

D-7. TREE PRESERVATION POLICY

The University is committed to responsible stewardship of all natural resources and, as part of that responsibility, the Board of Trustees has adopted this policy regarding the preservation of trees on property owned by the University. In recognition of the University's land-grant traditions and expertise in the fields of forestry and agriculture, it is essential that the University lead by example in its efforts to preserve and renew these invaluable natural assets which not only enhance the beauty of our campuses, but which also contribute to the health and overall wellbeing of the University's faculty and students, as well as those within the surrounding communities.

DEVELOPMENT OF MASTER LANDSCAPING PLAN

The Board of Trustees shall direct the development and adoption of a master landscaping plan for each University campus (each, a "Master Landscaping Plan"). Each Master Landscaping Plan shall show the location, species, and size of existing trees and of new trees to be planted on and around the relevant campus and shall otherwise be consistent with the provisions of this policy. The Board of Trustees may also direct the establishment of a budget and the solicitation of financial gifts and memorials to fund this policy and the implementation of each Master Landscaping Plan.

In recognition of the fact that trees are a living and growing resource that appreciate over a long growth process and which have an indeterminate life span, the following tenets are to be incorporated into each Master Landscaping Plan:

- trees will be maintained, preserved, and protected at all times;
- trees may only be considered for removal in accordance with this policy;
- trees may only be removed in accordance with this policy; and
- where feasible, trees that are removed shall be replaced.

MAINTENANCE, PRESERVATION, AND PROTECTION OF TREES

Every reasonable effort should be made to maintain, preserve, and protect trees and to keep them pruned, stabilized, and free from damage from the elements and disease. Efforts should also be made to limit the removal of trees from construction sites (including roads, buildings, and other facilities), which efforts shall include the following: (a) the University Architect shall work with project architects, engineers, and other relevant landscape architects to limit tree removal through appropriate site selection and development; (b) all construction plans and specifications shall require the identification of the trees to be protected as well as the construction of protective barriers around protected trees which shall be maintained during the construction; and (c) meaningful monetary penalties shall be imposed for the destruction, removal, or damage of such protected trees. In the event that removal of any tree is necessary in connection with any construction project, efforts should be taken to plant a suitable replacement tree in a nearby location. Notwithstanding the foregoing or anything to the contrary herein, no tree may be removed from any University property other than in accordance with this policy and the applicable Master Landscaping Plan(s).

CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANTING CONSIDERATION OF TREE REMOVAL

Though the preference should generally be to eliminate or minimize the need for tree removal in all circumstances, there may occasionally be circumstances that give rise to a need to remove one or more trees. Accordingly, a tree may be considered for removal if the tree:

- is determined to be dead or diseased beyond reasonable preservation (e.g., as may be evidenced by a lack of healthy, living foliage during its normal growing season);
- constitutes a safety hazard to person or property based its location or condition;
- is likely to cause an obstruction or hazard to overhead or underground utility lines;
- is contributing to preservation and/or maintenance of any adjacent facility, including by accelerating or contributing to the deterioration of any such facility;
- has been damaged to the extent it is unsafe or unsightly in appearance;
- is located in a manner that interferes with construction or site-development; or
- is determined to warrant removal for any other appropriate reason.

Determinations regarding the above criteria should be made by the University's Director of Landscape Services; *provided, however*, that other appropriate facilities personnel and professionals may be consulted as appropriate.

PROCEDURES FOR TREE REMOVAL

Upon determining that a tree warrants consideration for removal in accordance with this policy, the Director of Landscape Services shall submit a written recommendation for the removal of such tree to the Associate Vice President of Facilities Management (the "Vice President of Facilities"), with respect any tree on the Auburn University campus, or to the Director of Physical Plants, with respect to at the Auburn Montgomery campus, who shall approve or disapprove the recommendation. In addition to identifying the location of each tree proposed for removal, the recommendation of the Director of Landscape Services shall also indicate whether a replacement tree should be planted (including the reasons for why a replacement tree is not needed if such determination is made) as well as the proposed located and species of any propose replacement tree.

Each campus shall maintain a "Tree Preservation Committee" to review requests for tree removals, and each such committee shall consist of three (3) individuals appointed by the University President, with respect to the Auburn University campus, or by the Chancellor of Auburn Montgomery, with respect to the Auburn Montgomery campus. Tree removal requests described in the preceding paragraph shall be submitted to the appropriate Tree Preservation Committee who shall then review and make a decision upon each such request. Each Tree Preservation Committee is authorized to hold review meetings in-person or by telephone or internet conference, as appropriate based on the relevant circumstances. If a Tree Preservation Committee decides in favor of removal of any tree, in each case acting pursuant to the written, majority decision of such committee, it shall forward it's decision to the University President who may then (a) authorize the removal of such tree and the planting of any replacement trees, as applicable, or (b) overrule such decision, in which case the relevant tree shall not be removed.

PROCEDURES FOR TREE REPLACEMENT AND OTHER TREE PLANTINGS

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, it shall be the general policy of the University to plant a replacement tree following the removal of any tree unless there is good reason exists for not doing so. The location and species of any tree planted on University property – whether in replacement of a tree that has been removed or otherwise – shall be done only in accordance with the applicable Master Landscaping Plan. In all cases, particular care should be taken to avoid the planting of any tree that would interfere with the applicable Campus Master Plan, including any such interference with current or future designated or proposed building sites, utility locations, or street locations.

EXCEPTIONS TO POLICY

While this policy shall be followed in the vast majority of cases, unique circumstances may occasionally arise warranting exceptions or deviations from this policy including, without limitation, situations where the safety or preservation of persons or facilities require immediate removal (e.g., trees at imminent risk of falling onto buildings, trees impacted by storm systems or other natural disasters, etc.). Without limiting the foregoing, no additional approval or authorization shall be required under this policy to remove a tree which was recently planted in accordance with this policy but which has failed to survive; *provided, however*, that a new tree of the same species must be promptly planted in substantially the same location as the removed tree.

ADOPTED: March 26, 1990
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