



VILLAGE OF DEXTER

TREE SPECIFICATIONS MANUAL
Policies and Procedures Manual

TREE BOARD

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ACCEPTED BY VILLAGE COUNCIL
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Policy
 - A. General Policy
 - i. Municipal Tree Ordinance (Appendix 1)
 - ii. Adherence to Manual
 - iii. Property Owner Cooperation Policy
 - B. Removal and Replacement Policy
2. Species, Cultivars and Varieties
 - A. Acceptable Species
 - B. Undesirable Species
 - C. Other Species
 - D. Zoning Ordinance Requirements (Appendix 2)
3. Planting Stock Requirements
 - A. General - American Standard for Nursery Stock (Appendix 3)
 - B. Size
 - C. Grade
 - D. Location and Spacing
 - i. Clear Vision Areas
 - ii. Utility and Streetlights
 - iii. Size Spacing
 - iv. Overhead line or underground utility
4. Planting Method and Support
 - A. Tree City USA Bulletin No. 19 - How to Select and Plant a Tree (Appendix 4), Department of Natural Resources Tree Planting Guide (IC 4108) (Appendix 5)
 - B. Planting holes balled and burlapped
 - C. Root balls
 - D. Soil Amendments
 - E. Wire baskets and burlap
 - F. Guy wires or support
 - G. Planting Method (Appendix 6)
5. Early Maintenance
 - A. General - MDNR 3 year maintenance plan (Appendix 7) and MDNR Tree Maintenance Checklist (Appendix 8)
 - B. Watering (Appendix 9)
 - C. Fertilization

- D. Pruning – United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, “How to Prune Trees” and Virginia Cooperative Extension Pruning Calendar (Appendix 10)

- 6. General Maintenance
 - A. Pruning Approaches (Appendix 10)
 - B. Pruning Cycles
 - i. 5-Year Cycle
 - ii. Annual Windshield Survey
 - iii. Records and Ratings
 - 1. Priority
 - 2. Size of Limb
 - 3. Target Areas
 - iv. Species and Hazard Interaction
 - v. Posting

- 7. Pruning Policy and Schedule (Appendix 10)
 - A. Class I
 - B. Class II
 - C. Class III
 - D. Class IV

- 8. Wood Disposal and Wood Chip Disposal Policy

- 9. Street Closing

- 10. Tree Removal Policy

- 11. Tree Damage Policy
 - A. Tree Evaluation Form (Appendix 11)

- 12. Resident Participation Policy

- 13. Tree Planting Lottery Policy

- 14. Tree Board Planting Location Policy

- 15. Maple Tree Tapping Policy

- 16. Appendix 12 – Annual Tree Board Action Plan

TREE SPECIFICATIONS MANUAL

AUTHORITY

Pursuant to authority granted under the “Municipal Tree Ordinance”, Ordinance #15-2005, adopted by the Dexter Village Council, Dexter, Michigan, on April 28, 2005, the Community Development Manager having had the advice and assistance of the Tree Board, established in the said Ordinance, hereby promulgates the following Arboriculture Specifications and Standards of Practice for the Village of Dexter, Michigan, hereinafter called the Village of Dexter Tree Specifications Manual.

1. POLICY

- A. GENERAL POLICY - To reduce the unnecessary expense and unnecessary removal of healthy trees, the Tree Board recommends removal of only those trees that are dead, dying, or diseased and trees that are determined by the Tree Board or designee to be hazardous to the public.
 - i. All work on public trees shall comply with the “Municipal Tree Ordinance” (Appendix 1) of the Village of Dexter, Michigan, and this Tree Specifications Manual.
 - ii. The Tree Specifications Manual shall be adhered to at all times, but may be amended at any time that experience, new research, or laws indicate that improved methods or circumstances make it advisable, and only then with the advice and assistance of the Village of Dexter Tree Board, all as provided for in the above said Ordinance.
 - iii. The policy of the Village of Dexter Tree Board, the Village of Dexter Department of Public Works, and the Village of Dexter shall be to cooperate with the public, property owners, and with appropriate non-profit organizations.

2. SPECIES, CULTIVARS AND VARIETIES

- A. A list of tree species and/or their varieties acceptable and approved for planting on Village property has been compiled with the assistance of the Village Tree Board and approved by Village Council, Article 6, Landscaping Standards, of the Village of Dexter Zoning Ordinance (Appendix 2).

