

Town of Stratford - Council Policy			
Name:	Town-Owned Tree Policy	Policy Number:	2021-SC-01
Committee:	Sustainability	Approval Date:	December 8, 2021

1. Introduction

The Town of Stratford (the Town) owns many acres of treed and forested land, most of which are within parks and greenspaces. The trees and shrubs on Town property are important natural assets and serve valuable ecological functions. The Town recognizes the important role of trees and does not remove Town-owned trees without first ensuring that a tree poses a serious threat to the safety of assets or people.

This policy has been adopted to provide a consistent approach to making decisions about Town-owned trees and to prevent their indiscriminate removal.

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- a. "CAO" Chief Administrative Officer of the Town of Stratford.
- b. "Natural Area" A property owned by the Town of Stratford or portion of a property owned by the Town of Stratford that is intentionally left in its natural state, with design or maintenance limited to preserving or enhancing natural characteristics.
- c. "Town-owned Tree" Any perennial plant with one or more woody stems whose trunk or stem is located within the boundaries of a property owned by the Town of Stratford.

3. Policy

- a. A Town-owned Tree will not be removed or damaged by anyone without written permission from the CAO, unless that person is an employee of the Town of Stratford acting upon direction from the CAO or designate.

- b. A Town-owned Tree will not be removed by the Town or authorized for removal unless the Town-owned Tree has been assessed by a certified arborist and is considered by the arborist:
 - i. to pose an immediate hazard to humans or property
 - ii. to have a disease or an infestation that puts other trees at risk
- c. A Town-owned Tree may be removed by the Town or authorized for removal without consulting a certified arborist if the removal of the Town-owned Tree is required to accommodate municipal projects such as water and sewer mains, roadways, utilities, active transportation lanes, sports fields, or building projects and there is no cost-effective alternative to save the Town-owned Tree.
- d. The Town may use other forms of intervention based on the advice of a certified arborist, such as pruning or cabling, before removing a Tree.
- e. Standing dead or damaged Town-owned Trees serve a valuable ecological function and will not be removed unless they pose an immediate hazard to humans or property.
- f. In Natural Areas, Town-owned Trees shall be left in their natural wild state wherever possible.
- g. Town of Stratford staff may prune a Town-owned Tree to improve the growth and structure of the Town-owned Tree, or to remove limbs that pose a direct hazard to humans or property.
- h. The Town of Stratford does not prune or remove Town-owned Trees to create or preserve views for public or private benefits.
- i. Requests for removal or pruning of Town-owned Trees will be directed to the CAO or designate.

4. Effective Date

This policy is effective on December 9, 2021.