastructure	Accountability: Manager Operations	Policy Number: # *Provided by Governance*
	Review date: 2016	Endorsed: 21 August 2012
		Draft 2: 10 August 2016

Guidelines / Procedures

This policy is divided into five key management areas with individual guiding principles for each management area. The areas are:

1.0 Tree protection
2.0 Tree selection and planting
3.0 Tree asset management (including risk management)
4.0 Tree removal and replacement and
5.0 Community consultation and involvement.

1.0   Tree protection
The City of Ryde recognises the importance of trees in the urban environment and for that reason it will manage and or regulate trees throughout the City irrespective of whether they are located in streets, parks or on private properties. The City of Ryde recognises that trees on public land play a critical role in ensuring the urban forest is an intergenerational asset.

TREE PROTECTION GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Implementation of protection measures
The City of Ryde will protect trees within the City by managing trees on public land and regulating activities relating to trees on private land, in accordance with the following documents:
- Tree Management Plan which provides management direction to the planning and management of the urban forest across the City by specifying the actions necessary to implement this policy. This Plan's focus is on trees on public lands   - Street Tree Masterplan which directs the protection and maintenance of existing street trees and provides a plan for the planting of additional trees along the City's streets and   - Significant Tree Register which identifies and guides the protection of trees identified as being significant for heritage, cultural or ecological reasons. This single register will be used to promote community awareness and ensure better and consistent methods of protection of the trees in the future.   - City of Ryde Development Control Plan, Part 9.5 Tree Preservation (2014), a regulatory tool which sets out the procedural framework governing the removal, pruning and alteration of soil levels close to trees within the City. In order to ensure the collective loss of trees across the City is balanced by tree replacements Part 9.5 Tree Preservation enables the City of Ryde to condition any tree removal with replacement tree planting   - Tree Management Technical Manual which specifies requirements for the management and protection of trees on development sites
Development applications under the City of Ryde DCP 2014
The City of Ryde will ensure that the assessment of development applications includes an assessment of the potential impacts of trees in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and other relevant Federal and State legislation, as amended from time to time.

TREE PROTECTION GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Overhead utility/service lines
The City of Ryde will reduce conflicts between street trees and overhead service lines through considered tree species selection and partnerships with telecommunications and energy providers.

2.0   Tree selection and planting

The urban forest is measured as a percentage of canopy cover of the total area and an appropriate tree canopy density is necessary for significant benefits to accrue. Replacement and new tree plantings need to take place to offset the gradual loss of the urban forest canopy.

Street trees are the City's green connections between parks and the surrounding National Parks and provide many benefits to residents such as screening, shade over footpaths and car parking. The choice of tree species helps create the character of each suburb.

There are opportunities within parks to plant large trees and parks generally enhance the visual quality of a neighbourhood. Tree planting within parks will be guided by individual Plans of Management and street tree planting by the Street Tree Masterplan.

The conditions of many of the City's existing mature trees are declining due to ageing, prolonged drought and environmental factors as well increased urban development. This decline contributes to the loss of biodiversity through habitat loss and places increased pressures on the City's natural ecosystems.

TREE SELECTION AND PLANTING GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Tree planting
The City of Ryde will maintain and increase the canopy cover within the City through a program of tree planting in considered locations in the City's streets and open spaces while encouraging the community to plant suitable trees in their private gardens.

Street Tree Masterplan
The City of Ryde will plan and manage street trees throughout the City to enhance the quality of streetscapes, amenity and character of neighbourhoods. The City of Ryde recognises that street trees are important for both establishing and improving vegetation and habitat connections between parks and other open space.

Park trees
The City of Ryde recognises that the City's parks and open space are important because:
- they provide space for the planting of large and broad canopy trees
- remnant vegetation located in these areas will be managed
- a diversity of tree and shrub species within these areas attracts wildlife and provide low, medium and high canopy cover for native fauna

TREE SELECTION AND PLANTING GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- they offer protection for trees and sites classified as being part of a vulnerable, threatened or endangered ecological community
- they provide and have the potential to provide habitat for native fauna or fauna including that classified as vulnerable or threatened under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (NSW) or the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) and
- they form part of wildlife habitat corridor networks across the City.