- B. Prohibited tree species and their varieties are listed in Article 6, Section 6.11C of the Landscaping Standards (Appendix 2).
- C. Other tree species and their varieties may be planted on Village owned property, but only trees of good appearance, beauty, and adaptability that are free from injurious insects, diseases, or other limitations and that have been approved by the Tree Board.
- D. The Tree Board, in conjunction with the Community Development Manager or Department of Public Services Superintendent, shall review at least once every two years the species, cultivars, and varieties list in Appendix 2 to determine whether any should be removed or whether certain species, cultivars, or varieties of proven adaptability and value should be added; and the Tree Board shall similarly review the trees listed in Article 6, Landscaping Standards, to determine whether any should be removed or whether certain new species, cultivars, or varieties should be added.

3. PLANTING STOCK REQUIREMENTS

- A. GENERAL - Trees shall be Michigan State Agriculture Department inspected and certified. Trees shall be nursery grown and dug for sale in conformance with the American Standard for Nursery Stock (Appendix 3), published by the American Association of Nurserymen. Nursery of origin of all trees shall be noted on the bid as plant material may be inspected. A Michigan Department of Agriculture certificate will be required for all planting from out-of-state. Stock obtained from municipal or government nurseries must meet relevant standards per the Michigan Insect Pest and Plant Disease Act, Public Act 189, 1931.
- B. SIZE - Unless otherwise specified all tree planting stock shall conform to American Association of Nurserymen Standards and shall be at least 2-2 ½ inch caliper.
- C. GRADE - Unless otherwise allowed for specific reasons, all trees shall have comparatively straight trunks, well developed leaders and crowns and shall exhibit evidence of proper nursery pruning practices. Trees shall have acceptable balance and at the time of planting must be free from mechanical injuries and other objectionable features that affect future form and beauty of the plant.

D. SPACING AND LOCATION

- i. Trees shall be planted at least 10 feet from driveways and alleys, and at street intersections the distance shall be 15 feet pursuant to Section 3.08A3, Clear Vision Areas.
- ii. No tree shall be planted closer than 30 feet to a utility pole or within 15 feet of a streetlight to allow for maintenance and light penetration.
- iii. Spacing of trees shall be 30-60 feet depending on the species planted and the width of the lot. Generally all large trees, at maturity, shall be spaced 40-60 feet; all medium trees shall be spaced 35 feet and all small trees shall be placed 25 feet apart.
- iv. No street tree shall be planted under or within 10 lateral feet of any overhead utility wire, or over or within 8 lateral feet of any underground utility wire.
- v. All planting on streets without curbs or sidewalks must be approved by the Village, who shall determine the location of the tree to avoid future injury or damage when the street is curbed or when sidewalks are constructed.

4. PLANTING METHOD AND SUPPORT

- A. Tree planting within the Village of Dexter should follow the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards for tree planting, Tree City USA Bulletin No. 19 - How to Select and Plant a Tree (Appendix 4), OR Michigan Department of Natural Resources Tree Planting Guide (IC 4108) (Appendix 5).
- B. Planting holes for balled and burlapped trees all be a minimum of 24 inches greater than the diameter of the ball of soil to allow proper backfill. The hole shall be the depth of the root ball.
- C. Root balls shall be placed on undisturbed subgrade to prevent settling. Care should be taken not to over excavate the planting hole depth.
- D. In poorly drained soil, artificial drainage may be provided for wet sites and species selection should be tolerant of poor drainage conditions. Soil amendments may be added to the backfill on sites where existing soils are not ideal for proper root development. Amendments should be added at a rate of one-third to two-thirds existing soil to minimize the effects of soil interface. Acceptable soil amendments are topsoil, compost, or peat moss.
- E. Wire baskets and burlap shall be removed from the top one-third of the root ball prior to backfilling to prevent future girdling.

- F. Tree trunks shall be suitably wrapped and guyed, or supported in an upright position, according to standard arboriculture practice. Guys or supports installed shall not girdle or cause serious injury to the tree nor endanger public safety.
 - G. Planting method information can be found in Appendix 6 of this manual.
5. EARLY MAINTENANCE

A. GENERAL

- i. Maintenance for Village trees should follow the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Tree Maintenance Guidelines detailing the first three years of maintenance (Appendix 7) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Tree Maintenance Checklist (Appendix 8).
- ii. Although top pruning should be done to develop a balance with the root system, excessive pruning at the time of transplanting should be avoided. Properly selected plants at the nursery will minimize the need for excessive pruning.
- iii. Newly planted trees, shrubs, or other plants require special maintenance for three growing seasons following planting. All maintenance practices shall follow approved arboriculture standards.

