



GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**PARKS AND RECREATION
DEPARTMENT**

DISTRICT TREE POLICY

DISTRICT TREE POLICY

PART I

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GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DISTRICT TREE POLICY

RATIONALE

Gore District Council's District Tree Policy specifies those principles, policies and objectives regarding Council's ongoing protection and management of the District's tree resources.

The District Tree Policy:

- Outlines the Council's commitment to managing trees as a valued asset of the District
- Defines the benefits of trees both to the environment and to people
- Recognises the ecological benefits of remnant and regenerating native vegetation on Council owned lands, as well as exotic plantings
- Makes a commitment to encouraging widespread planting which defines and enhances the District's unique landscape character
- Ensures trees are a high priority in the new and changing landscapes of the urban areas
- Re-affirms the Council's commitment to the protection and management of trees on both public and private land through tree protection provisions in the District Plan
- Recognises the increasing importance of the public tree resource with increasing urban intensification
- Provides a mandate for the District Council's involvement in both the direct management of and indirect advocacy for trees as an integral component of the urban and rural environments which comprise the District.

Within District Tree Policy Part II Appendices clarification of the relationship between the District Tree Policy and the District Plan is given in Appendix II E - The Role of the District Tree Policy in Relation to the District Plan.

COMPOSITION OF THE DISTRICT TREE POLICY

The District Tree Policy is in two parts.

The **District Tree Policy - Part I** is a public policy document, specifying those principles, policies and objectives which guide the Council's ongoing protection and management of the District's tree resources.

The **District Tree Policy - Part II Appendices** contains additional information to support the policies defined in the District Tree Policy - Part I and serves as a working document for Council officers.

FORMAT FOR DISTRICT TREE POLICY - PART I

The District Tree Policy comprises six sections:

Section **1.0 POLICY GUIDE** explains the layout and format of the Gore District Council District Tree Policy.

Section **2.0 INTRODUCTION** describes the Gore District Council's rationale in preparing the District Tree Policy.

Section **3.0 TREES - A VALUABLE ASSET** discusses aspects of tree management which the Council considers to be important. It covers:

- 3.1 Council's Guardianship Role
- 3.2 Trees in the Landscape
- 3.3 The Benefits Derived from Trees
- 3.4 The Difficulties with trees in the Urban Environment.

Section **4.0 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES** sets out all the Council policies in relation to tree management. It covers:

- 4.1 Tree Planting
- 4.2 Maintenance of Trees
- 4.3 Tree Removal
- 4.4 Consultation
- 4.5 Reserve Neighbours
- 4.6 Promotion and Education
- 4.7 Tree Evaluation and Assessment
- 4.8 Subdivision, Development and the District Plan.

Section **5.0 GLOSSARY** provides easily understood definitions of the technical or specific terms used in this document.

Section **6.0 APPENDIX** contains appendices which support and clarify the policy text.

1.0 POLICY GUIDE

Each paragraph throughout sections 2.0 INTRODUCTION and 3.0 TREES - A VALUABLE ASSET is numbered, for ease of reference.

A standard format has been adopted throughout section 4.0 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES of the District Tree Policy text, using the following framework:

TITLE OF SECTION

This text indicates the general topic

Objective subtitle

This text indicates the particular subject the objective covers

Objective number

This text defines the management aim (or goal) the Council seeks to achieve

Policy

This text clarifies the way in which the Council will achieve its management aims or which policies it will follow

Explanation

This text outlines why the Council considers the objectives and policies are necessary

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Gore District Council District Tree Policy addresses issues relating to the recognition, strategic planning, management and long-term continuity of the tree resource within Gore District. The policy relates directly to tree protection provisions defined within the Gore District Council District Plan.
- 2.2 The District Tree Policy has an important role in raising the awareness of the community in relation to the benefits of trees, their multiple functions and the ways in which they contribute to improving the condition of our environment.
- 2.3 The District Tree Policy applies to individual trees, groups of trees and areas of existing and regenerating bush on Council administered reserves, civic open spaces and other Council owned lands that fall within the jurisdiction of the Parks and and Recreation Manager. In addition the policy supports the regulatory provisions of the District Plan by establishing the Council's policies for the maintenance, management and advocacy of Protected Trees.
- 2.4 The District Tree Policy compliments Council's other reserve management plans.
- 2.5 The District Tree Policy will be reviewed after twelve months from the date of adoption and, thereafter, on a three-yearly basis.

