CITY OF WHITTIER

PARKWAY TREE TIPS

Parks Department
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Did You Know…

The City of Whittier is known for its urban forest. Trees beautify the City and enhance the quality of life for all residents. The National Arbor Day Foundation has recognized our City as a Tree City, USA since 1984 because of the care we provide for our trees. The purpose of the "Parkway Tree Manual" is to provide guidelines for the preservation and protection of the City's urban forest as established in the **Ordinance, WMC 12.40.**

Mission of the Parkway Tree Tips

The purpose of these tips is to briefly review the City's policy for the planting, trimming, and removal of all trees on City parkways and right-of-ways. These specifications are based on National standards for tree care set by the International Society of Arboriculture, the National Arborist Association and the American National Standards Institute.

Parkway Defined

Typically, a parkway is the strip of property between the curb and sidewalk or, in the absence of a sidewalk, from the curb to assigned width, which varies by street in which the City had the right-of-way for street tree planting, utilities, etc. Call the City for actual parkway width for a specific address. The **Municipal Code 8.24.007**, Duty of Property Owner, states a property owner's obligation is to maintain the right-of-way (parkway).

Parkway Tree Index

It is important that the selection and maintenance of trees contribute to and support the local character of a particular site. The Parkway Tree Index-Master Plan was developed to guide future planning for tree planting in the parkways throughout the City, taking into consideration site tolerance, soil types, locally indigenous species, mature height/width, overhead utility lines, and a number of other criteria.

Parkway Tree Ordinance

It is the duty of the Parks Department to oversee the planting and maintenance of all parkway trees. The City has the authority, per **Municipal Code 12.40**, to require residents and property owners to apply for permission to plant, trim, or remove any tree within the parkway.

12.40.030- Planting

Trees planted in the parkway become public property and the responsibility of the City. Therefore, any resident who wishes to plant a tree in the parkway is <u>required</u> to discuss their plans with the Parks Department. The Director has the authority to instruct the property owner to remove all unauthorized trees planted in the parkway.

12.40.040- Trimming or Removing

No person shall cut, trim, prune, plant, remove, injure, or interfere with any tree in the parkway without obtaining a permit from the Parks Department, which is issued at the director's discretion.

12.40.050- Permits

Planting- A property owner may request, permission in writing, to plant a tree in the parkway. The request may be granted if it meets the criteria set forth in the Parkway Tree Manual and is not in conflict with the Parkway Tree Index.

Trimming- All parkway trees are trimmed a minimum of once every 6 years. Property owners may call or write to the Parks Department to request their parkway tree to be trimmed. The Tree Maintenance Supervisor will inspect the tree and determine if it is within the criteria to warrant a trim. He will contact the property owner to advise them of his findings.

If the Supervisor determines the tree can wait to be trimmed at the regular trim cycle, the homeowner has the option to request a permit to trim the tree at their own expense. The permit requires that the trimming be completed by a licensed certified arborist, following current ISI standards, and inspected by the City Tree Maintenance Supervisor.

Removal- Tree removal permits are only granted if the tree is dead, deemed a hazard (as outlined in the guidelines of the Parkway Tree Manual) or if all mitigation measures have been exhausted. The City is responsible for posting and performing all removals.

Reasons That Are Not Valid For Removal

1. Leaves clogging gutters or a nuisance and have to be raked
2. Messy fruit
3. Roots clogging sewer (unless all options have been exhausted)
4. Hardscape (See Hazardous Condition Removal)

12.40.090 Making Attachments

It is illegal to nail, wire, rope, or use any other device whatsoever to attach signs, lights, swings, etc. to a parkway tree.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Can the tree be topped?*
   The practice of topping trees is very damaging to the tree, therefore, not allowed on any City tree.

2. *The tree is messy; can it be trimmed (or removed)?*
   The City does not trim for sap, bloom dropping or any other debris, and if the tree is healthy, it cannot be removed.

3. *Can I cut back the surface roots in my lawn?*
   If you feel you have a surface root issue, contact the Parks Department for the Tree

Supervisor to inspect the area and advise how far back you can trim the roots without compromising the integrity of the tree.

4. *Can the tree be removed because the sidewalk is lifting?*
   Usually not. There are several mitigation measures the City can use. The Parks Supervisor will inspect the sidewalk and forward the repair request to the Street Department.

5. *Tree roots are in my plumbing causing a backup.*
   Sewer issues are handled through Public Works. For full details contact them at 562/464-3510.

Emergency Number for limbs/trees down after 5 p.m., on weekends or holidays, is 562/695-5214 (the Pumping Plant).

*a copy of the manual can be provided if one calls 562/464-3375