

# COUNTY OF JACKSON POLICY MANUAL

**GENERAL**

**Policy 9110**

## TREE POLICY

### **I. Purpose:**

Safety, environmental stewardship and the beauty of the community are priorities for the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. Trees are assets providing environmental services such as prevention of erosion, siltation and flooding, absorption of air pollutants, reduction of noise, wildlife habitats, they add beauty and character, and contribute to property values and the safety of the community. Jackson County has a responsibility to maintain trees that exist on all County-owned property including parks, trails, airport approach protection areas, road rights of way, and all other areas owned by Jackson County.

Regulations established by State of Michigan statute may also obligate tree maintenance. Pursuant to MCL 247.242, the County has a statutory responsibility to maintain public roads within the County in a condition safe for travel by the motoring public thus the responsibility to maintain trees within the right of way of all County-maintained roads. Pursuant to MCL 259.151, trees must be trimmed or removed to establish safe airport approach protection areas for aircraft at the Jackson County Airport.

### **II. Policy and Procedure:**

- A. Staff will prepare a written standard operating procedure for tree pruning and removal methods. Those documents will incorporate best practices for pruning and removal consistent with the provisions of this policy.
- B. The County has the right to prune or remove any tree on County-owned property or within the right of way of a public road. Additionally, where the County has obtained an easement for removing or pruning trees, those activities may be performed within the limits established by the individual easement.
- C. All trees within the County's jurisdiction should be maintained in a manner that protects their structural integrity and health, and the safety of surrounding people, vehicles, buildings, infrastructure, utilities, etc.
- D. When the County becomes aware of trees within its jurisdiction that are dead, have structural defects, or otherwise pose an unacceptable risk to the public or public property, they should be removed as soon as possible. Trees that are dead or unhealthy, but do not pose an unacceptable risk to the public or public property, do not need to be removed.

- E. Pruning practices must follow the most current accepted best practices in the industry. As of the adoption of this policy, that standard is ANSI A300 (Part 1) Pruning.
- F. Living trees may be removed or pruned for the safety of the community, the health or structural integrity of the tree, for a construction project, or any other reason deemed appropriate by staff.
- G. Except as otherwise provided in this policy, when it is determined that a tree within the right of way of a public road must be removed, staff must provide advanced notice to the owner of the adjacent property. That notice must give the property owner a specific period of time to respond to the notice. Staff may proceed with the tree removal when the consent of the property owner is received, or when the time period stated in the notice has expired, whichever occurs first.
- H. In the event that a tree within County-maintained right of way poses an immediate threat to the safety of motorists on a public road, the tree may be removed or pruned without notice to the adjacent property owner.
- I. To prevent the spread of Oak Wilt, removal or pruning of oak trees must follow the most current accepted best practices as established by the United States Department of Agriculture or Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
- J. Staff should make every effort to remain informed about various invasive tree species, other invasive species that affect trees, and diseases affecting trees that threaten this area. If any of these are located on County-owned property or within the right of way of a public road, the appropriate department should make every reasonable effort to remove or abate the threat. Such actions should be undertaken in consultation and coordination with the appropriate professionals and with strict adherence to best practices for the removal or abatement of the specific threat.
- K. Trees may not be planted on County-owned property or in the right of way of a public road without a permit from the appropriate County department. Requests for memorial trees in a County park are addressed under the Jackson County Parks Trees & Bench Recognition and Memorials Policy.

Adopted: 11/17/2020