3.0 TREES – A VALUABLE ASSET

3.1 Council's Guardianship Role

- 3.1.1 Gore District Council, as guardian and steward of the district's public tree resource, currently maintains some 2,300 street trees and countless specimen trees in parks, reserves and on other Council-owned lands. The Council takes a proactive approach, by regularly planting new trees on public land - primarily to maintain and replenish the numbers of street trees and specimen trees in parks and reserves. Council's Parks Department covers the care and maintenance of trees in the public domain, including contracting in arboricultural works related to the clearance of trees in close proximity to power lines and electrical assets and other structural features.
- 3.1.2 Gore District Council also provides for the management and protection of trees on public and private land through tree protection rules and provisions within its District Plan. A tree(s) can be protected:
- through the permitted standards in the District Plan
 - as a notable tree that is listed in the District Plan schedule
 - as a condition of resource consent.

3.2 Trees in the Landscape

- 3.2.1 Trees are an essential distinctive component within the landscape. Their dynamic, organic nature gives them an ephemeral character when considered against the overall long-term life of the District. The living nature of trees - and the need for continuity - makes the processes of replacement planting and ongoing planned renewal a critically important aspect of landscape management.
- 3.2.2 Whilst protecting trees is paramount to the principle of maintaining the quality of the present day landscape it should be recognised that trees are not everlasting permanent features. In order to avoid significant degradation of urban and rural tree cover it is necessary to maintain trees across a range of age classes.
- 3.2.3 Tree planting and management in streets, parks, reserves and Council-owned land throughout the district is vital to counterbalance the continuous changes occurring every day as a result of urban intensification, building development and roading improvements. Without such a cycle of replacement and renewal the incremental loss of trees will create temporary gaps and/or serious long-term reductions in tree cover. Such circumstances inevitably lead to the degradation of landscapes.
- 3.2.4 Planting and replenishment of trees by private citizens is valuable, resulting in constantly changing and improving private landscapes. The district's existing private property tree resource should not be relied upon to maintain the appearance of Gore District Council's urban and rural landscapes - only to augment it. A significant benefit in broadscale landscape improvements arises from well planned and co-ordinated public planting. Public and private plantings together combine to create tangible and enduring environmental and amenity benefits for the District.

3.2.5 Urban trees require specialised ongoing management in order to assist their survival in the highly-modified built environment. Urban environments are often high stress environments for trees, which have generally evolved in the more conducive natural growing environments of the forest, wetland or open plains. Trees under stress - be it from water deficit, soil compaction, low nutrient levels, air pollution, elevated air temperatures, altered light levels or physical damage - are more susceptible to pests and diseases and will frequently exhibit a shortened life span. As a significant asset of the Council the costs associated with maintaining an existing mature urban tree in healthy condition are economically preferable when compared to those of establishing new trees in the same location.

3.3 The Benefits Derived from Trees

3.3.1 Trees provide multiple benefits. These are generally summarised as aesthetic, environmental, climatological, ecological, economic and social factors. Trees can be used in our urban and rural landscapes to achieve substantial positive outcomes for the community and visitors alike.

3.3.2 The ability of trees to re-inforce the local identity and character of a place and to provide visual unity, softening the often harsh and sometimes visually chaotic built character of our urban environments, makes them an important tool in the urban design. In addition the natural and cultural heritage values of significant old trees provides an important depth of meaning and history within the landscape.

3.3.3 Trees also assist in modifying and ameliorating some of the less desirable aspects of urban environments - such as air pollution, noise, degraded water quality, water run-off, convected or reflected heat and wind exposure, and erosion.

3.3.4 Trees provide substantial benefits in relation to the ecological health and sustainability of our urban built environments. They provide habitat for our important indigenous insects and bird life. The air, water and nutrient exchange processes undertaken by trees are fundamental to human existence and the continuity of the food web which supports all life on earth. Urban trees improve the environment by absorbing, filtering and purifying the basic elements of air and water. Their continuous metabolic processes ameliorate the adverse effects of sun, wind, rain, dust, noise and pollution - softening the harshness of the urban environment, providing shade and reducing the energy needs and material consumption of the city.