B. WATERING - Ample soil moisture shall be maintained following planting. A thorough watering once in five (5) to ten (10) days, depending on soil type and drainage provisions, is usually adequate during the growing season. A soil probe can be used to check the moisture in the soil ball and/or backfill. Over watering should be avoided. Information on watering from the Urban and Community Forestry Division of the Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri can be found in Appendix 9.

C. FERTILIZATION - Fertilization of newly-planted trees and shrubs is NOT recommended. Adequate quantities of the essential nutrients should be available for new root growth in existing soils. However, provision of good drainage and adequate moisture of the backfill and soil ball is essential. To increase vigor of existing trees, a pre-approved fertilizer may be applied when needed.

D. INSECT DISEASE AND CONTROL - Frequent and thorough inspections shall be made to determine when measures for the control of insects and disease shall be taken. Plants are in a weakened

condition following transplanting, and they are more susceptible to insects (especially borers) and disease than are vigorously growing trees. Where control is deemed necessary, pesticides will be used that are target specific and have been formulated to provide acceptable control. All pesticides shall be applied using the most recently approved federal guidelines. Where more than one pesticide is recommended for control, the less toxic formulation shall be used.

- E. PRUNING - Pruning of newly-planted trees shall consist of removing dead, broken, or injured branches; and the pruning out of rank, uneven growth that affects form. Water sprouts shall be removed when they reach the diameter of a pencil. Pruning shall be practiced in accordance with the Village of Dexter Tree Ordinance. Newly planted trees are to be correctively pruned annually for three (3) years.

6. GENERAL MAINTENANCE

- A. All pruning of Village-owned trees shall be performed in accordance with the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (NA-FR-01-95), Appendix 10. Appendix 10 also includes a deciduous tree pruning calendar prepared by the Virginia Cooperative Extension.
- B. In order to efficiently use available personnel to effectively provide required tree maintenance for Village-owned trees, the following pruning cycles have been established:
 - i. The following maintenance shall be performed on a five-year cycle, village-wide, block by block:
 - a. Sidewalk clearance for pedestrians to a minimum of seven feet.
 - b. Street clearance for trucks and buses to a minimum of 14 feet.
 - c. Corrective pruning of trees less than eight inches in diameter.
 - d. Clearance for traffic signage and lighting.
 - e. Clearance within the clear vision zone of intersections (pursuant to Section 3.08A3).
 - ii. Once a year, public and private overhanging trees within the public right-of-way in the Village of Dexter will be surveyed for potential hazards. This tree survey will be conducted in a systematic manner so that every street tree is visually examined via a "windshield" survey. The Community Development

Manager or the Department of Public Services Superintendent or Village Manager designee will be looking primarily for deadwood greater than 2 inches in diameter or poorly formed crotches that show evidence of splitting or decay. Simultaneously, low limbs posing pedestrian or vehicular hazards will also be identified. Insect, disease, or environmental problems shall also be identified for initiation of integrated pest management practices.

- iii. Records and Ratings – A record of all hazardous situations will be developed, each tree being identified by:
 - a. Section
 - b. Priority
 - c. Address
 - d. Size and Species
 - e. Description of Work Required
 - f. Time
 - g. Material
 - h. Additional Comments

Priority shall be assigned on a nine-point scale. Three points will be assigned to each of the following aspects of the potentially hazardous situation.

Size of Limb

- 1 Point – limbs up to two inches
- 2 Points – limbs 2" to 6"
- 3 Points – limbs greater than 6"

Target Area

- Primary pedestrian/vehicular corridors. Examples of this being areas around parks, schools, churches, and public buildings (3 points).
- Secondary pedestrian/vehicular corridors. Examples of this being minor arterial roadways, primarily all other residential areas.

- iv. Species and Hazard Interaction – Evaluation of characteristics of the individual species structural strength and the speed at which wood decays. (For example – Fast growing species such as willows and cottonwoods are weak wooded and as such are more susceptible to fail, splitting and branch drop, once decay has begun. Oaks, being a hardwood, will hold their deadwood much longer.)

