Municipality of Bluewater	POLICY AND PROCEDURE
POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL	
POLICY	**PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF TREES**
EFFECTIVE DATE	**AUGUST 12, 2019**
APPROVED BY	**By-Law Number 77 – 2019**
SUPERSEDES/REVISED	**Revised: April 2, 2024 (By-law 32-2024) Revised: June 16, 2025 (By-law 64-2025)**
LAST REVIEWED	**N/A**
PAGES	**9**

PURPOSE

This policy describes how the Municipality of Bluewater fulfills its responsibilities as required by section 270 (1) 7. of the *Municipal Act, 2001,* S.O. 2001, as amended to set out the manner in which the municipality will protect and enhance the tree canopy and natural vegetation in the municipality ("Tree Policy").

Healthy trees help reduce air and noise pollution; assist with production and conservation of energy; filter water; stabilize soils; help prevent wind erosion; provide habitat and food for wildlife such as birds; supply oxygen in the air; help absorb carbon dioxide; improve human health by providing shade and add beauty to the community. Mature trees can provide an important stormwater management function by reducing infrastructure degradation.

The Municipality of Bluewater strives to achieve a healthy tree population in urban and rural areas of the Municipality. The Municipality recognizes the importance of contributions and partnerships with community organizations and residents to meet this goal. The Municipality will promote and facilitate these contributions and will implement programs to realize the benefits of trees and improve the visual appearance of municipal property including parks, cemeteries, road sides and boulevards.

The Municipality acknowledges that additional resources and policies are available in the Municipality of Bluewater Official Plan in section 5, the Bayfield Heritage District Conservation Plan, the County of Huron Forest Conservation By-law and stewardship grants available through the Clean Water Now project.

SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to Municipality-owned properties and Municipal Highways.

This policy also provides policies for new development and redevelopment of private properties subject to a Planning application.

The Municipality may from time to time implement programs to foster planting of trees on private property.

This policy aims to provide:

- Guidance on planting, maintaining, preserving and removing trees.
- Requirements for planting and siting trees on Municipal property.
- Methods by which residents may help ensure a health tree canopy in the community.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Commemorative Tree and Bench Program

DEFINITIONS

"Administrative Assistant" means the Administrative Assistant, Public Works and Facilities of the Municipality of Bluewater or any successor to that position and in their absence includes the acting Administrative Assistant;

"Clerk" means the Clerk of the Municipality;

"Council" means the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Bluewater;

"Bluewater", "Municipality" means the Corporation of the Municipality of Bluewater;

"Heritage Tree" means a tree having one, or more of the following characteristics:
An individual tree because of its size, form, shape, beauty, age, colour, rarity, genetic constitution or other distinctive features;
A living relic that displays evidence of cultural modification by Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people, including strips of bark or knot-free wood removed, test hole cut to determine soundness, furrows to collect pitch or sap or blazes to mark a trail;
A prominent community landmark;
A specimen associated with an historic person, place, event or period;
A tree associated with local folklore, myths, legends or traditions;
A representative of a crop grown by ancestors and their successors that is at risk of disappearing from cultivation.

"Heritage Tree Program" means the Ontario Heritage Tree Program provided by Forests Ontario or any successor program or similar program if the Forests Ontario Heritage Tree Program is no longer provided.

"Manager of Public Works" means the Manager of Public Works of the Municipality of Bluewater or their designate, or any successor to that position and in their absence includes the acting Manager of Public Works;

"Municipal Highway" means a public Municipal Highway, street, road, avenue, lane, driveway, owned or under the jurisdiction of the Municipality and all parts including any surface, grassed area, boulevard, ditch, curb, gutter and sidewalk but does not include any unopened and improved road allowance;

"Public Lands" means lands that are not Municipal Highways and that are owned or under the management of the Municipality, square, place, park, walk, walkway, non-vehicular access, woodland, ravine, greenbelt, storm water management facility, open space, cemetery and lands which the Municipality holds any real property interest;

"Roads Supervisor" means the Roads Supervisor of the Municipality of Bluewater or their designate, or any successor to that position and in their absence includes the acting Roads Supervisor;

General Policies:

No one shall remove or plant any tree on Municipality-owned property without written permission.