3.4 The Difficulties with Trees in the Urban Environment

3.4.1 Trees may sometimes be seen as incompatible with the structural elements of the district, particularly the urban environment and can be considered to cause 'more trouble than they are worth'. Such opinions generally place little weight on the wide ranging values and benefits of urban trees, being more concerned with potential restrictions or constraints on infrastructure construction or property development.

3.4.2 It is undeniable that trees in urban locations can create problems of a physical nature, most commonly seen in the limitation of development potential, interference with underground and overhead services, disruption to foundations, difficulty of access, leaf fall blocking drains and stormwater channels, traffic safety issues related to reduced visibility, excessive shading and obstruction of views. Additionally, problems more of a social nature, such as safety at night and

disputes between neighbours, are also issues related to the effects of urban trees. In such circumstances it will be necessary to explore ways in which people and plants can co-exist.

- 3.4.3 Occasionally, trees in close association with buildings and services can cause genuine difficulties. However, with good planning, creative development design and the selection of appropriate species these perceived 'problems' are largely avoidable. Usually many of the adverse effects generated by trees are more than mitigated by the substantial environmental and aesthetic benefits they provide.
- 3.4.4 Gore District Council's approach to street trees along roadsides has become one of rationalisation. Wherever street trees exist, or are proposed, the potential conflict with utilities and roading assets is assessed prior to any decision to retain, maintain or remove.
- 3.4.5 Strong community interest in environmental issues and general support for the provision of green residential and urban amenity means that, more than ever, Gore District Council must strike the appropriate balance between the management and protection of valuable vegetation and the avoidance of real and perceived detrimental effects associated with trees.

4.0 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR MANAGEMENT OF TREES

4.1 TREE PLANTING

This section contains policies relating to tree planting principles and specific policies regarding Council tree planting on streets and for bush remnants. It applies to all trees planted on recreation reserves, civic open space and other Council land.

4.1.1 Tree Planting Principles

Objective 4.1.1.1

Council tree planting will ensure the existing distinctive landscape characters of the District is re-inforced, by primarily using species considered appropriate for the area by the Parks and Recreation Manager.

Policy 4.1.1.1 (a)

Existing district-wide planting themes established for the urban areas of the District shall be implemented. The long-term cost impacts associated with ongoing maintenance shall be considered.

Policy 4.1.1.1(b)

An emphasis shall be placed on ensuring a diversity of species suitable for the particular area.

Policy 4.1.1.1(c)

Local character species shall be used to provide a backdrop and framework for the planting of a range of selected species, while enhancing open space.

Explanation

Within the District there are distinctive landscape character areas that are reflected by the nature of its vegetation. District wide planting themes have been established for the urban areas of the District. Appropriate plant selection will build on these unique identities by using the most appropriate plant associations for the site.

Objective 4.1.1.2

The existing botanical diversity resulting from the mix of trees shall be preserved and enhanced for both local and visitor interest.

Policy 4.1.1.2(a)

Botanical collections shall be continuously developed through planting to form the basis of a district wide arboretum.

Explanation

Parks and reserves should be seen as an extension to the Gore town belt,, broadening the vegetation gene pool and allowing a wider use and monitoring of new species. There are already developed tree collections and the opportunity exists to extend these further.

Objective 4.1.1.3

A long term tree framework of substance and value shall be maintained throughout the District, including local native species where appropriate, to promote the multiple gains described in 3.3 The Benefits Derived from Trees.

Policy 4.1.1.3(a)

Council shall plant potentially large trees wherever space permits, except in floodplains and where there is a potential risk to safety.

Policy 4.1.1.3(b)

Council shall plant trees of longevity and heritage value incorporating, where possible, nursery stock material specially propagated from existing notable and/or character trees.

Explanation

There is a trend towards smaller residential lots as a result of infill subdivision and cross leasing. This has resulted in a reduction in large trees in urban areas of the District, as residential sections are not large enough to contain substantial trees. Therefore, planting of trees which grow to ultimately large proportions will be implemented, wherever space permits, to ensure that the urban areas still contain substantial trees of long term value.

