

(August 2017)

Municipality of Whitehouse

Public Tree Protection During Construction Policy

Rationale

New development and on-going improvements to our community's infrastructure often dictate construction near public trees. These trees represent one of our greatest assets because they boost real estate values, mitigate storm water runoff, moderate temperatures, and remove air pollutants. Surprisingly, trees are the only Municipality assets that appreciate in value with age. Therefore, protecting these valuable resources from construction damage makes fiscal sense. Evidence of tree damage from construction may not be obvious, especially if this involves the tree's root system. It can take a season or even years to appear because stress on the root system only slowly manifests itself in aerial limbs and leaves. Once the damage is obvious, it is often too late to reverse the effects and save the tree. Therefore, the Municipality has adopted this policy on construction around existing public trees.

DISTANCE FROM TREES

1. For trees measuring twelve (12) inches DBH (Diameter at Breast Height) or less, soil excavation work or root cutting shall not occur closer than four (4) feet from the trunk of the tree.
2. For trees measuring greater than twelve (12) inches DBH, soil excavation work or root cutting shall not occur closer than a distance equal to three (3) times the DBH from the trunk of the tree.
3. For multi-trunk trees, soil excavation work or root cutting shall not occur closer to the trunk of the tree than a distance of three (3) times the diameter of the trunk cluster, measured at the narrowest point between ground level and breast height.

ROOT PROTECTION

4. If cutting of roots is necessary after complying with 1, 2, and 3 above, roots must be cut sharply and cleanly. Do not paint or treat the wound. The contractor shall water the affected tree thoroughly using five (5) gallons of water for every one (1) inch of tree DBH, and provide the information on the location of the affected tree or trees to the Public Service Director or a designated Municipality representative.

Soil Compaction Prevention Zone

5. No construction equipment shall be parked and no construction materials such as sand, soil or gravel shall be stored on the surface of the unpaved areas within the drip line (outermost reach of the branches) of the tree.

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SIDEWALKS

6. Before the pouring or setting of new sidewalks near public trees, the contractor shall lay a two (2) inch thick sublayer of clean, 2 inch crushed stone for a minimum length of eight (8) feet with the tree trunk opposite the midpoint. (see diagram)
7. The existing grade under the drip line of the tree shall not be raised by the project unless existing roots require a "ramped up" style. Then, the gravel will be laid atop the roots at grade resulting in the sidewalk being above grade when it hardens. Top soil will be filled in to make a safe, gradual bank from the edge of the new walk down to the pre-existing grade.