The **Manager of Public Works** may, from time to time develop tree inspection and maintenance standards and schedules based on best practices to implement this policy. Authorization from Council is not required to develop, revise or implement these standards.

The Municipality seeks to leverage its efforts with community partners. The Municipality may consult with relevant community groups to gain local knowledge regarding potential planting areas or candidate trees for pruning, repair and/or removal.

Tree Preservation and Protection

No one shall do any of the following:

a) Remove or cut down a tree or any part of a tree on Municipal Highways or Public Lands.

b) Cause injury to a tree or its root system on Municipal Highways or Public Lands.

Tree Inspection and Maintenance

In order to prolong the safe life of trees, the Municipality will coordinate pruning of dead and dying branches in trees.

Bluewater encourages residents to participate in keeping our tree canopy healthy. Residents may report if a tree on a Municipal Highway or Public Lands:

- Needs maintenance work or presents a concern for its health.
- Is dead or appears significantly unhealthy
- Has been damaged

Residents may also contact the Municipality to:

- Request a tree pruning
- Request clean-up of tree debris

Tree Removal

1.0 The Municipality may remove trees located on Public Lands or Municipal Highways if they are:

- Dead or diseased
- Presenting a hazard to public safety
- Structurally compromised (e.g., splitting or cracking)
- Adversely affecting infrastructure or operations

2.0 A Tree Removal Evaluation Form (Appendix A) must be completed by Bluewater staff for all removal requests or decisions.

3.0 An assessment by a certified arborist is required for all proposed tree removals unless the tree is clearly dead or poses an immediate safety hazard. This includes trees that are partially dead, diseased, structurally compromised but still viable, or exhibiting active foliage. Assessments are not needed when staff confirm a tree is dead or an immediate hazard necessitates urgent removal.

4.0 Where the removal of the subject tree may require removal or significant disturbance to other trees, this must be documented on the evaluation form.

5.0 Trees marked for removal will be identified on site with an "X" and, where feasible, may be communicated to the public through Municipal social media or direct

notification.

6.0 For tree removals in Villages and Hamlets located in the boulevard adjacent to private property, a courtesy door hanger notice will be provided where possible, to the adjacent property owner prior to removal. Notwithstanding emergency tree removals.

7.0 Where a private tree adversely affects a Municipal Highway and requires pruning or removal, a courtesy door hanger notice will be provided where possible.

8.0 Any unresolved objections may be submitted in writing to the Manager of Public Works for review. The Manager's decision is final and binding.

9.0 Where removals fall within the Bayfield Heritage Conservation District, review by the Bluewater Heritage Advisory Committee is required.

10.0 Removals due to emergencies (e.g., immediate danger, storm damage) are exempt from these requirements.

Tree Planting

11.0 All trees planted on Municipality owned lands and Municipal Highways require municipal permission. Staff will evaluate site conditions for height, soil type, growing conditions, location of services and other restricting factors such as sight lines.

Residents that wish to have a tree planted in the boulevard in front of their residence may register with the Administrative Assistant. The Municipality will endeavour to plant enough trees to satisfy resident requests. Residents are encouraged to help care for trees planted in front of their residence by monitoring their condition and watering.

Tree planting requests by lakeshore associations, neighborhood groups and groups with interest related to environmental stewardship along Municipal Road Allowances will be considered as part of the Municipality's annual tree planting program. The requesting entity is encouraged to help water the trees which are planted as a result of their request. Requests of this nature must comply with the criteria as set forth in this policy.

12.0 Bluewater will undertake a tree planting program to replace trees that have been removed.

13.0 Bluewater will undertake a tree planting program to realize and increase the

community benefits associated with healthy trees. The annual program will include, at a minimum the acquisition and planting of 150 trees of a variety of species. The Municipality will source trees from various providers including the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.

14.0 It is a goal of the Municipality to ensure the list encompasses a number of native varieties to keep the tree stock healthy and maintain diversity to protect against a particular threat such as emerald ash borer. Invasive trees are not permitted to be planted on Public Lands or Municipal Highways.

15.0 The Bluewater Heritage Advisory Committee shall comment on projects that significantly change the overall visual impact of the treescape located on either side of the streets in the Bayfield Heritage Conservation District (Main Street, Elgin Place and Clan Gregor Square).