Objective 4.1.1.4

To provide distinctive landscapes of mature trees throughout urban areas (other than in areas specifically acknowledged as tree-less open space landscapes).

Policy 4.1.1.4(a)

Urban tree collections shall be established on reserves that are difficult to manage through grazing or mowing.

Policy 4.1.1.4(b)

Council shall develop urban tree collections, with an emphasis on factors such as:

- *Longevity*
- *Heritage value (natural and built)*
- *Local character (natural and built)*
- *Low maintenance*
- *Fast establishing species*
- *Wildlife habitat*

Explanation

Currently, the Council has some reserve areas that are maintained by grazing or irregular mowing. Many are difficult to manage this way and those suited to planting will be scheduled for conversion to urban tree collections. A strategy will be developed that identifies priorities, funding and ensures local consultation. Opportunities exist to develop these sites by integrating a high value tree framework with open space to create the potential for passive recreational values in the future. Those particular open space areas deemed to be characterised as primarily tree-less landscapes will not be considered for tree planting.

Objective 4.1.1.5

To reduce the necessity for intensive maintenance of trees.

Policy 4.1.1.5(a)

Council shall give preference to planting species that:

- *are pest and disease resistant*
- *provide maximum environmental/ecological benefits*
- *have a proven track record for establishment and sustainability*
- *require less maintenance.*

Policy 4.1.1.5(b)

The Parks and Recreation Manager shall ensure that:

- *Quality plant stock is used*
- *Standardised specifications and techniques and practises are used to install plant materials*
- *The correct species is chosen in relation to the limitations of the site.*

Explanation

Choosing the most appropriate species for the conditions and particular aspects of the site can reduce long term maintenance problems. By using quality plant stocks, planted effectively and appropriately for the site, many long term maintenance liabilities can be avoided.

Objective 4.1.1.6

To increase the awareness and use of local native plants and locally developed plant selections.

Policy 4.1.1.7

Local native species and locally developed plant selections and cultivars shall be featured where there is opportunity to do this well.

Explanation

Otago and Southland contains many reputable private and public gardens and has been associated with several notable plant breeders. Opportunities exist to promote the use of local native species and developed plant selections and their cultivars and, in particular, to feature these during promotions such as the Rhododendron Festival.

Objective 4.1.1.8

To ensure that design, planning and cost impacts are considered prior to planting.

Policy 4.1.1.8(a)

The designs for new tree planting shall be based on:

- *The relationship of trees with their surroundings in terms of character, form, amenity and ecological value*
- *The foreseeable effects of trees in relation to shade, views, services and potential damage to built structures*
- *The scale of trees in terms of built structures in relation to potential size and numbers of trees used in the design*
- *The outcome, where applicable, of any request for service relating to street tree planting which is accepted by Parks and Recreation Manager*
- *The cost of successfully establishing new planted areas and the ongoing costs associated with maintenance.*

Explanation

Trees are dynamic - they naturally change and develop over time. There are a many inter-related factors which must be considered for all plantings. The design and planning of plantings creates a range of opportunities to address the constantly changing characteristics of plantings and the needs of potential new planting sites.

4.1.2 Street Tree Planting

Objective 4.1.2.1

To enhance the streetscape of streets within the District through the planting of trees, where practical.

Policy 4.1.2.1(a)

Future tree plantings shall be concentrated in streets where:

- *there is sufficient public support*
- *there is sufficient space to accommodate root zone development (the minimum requirement is 1.2m. wide)*
- *street trees are unlikely to cause significant long term management problems (such as potential conflict with overhead wires, underground services, traffic visibility and alternative road plans)*
- *trees will enhance the quality of the streetscape.*

Policy 4.1.2.1(b)

The actual placement of individual street trees shall be based on the following matters:

- *the overall design of the street planting*
- *the proximity to and likely effect on overhead wires*
- *the proximity to and likely effect on underground services*
- *the effect on vehicular and pedestrian access and sight visibility*
- *the possibility of alternative roading plans such as road widening and intersection improvements.*

Policy 4.1.2.1(c)

Consultation with local residents and property owners will be undertaken, wherever this is appropriate, before any major street tree planting is undertaken. In commercial areas wider public consultation, with business owners for instance, will be undertaken if necessary.