- v. Posting - All work scheduled to remove trees or large limbs originating on private property will be publicized to the property owner by "doorknob" message or first class mail. Care all be taken that only legally permissible work on or above the public right-of-way will be scheduled without permission from property owners directly affected by maintenance procedures. If a property owner disputes the planned work, the Village shall retain a certified arborist to assess the tree prior to removal, pruning, or other maintenance work.

7. PRUNING POLICY

Pruning Classifications of Village trees shall be performed in accordance with the United States Department of Agriculture Forestry Service (NA-FR-01-95). Pruning classifications are to be determined by size and significance as determined by the Village.

A. Class I or Fine Prune

- i. All trees eight inches in diameter or less
- ii. Any other tree as determined by the Village.

B. Class II or Medium Prune

- i. Trees with diameters in excess of eight inches but less than 25 inches.
- ii. Any other tree as determined by the Village.

C. Class III or Coarse Prune

- i. All trees in excess of 25 inches in diameter.

D. Class IV or Safety Reduction Prune

- i. In the event a tree is determined hazardous by the Village, cutting back or drop crotching may be performed to eliminate the hazard provided the useful life of the tree will be extended long enough to warrant doing so. If the expected pruning cost exceeds the tree's value, removal and replacement shall be considered.

8. WOOD DISPOSAL POLICY -Woodchips will not be left at homes immediately following tree removal. Woodchips will be made available to residents/property owners free of charge and can be picked up directly from the Department of Public Works. The wood chips shall not be stock piled in the public right of ways fronting private properties.

9. STREET CLOSING - To protect the public from danger, suitable street and sidewalk barriers or signs shall be used. Right-of-way permits must be applied for and approved through the Village Offices and details of the closures must be provided. Signals, flares or flashing lights shall be placed on all barriers or obstructions remaining in the street after dark.

10. TREE REMOVAL POLICY -

The Village recognizes the significant contribution made by street trees to both the aesthetic and environmental aspects of existing streetscapes within the Village. It also recognizes that in some cases tree retention may not be desirable, feasible, or reasonable owing to the condition, location, or species of the tree or its implications for development of an abutting site and/or the achievement of other Village objectives.

The Village wishes to avoid removal of street trees except where retention is considered undesirable or unreasonable, such as:

- exceptional circumstances exist relating to public risk and safety
- the species is not an approved variety and is not acceptable to the Village
- the tree precludes redevelopment of an adjoining site with no reasonable alternative to removal.

Owing to the hazardous nature of the task, residents/occupants will not be permitted to remove street trees themselves. Where removal is approved as a result of a development application, replacement of the tree with an approved variety will be required and its maintenance for the first two summers following its planting also required to assure the establishment of the replacement tree(s).

PROCEDURE

- A. The Village shall normally undertake the removal of street trees (based on a quotation from its preferred contractor through an approved bid process) under the following circumstances:
- i. The tree is diseased and beyond remedial treatment, or dead;
 - ii. The tree has been assessed by the Village as structurally weak and dangerous, placing the public at risk.
 - iii. The tree has been irreparably damaged by a storm;
 - iv. The tree is hazardous to motorists / pedestrians owing to interference with intersection sightlines presented by the tree's alignment or spacing;

- v. The tree is affected by road widening, service modification / relocation, or other infrastructure works and all other options to retain the tree have been deemed by the Village to be infeasible;
 - vi. The tree is dangerously in contact with overhead power lines or distributor wires to properties and where, for reasons of growth habit pertaining to the variety, selective pruning is not practical with the only option being severe lopping.
- B. The following are not considered sufficient reasons for the removal of street trees:
- i. The tree obscures or potentially obscures views (other than traffic or pedestrian)
 - ii. The tree variety is disliked;
 - iii. The tree variety causes nuisance by way of leaf, fruit and/or bark shedding or the like;
 - iv. The tree causes allergy or health problems;
 - v. The tree shades private gardens, solar hot water installations or the like.

The guiding principles of the tree removal policy are:

- To maintain public safety by reducing risk to people and/or by mitigating dead, dying, deteriorating, damaged, diseased and/or hazardous Village street trees on the public right-of-way in a timely and reasonable manner.
- To maintain publicly-owned tree resources by ensuring that professional standards are met, reasonable care is demonstrated, and corrective actions are taken when necessary for the welfare and safety of the public.
- To notify in a timely and reasonable manner the owner of the property that directly abuts the public right-of-way where a Village street tree is marked for removal.