Street Trees

16.0 Siting of trees will be consistent with the following limitations:

a) No closer than 3 metres to a building

b) No closer than 1.5 metres to a driveway/entrance

c) No closer than 3 metres to a hydro pole or utility transformer

d) No closer than 7 – 10 metres from an existing tree

e) No closer than 3.5 metres to a utility line or cable; drains; catch basins

f) No closer than a 2 metres radius of a fire hydrant or parking meter

g) No closer than 1.5 – 4 metres from a street light

h) Trees may be planted between 0.5 metres from the property line and 1.5 metres to the edge of the sidewalk.

i) Where there is no sidewalk the tree shall be located between 0.5 metres from the property line and a maximum of 1.0 metres from the property line.

j) Sight triangles as set out in the Municipal Zoning By-law shall be kept clear of trees.

17.0 Where a Heritage District Conservation Plan or a Streetscape Plan has been prepared all landscaping including trees will be in accordance with the Heritage District Conservation Plan or the Streetscape Plan.

18.0 Street trees are not permitted on lanes, walkways, walks or similar properties due to limited space.

19.0 Street trees are not permitted in boulevards of streets where the width of the street is less than 16 metres.

Development and Re-development of Private Properties

20.0 Policies to implement conditions of applications under the *Planning Act,* R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 13, as amended shall include the following elements:

a) Developers are responsible for the purchase and planting of trees. Additionally, trees are to be maintained in a healthy condition throughout a maintenance period set out in an agreement or undertaking relating to the development.

b) Trees species and minimum size shall be directed by the Municipality.

c) Additional detailed requirements may be set out in procedures and guidelines.

Tree Maintenance

21.0 The Municipality may include maintenance regimens and plans for specific trees or any trees as a Schedule to this Policy.

Programs to Designate, Recognize and Raise Awareness of Significant Trees

22.0 The Municipality will promote programs to bring awareness of the social, cultural, historical and ecological value of its trees.

(a) Heritage Trees

The Municipality will support the Bluewater Heritage Advisory Committee in consideration of designating and protecting trees under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act,* R.S.O. 1990, c. O. 18, as amended ("*Heritage Act*").

(b) Bluewater Honour Roll of Trees

The Municipality will support the Communities in Bloom Committee, Bayfield Tree Project, Hensall Streetscape Committee and other community organizations in acknowledging trees accepted in the Heritage Tree Program.

The Municipality will celebrate its significant trees by maintaining a Bluewater Honour Roll of Trees web page and developing awareness programs around these historically and culturally significant trees.

23.0 The Municipality will foster initiatives to participate in provincial and national tree programs such as 50 Million Tree Program.

Municipality of Bluewater

Tree Removal Evaluation Form

To be completed by Bluewater Staff for any tree removal request on Public Lands or Municipal Highways

Section 1 – Tree Identification & Location

Date of Assessment: _____

Assessed by (Name/Position): _____

Address/Location: _____

Area Description (e.g. boulevard, park, cemetery): _____

_____

Tree Marked with "X" on Site: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Planned Date of Removal: _____

Section 2 – Reason for Removal (check all that apply):

- ☐ Dead Tree
- ☐ Diseased
- ☐ Public Safety Hazard
- ☐ Structural Damage (splitting/cracking)
- ☐ Public Request / Concern
- ☐ Other (describe): _____

_____

_____

Section 3 – Arborist Verification

A certified arborist assessment must be completed if the tree is not dead.

Arborist Assessment Required: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Certified Arborist Name/Company: _____

Date of Assessment: _____

Arborist Recommendation:

- ☐ Removal Recommended
- ☐ Removal Not Recommended
- ☐ Additional Notes Attached

Section 4 – Additional Considerations

Does removal require removal or damage to nearby healthy trees? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe: _____

Public Notification Required (e.g. courtesy notice, social media): ☐ Yes ☐ No

Method: _____

Bluewater Heritage Advisory Committee Review Required? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, date sent: _____

Section 5 – Final Authorization

Roads Supervisor Approval:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Manager of Public Works Approval (if required):

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Section 6 – Tree Removal Details

Date Tree was Removed: _____

Was Stump Removed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Notes: _____

_____

_____