Consideration will be given to written requests from residents not to have a street tree outside their property, and a decision will be based on how critical the tree is to the overall design for the street.

Policy 4.1.2.1(d)

Where street planting is impractical or inappropriate Council shall encourage residents to plant appropriate trees on private land adjoining the street frontage by providing suitable plant material and advice. The responsibility for the maintenance of these trees remains with the landowner.

Policy 4.1.2.1(e)

Street trees plantings shall be regularly reviewed, through standard contract management procedures and programmed inspections.

Policy 4.1.2.1(f)

The Planning / Roading teams shall liaise with Parks and Recreation Manager with regard to the creation of tree planting opportunities during the subdivision process. Considerations will include:

- *centre islands or median strips wide enough for tree planting*
- *wider grass berms*
- *variations in road alignment*
- *the use of "set backs", especially in commercial zones*
- *maintaining road safety and activity clearance.*

Policy 4.1.2.1(g)

Unauthorised planting of trees by residents on street berms shall be actively discouraged.

Explanation

While street trees can significantly contribute to the improvement of the urban environment and enhance residential development they are also the cause of regular public objection and may be expensive to maintain. It is essential to only carry out new plantings where there is sufficient local support and then to ensure that trees are chosen and placed where there is a high chance of success with limited long term management problems.

The current trend of rationalising low value high maintenance trees and redirecting the funding to developing high value low maintenance plantings will be a priority.

Council will also seek to enhance streetscapes through encouraging private landowners to plant trees on their properties and by liaising with developers to create improved planting opportunities through alternative street designs.

4.2 MAINTENANCE OF TREES

This section covers general tree maintenance policies and specific policies regarding maintenance of trees growing upon lands as defined in section 2.3

4.2.1 Acceptable pruning and maintenance practices

Objective 4.2.1.1

To promote maintenance of trees in a safe, healthy and natural form.

Policy 4.2.1.1(a)

The Council shall generally not carry out topping of trees.

EXCEPTIONS

There are circumstances where it shall be necessary to remove the top growth of trees in the following circumstances:

- (a) Where trees are near power lines in preference to removing the trees altogether. (However, if identified as low value and high maintenance (refer Policy 4.3.1.1a) (9th bullet point) some consideration may be given to removal)*
- (b) Where trees are considered a safety hazard and removal of the upper crown is deemed acceptable in order to alleviate the hazard and retain the tree(s)*
- (c) Where trees interfere with shipping navigation, radio or telecommunications facilities*
- (d) Where trees are undermining a flood protection or erosion control structure*
- (e) Where a group of trees constitutes a shelterbelt or hedge.*

Policy 4.2.1.1(b)

Acceptable pruning methods, such as natural target pruning, crown lifting and crown thinning shall be used to maintain trees in as natural a form as possible and to maintain and enhance their amenity values.

Policy 4.2.1.1(c)

Work on trees shall be carried out to recognised and accepted contemporary arboricultural standards, confirming current industry practices and NZAA and ISA guidelines.

Policy 4.2.1.1(d)

The Parks and Recreation Manager has developed a list of 'approved arborists'. Only approved arborists shall be contracted to carry out tree maintenance work on Council trees in order to maintain industry acceptable standards of workmanship.

Policy 4.2.1.1(e)

Plant pest and disease control measures shall focus on known aggressive decay organisms which have the capacity to debilitate or kill trees.

Policy 4.2.1.1(f)

Poor tree health shall be minimised by the application of sound arboricultural practices and appropriate care strategies to prevent pest and disease establishment.

Policy 4.2.1.1(g)

Priority for work shall be based on:

- (a) health and structural safety of the tree*
- (b) essential service clearance*
- (c) form pruning for desirable clearance and amenity effects.*

Explanation

The Council will maintain trees in accordance with internationally recognised standards. Appropriate tree care maintenance programmes and strategies will be applied wherever necessary.

All pruning operations will be undertaken using principles defined as CODIT, Natural Target Pruning and other recognised pruning methods.

