

CITY OF ENCINITAS
ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

Policy Title: Urban Forest Management Program Section: Council Policy

Responsible Department: City Manager Number: C027

Approved By: City Council Date Approved: 3/18/09

Date Revised: _____

I. Policy Statement

The City of Encinitas recognizes that its urban forest is an integral part of the City's infrastructure. Properly planned and managed, the urban forest provides significant ecological, social and economic benefits. These include improved air and water quality, reduced erosion and stormwater runoff, energy conservation, improved health, enhanced livability, traffic calming, noise reduction and increased property values and providing habitat for animals.

The City is responsible for the management of the City's urban forest in City rights-of-way, parks, beaches, recreational trails and City owned properties. The City also develops standards and reviews, conditions and approves developments on private property including landscape plans. The City Council finds that the standards and guidelines in this policy are necessary to insure: 1) the continued protection, management, maintenance and replacement of the City's urban forest, 2) consistency in practice among the various City departments involved in urban forest issues, and 3) consistency with the City's General Plan and Specific Plans. Adoption of these standards and guidelines will serve to protect and enhance the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Encinitas.

II. Urban Forest and Urban Forest Management – Definitions

Urban Forest: The City of Encinitas defines the Urban Forest as the ecosystem composed of all trees and plants, both intentionally planted or occurring naturally and the soils they grow in.

Urban Forest Management: The City of Encinitas defines Urban Forest Management as: The effective and efficient management of the City's critical "green infrastructure" through leadership, appropriate planning, pro-active programs and education.

- The City recognizes that Urban Forest Management is based on scientific principles that govern a natural ecosystem occurring in the midst of, and interacting with City and human processes. It involves the protection and enhancement of urban trees and forests and the natural resources and processes on which their health depends.

III. Goals of Urban Forest Management Program

The goals of the City's urban forest management program are to:

- Maximize the environmental, economic and social benefits derived from the urban forest.
- Resolve conflicts between City trees and other vital infrastructure while protecting both.
- Encourage community and private partnerships related to urban forest issues.
- Insure that urban forest maintenance funds are spent in a cost-effective manner.
- Insure the conservation of a healthy and safe urban forest.

IV. Methods

In managing the City's urban forest, City Departments will utilize the following methods:

1. Optimize tree canopy cover: Canopy cover will vary in accordance with area of city, street size, existing infrastructure, community needs, environmental limitations and aesthetic considerations.
2. Optimize the use of above ground and below ground space available for trees.
3. Insure an increased level of future benefits from street trees by providing appropriate tree age diversity and distribution.
4. Provide appropriate species diversity.
5. Reduce conflicts with existing infrastructure (such as root intrusions with sidewalks or canopy intrusions with street signs) through proper tree selection and through recognition of trees as an important and equal component of the City's infrastructure.
6. Maintain a comprehensive tree care management program for City trees.
7. Using industry approved procedures, provide regular maintenance of City trees to insure vehicular clearance as well as traffic control sign visibility.
8. Recycle all green waste generated through the management of the City's urban forest.
9. Maintain an electronic inventory of all City trees (including assigning a value to all City trees) to assist in the efficient management of these important assets.
10. Protect the native, mature forest that exists in City-Maintained areas.
11. Insure that other public and private entities that impact trees in the City operate with common goals and objectives.
12. Promote the benefits and needs of the urban forest through community outreach.
13. Preserve, protect and manage the City's urban forest using industry accepted "Best Management Practices" and nationally approved standards.
14. Do not plant trees and plants that are known to be non-native invasive species and remove such where appropriate.
15. Require tree evaluation and protection plans and monitoring for any project that impacts existing City trees.
16. Develop policies and procedures to assess monetary damages for vandalism, damage or the unauthorized removal of City trees.
17. Insure that trees planted in City rights-of-way and City parks are primarily site appropriate, locally adapted and native indigenous species.

V. Requirement to Develop Administrative Manual Procedure

The City will develop an Administrative Manual Procedure for use by all affected City Departments compatible with this policy and with the City's General Plan (Resource Management Element: Goal 3, Policies 3.1 through 3.7). The City Manager will ensure that this is reviewed bi-annually (at a minimum) and updated as needed. The Procedure must contain a provision related to tree removals which includes an evaluation procedure, community notification and replanting procedure (if appropriate).

VI. Trees of Community Significance

The City's General Plan (Resource Management Element: Policy 3.1) specifies that "Mature trees of community significance cannot be removed without City authorization." A tree of community significance (hereinafter referred to as a heritage tree) is defined as:

- A tree that is one of the oldest or largest of its species located in the City or a tree of unique form or species. It has historic significance due to an association with an historic building, site, street, person or event or it is a defining landmark or significant outstanding feature of a neighborhood.

Any person or agency may nominate a tree for heritage designation. The Environmental Advisory Commission will review all such nominations and make recommendations to the Planning Commission. Heritage trees may be located on public or private property. Upon Planning Commission approval, and if no objection has been received from the property owner, the tree will be designated as a heritage tree and any work on this tree must be done under the provisions of a City-issued permit unless immediate action must be taken for public health or safety reasons. It will be the responsibility of any private property owner whose property contains a heritage tree to insure that any new owner knows of the trees designation and the requirements that come with this designation.

VII. Arbor Day Foundation – Tree City USA Program

The City of Encinitas will complete all steps necessary to be officially recognized as a “Tree City USA” by the National Arbor Day Foundation. These steps include: designating a Department with the overall responsibility for the City’s Urban Forest Management, establishing a community tree ordinance, funding the urban forestry management program at an annual level of at least \$2 per capita and sponsoring an “Arbor Day” observance and proclamation.