Tree selection and supply

The City of Ryde values both native and exotic tree species and recognises that different tree species are suited to a different environmental conditions.

The City of Ryde will incorporate ecologically sustainable design principles in the selection of species for replacement and new tree plantings and will plan to select the trees suitable for the growing environment.

The City of Ryde will consider cultural, heritage, neighbourhood character and ecological factors when selecting trees in addition to the suitability of tree species to the planting location.

The City of Ryde will require all trees planted to be good quality tree stock in accordance with current industry best practice.

Tree installation

The City of Ryde recognises the importance of correctly planting and maintaining new tree stock to the:

- long term vitality and structural condition of the tree and
- aesthetic success and benefits of the tree in the long term.

3.0   Tree asset management

Trees are an important part of the City's landscape and like buildings, roads, footpaths and park furniture, trees in the City's open spaces and streets are valuable assets. Asset management is the process by which the City of Ryde manages its physical assets to meet current and future levels of service and the principles of asset management will be applied to the management of all public trees. Asset management of the urban forest will require the following:

- identification of tree assets
- maintenance of tree asset inventory records
- identification of service levels
- maintenance of tree assets
- operation of the tree assets and
- disposal of tree assets when the need no longer exists or it is no longer appropriate for the tree assets to be retained.

An inappropriate tree species or a tree growing in an unsuitable location on either private or public land can create problems in the urban environment. Proactively implementing strategies to manage risk and minimize harm are part of tree asset management.

TREE ASSET MANAGEMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Asset management The City of Ryde is committed to the ongoing sustainable management of trees in parks and streets within the City. The City of Ryde recognises that the urban forest is an important part of the urban form and accordingly that its management must be integrated with the management of the entire urban environment including infrastructure and buildings. The City of Ryde recognises the importance of proactively and consistently managing tree risk issues. The City of Ryde will plan and manage its urban forest infrastructure to lessen conflict with and damage to other urban infrastructure, assets and services.

4.0   Tree removal and replacement

The average life span of a tree in an urban environment is shortened due to the unfavourable conditions in which trees are planted and grow. Trees in parks generally have better environmental conditions and therefore a longer life span than street trees. Many trees in streets and parks within the City are mature and reaching the end of their life expectancy.

The City of Ryde will aim to manage the urban forest within the City. However maintaining over mature and senescent trees is costly and is only a very short term solution to ongoing health and structural problems. In addition to the removal of old trees, trees may need to be removed as part of capital improvements, as part of risk assessment management of other assets and young trees may need to be removed if they are not growing well and have little visual appeal.

Trees significantly contribute to the visual quality and character of a neighbourhood. Tree removals have immediate visual, environmental and management implications and accordingly residents are often concerned about tree loss.

TREE REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Sustainable Urban Forest The City of Ryde will plan for a sustainable urban forest that maintains and increases canopy cover across the City. The City of Ryde will preserve the cultural, heritage and ecological importance of trees and places.
Habitat value The City of Ryde recognises and will consider the habitat value of trees on public

land prior to removal.

Replacement planting
The City of Ryde will incorporate ecologically sustainable design principles and risk management in the selection of species for replacement tree plantings.

The City of Ryde will consider cultural, heritage, neighbourhood character and ecological factors when selecting trees in addition to the suitability of tree species to the planting location.

5.0   Community consultation and involvement

Trees have environmental, economic and social benefits, and many residents appreciate them as an asset. Trees are a community resource with very direct implications on property values and urban character. The conservation of natural resources including trees will ensure the health, diversity and productivity of the local environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.

The City of Ryde wants the community to gain an understanding and interest in the trees in their neighbourhood and throughout the City.

The City of Ryde will be receptive to community comment and providing avenues by which comments, concerns and suggestions can be relayed to the Tree Management team.

TREE MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Developing community awareness The City of Ryde will promote community awareness of the benefits of trees in an urban environment and tree management on both public and private land.
Balancing community outcomes The City of Ryde will manage the benefits and risks associated with trees in an urban environment in order to achieve the best community outcomes.

References - Legislation

Not Applicable

Review Process and Endorsement

This Policy should be reviewed every five years and endorsed by the executive team.

Attachments

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