Topping is internationally recognised as unsound arboricultural practice for the following reasons:

- (a) Vigorous regrowth from adventitious shoots at the site of each pruning cut results in a denser canopy developing in a short space of time. This causes excessive shading, often greater than that previously experienced.*
- (b) The points of attachment of new sucker growth have an inherent weakness and, therefore, a tendency to "break out" as they develop in size. A safety issue is created through this type of pruning.*

- (c) *Topping cuts are more prone to decay forming at the wound site. This significantly reduces the health, stability and longevity of the tree.*

Only Council approved arborists shall be used to ensure that all work on trees is carried out to recognised arboricultural standards. This approach will promote the health and natural form of trees.

4.2.4 Interference of Trees to Property and Services

Objective 4.2.4.1

To maintain trees under the jurisdiction of Parks and Recreation Department and/or specified within the tree protection provisions of the District Plan so as to avoid potential damage to property or services.

Policy 4.2.4.1(a)

When notified of damage caused by a public tree to property or services, practical steps shall be taken to mitigate these effects.

Policy 4.2.4.1(b)

Where trees are overhanging private property appropriate pruning shall be carried out by the Council to reduce the encroachment, as far as practicably possible.

Policy 4.2.4.1(c)

Trees on arterial routes shall be pruned or removed to provide clearance where they impede or obstruct access for pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Policy 4.2.4.1(d)

Trees shall not be significantly altered for specialist users such as building removal activities, if such pruning severely compromises the landscape character of the trees. Costs for any work carried out beyond normal maintenance to accommodate such activities shall be recovered from the specialist user.

Policy 4.2.4.1(e)

All reasonable effort shall be taken to clear street/reserve lights and minimise any reduction in light penetration resulting from obstruction by trees.

Policy 4.2.4.1(f)

If accepted arboricultural practices cannot resolve light/shadow areas the affected parties shall be encouraged to investigate street light relocations with the appropriate authority without bearing associated costs.

Policy 4.2.4.1(g)

A programme shall be initiated to ensure that tree growth is maintained away from power wires and electrical assets in accordance with the requirements of the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003.

Policy 4.2.4.1(h)

Pruning in the vicinity of overhead wires shall only be carried out by contractors approved by the Parks and Recreation Manager to undertake this work. Service line owners shall be consulted by the contractor regarding this work.

Explanation

These policies seek to avoid potential damage to property and services. Particularly within the street environments there will always be ongoing commitments to ensure that trees do not conflict with services such as wiring, drainage systems, footpaths, kerbing, vehicle and pedestrian movement and property security.

Trees planted beside or under power lines will be trimmed in order to comply with the safe clearance requirements of the approved Code of Practice and local power supplier. Wherever possible directional pruning methods will be used to remove branches growing towards power lines and to promote growth away from the lines.

Trees considered to be a safety hazard, or interfering with radio and/or telecommunications facilities, or undermining a flood protection or erosion control structure will be pruned or removed as deemed necessary.

It should be noted that all trees specified as Protected Trees are subject to the provisions of the District Plan, regardless of whether or not they are owned, administered or maintained by the Council.

4.3 TREE REMOVAL

This section covers general tree removal policies and specific tree removal policies regarding shading and loss of views and applies to all trees located on recreation reserves, civic open space and other Council land (except those areas identified in the exclusions) at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Manager or his/her representative.

4.3.1 General Tree Removal

Objective 4.3.1.1

To ensure that a consistent criteria is applied when considering removal of trees. Processes for the removal of trees which arise from requests for service are shown in Appendix I A and Appendix I B.

Policy 4.3.1.1(a)

Trees shall only be removed if pruning or other remedial work is not practically possible and for one of the following reasons:

The tree:

- *is dead, dying, diseased, decayed or disfigured with no realistic chance of recovery*
- *presents an immediate or potential danger to people or property, or is shown to be potentially a severe health or safety risk to neighbouring residents as identified by the Parks and Recreation Manager*
- *is causing uncontrollable structural damage to any street or utility service and remedial work to prevent further damage is impractical or greater than the value of the tree*
- *is encroaching into the carriageway in such a way that visibility is reduced or clearly causing a significant hazard and remedial work cannot mitigate the hazard without severely compromising or disfiguring the tree*
- *is inhibiting the growth, development or health of other trees of greater value*
- *was planted for revenue producing purposes and as a result is being harvested*
- *is inhibiting the proper management or maintenance of the reserve or other Council land*