The notification policy shall be as follows:

- The Village will give 14 calendar days' notice prior to the removal of the a street trees to the occupant and owner of the property abutting the Village right-of-way upon which a trees is slated for removal unless it is determined that the tree is hazardous and poses an imminent danger to the welfare and safety of the public or has a non-treatable contagious disease that poses imminent danger to the health of surrounding trees or the community forest, in which case no

notification shall be required. 14 days' shall commence based on the date of the written correspondence.

- If 14 days' notice is required, then for any size street trees marked for removal, the Village shall mail a letter, first class, to the occupant and owner of the address that directly abuts the public right-of-way upon which the street tree is located. The Village shall also notify by email any active home owners' association, if available, of trees marked for removal in the association's jurisdiction.
- Abutting occupants/property owners or home owners' associations shall have 14 days to dispute the removal.
- If abutting occupants/property owners or home owners' associations object to the removal of the tree, then removal work will cease until the Tree Board can take action on the dispute. The Village will consult at least two (2) certified arborists for structural health assessments. It will be the Tree Board's responsibility to determine whether the tree meets the standards for removal as stated in the Tree Removal Policy.

NOTIFICATION FOR WORK TO TAKE PLACE ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

All work scheduled to remove trees or large limbs originating on private property should be publicized in accordance with the Tree Removal Policy noted above. Care should be taken that only legally permissible work on or above the public right-of-way will be scheduled without permission from property owners directly affected by maintenance procedures.

11. TREE DAMAGE POLICY - Immediately upon receiving information indicating damage to a Village tree, the Village or a qualified contractor shall inspect the tree and complete a "Tree Evaluation" form, Appendix 11, to determine a course of remediation for the tree. If the tree warrants removal OR trimming, etc. to eliminate a health, safety, and welfare concern, the Department of Public Works and or qualified designee shall schedule the remediation activity.
12. RESIDENT PARTICIPATION POLICY - Annually the Village of Dexter will offer a Resident Cost Share Tree Planting. Residents can share in the cost to purchase a tree for planting in the extension and/or public right of way. The cost is typically 50/50. The cost will be determined annually based on pricing from a contractor. A contractor shall be selected based on the low bid. A contractor may be used in subsequent years if pricing stays the same. All trees are warrantied for one year. Participating

residents will receive information on proper maintenance and care of the tree.

13. TREE PLANTING LOTTERY POLICY - Locations around the Village will be selected for annual tree planting, when funding is available. The locations have been identified by the Tree Board as needing trees. Locations have also been added at the request of property owners. Property owners may request that their address be added to the lottery if they would like a tree, but cannot participate in the cost share program. The Tree Board will then select a species for each location. All trees are warrantied for one year. Recipients of a lottery tree will receive information on proper maintenance and care of the tree.
14. TREE BOARD PLANTING LOCATION POLICY - Budget dependent the Tree Board will select locations around the village to plant trees. These locations have been identified in the lottery or have been identified as a top priority planting location. Locations have been selected based on the following:
 - A. Tree removal location
 - B. Public Property (Schools, Parks, etc)
 - C. Major thoroughfares
 - D. Secondary thoroughfares
 - E. Minor thoroughfares
15. MAPLE TREE TAPPING POLICY - The Village's street and parks trees yield aesthetic and environmental benefits and are not crops or food sources. It is therefore the policy of the Village of Dexter to PROHIBIT the tapping of street trees in the Village right-of-way for the following reasons:
 - A. Street trees are currently under stress due to compacted soils around root zones;
 - B. Roads, driveways and sidewalks reduce water infiltration caused by impervious surfaces;
 - C. Salt, lawn chemicals, heat from pavement and poor soils contribute to increased stress;
 - D. Maple trees are not among the most urban tolerant species;
 - E. Many maple trees within the Village are old and their health is on the decline; introducing additional stresses could increase rate of decline.

AMENDMENTS

The Community Development Manager OR the Department of Public Services Superintendent shall have the authority to modify, amend, or extend with the advice and assistance of the Village of Dexter Tree Board, the Tree Specifications Manual at any time that experience indicates improved methods or whenever circumstances make it advisable.