- *is covered by the provisions given in policy 4.3.2.1*
- *is deemed by the Parks and Recreation Manager to be of low amenity value and is poorly sited or requires unduly high maintenance (such as in a location which conflicts with services)*
- *is clearly unsuitable for the site due to its long term potential to cause problems or the inappropriateness of the species in relation to the site*
- *is the subject of approval following a request for service in accordance with the processes shown in Appendix I A or Appendix I B (where either is applied).*

Note: Unless a tree (or trees) is assessed as immediately hazardous any significant tree removals shall require notification to the local community. See 4.4.1.2 (a).

EXCLUSIONS

The following trees are excluded from Policy 4.3.1.1(a) above:

- *Trees that fall into the category of Protected Trees in the District Plan*
- *Trees identified in a Reserve Management Plan for retention, as they represent an integral part of the reserve*
- *Trees that have been requested by private property owners to be assessed as Notable trees but have not yet been included in the District Plan.*

Policy 4.3.1.1(b)

“Trade-offs” that provide for long term quality replacement trees at the expense of more short term or lower value trees are to be encouraged, where such action will resolve tree related issues. Trade-offs may include replacement trees elsewhere on the site, at the agreement of the Parks and Recreation Manager or his/her representative.

Policy 4.3.1.1(c)

Trees shall not generally be removed for the following reasons (other than as stated in Policy 4.3.2.1(a)):

- *preservation of views*
- *shade*
- *leaf litter.*

Explanation

Parks and Recreation Manager receives requests from time to time to remove trees due to perceived nuisance created by trees. These policies provide a set of criteria that will be applied when requests for tree removal are received or tree removal is considered. Leaf litter will always be a problem, inherent with any trees in the urban landscape, but is not sufficient reason for the removal of a tree. However, as far as practicably possible, acceptable arboricultural pruning work may be carried out to mitigate the loss of views, shade and leaf litter experienced by adjoining property owners, provided that the health and value of the tree is not compromised.

4.3.2 Removal of those Council trees growing on Council property deemed to be causing substantial shading or loss of views

Objective 4.3.2.1

To ensure Council trees which result in shading or loss of views are only removed in circumstances where it can be demonstrated that planting occurred after the dwelling was developed and all reasonable efforts to mitigate these effects of the tree have been unsuccessful.

Policy 4.3.2.1(a)

Where Council trees are planted which, subsequently, unreasonably affect the views of a long term resident or significantly shade their property the Council shall:

- *manage the planting to reduce its impact on views and solar access but without compromising the value or integrity of the planting.*
- *refer all costs associated with removal applications or subsequent removal to the applicant unless the tree is found to be in an unhealthy state.*

Exclusions

The following trees are excluded from Policy 4.3.2.1(a);

- *Trees that fall into the category of Protected Trees in the District Plan*
- *Trees identified in a Reserve Management Plan for retention as they represent an integral part of the reserve*

- *Trees with a value equivalent to Category I Notable Tree (public consultation required) but not listed as a Notable Tree under the District Plan.*

Policy 4.3.2.1(b)

Where a mature tree, or stand of mature trees, exists prior to the arrival of a new resident in an adjoining property there is no requirement on Council to either remove or prune the tree(s) for views or shade on request. The tree(s) was a pre-existing condition before the new resident's occupation of the property.

Policy 4.3.2.1(c)

The Council shall only carry out pruning work beyond the growth that has occurred during the resident's occupation, or to remove the tree if deemed appropriate, where the resident can clearly demonstrate "loss of enjoyment." In this circumstance, if the resident accordingly derives some added value to their property, the resident shall be asked to contribute to the cost of the agreed pruning or removal work.

Explanation

As with leaf litter, reductions in views and shading may be outcomes associated with maturing tree plantings. Council's challenge is to manage these issues consistently and fairly, without compromising the District's tree resource. Approaches such as the careful plant placement of new trees, the ongoing maintenance pruning of trees and the consideration of removal of secondary trees may be carried out to attempt to resolve effects of shading and loss of views.

4.4 CONSULTATION

This section covers the Council's approach to consultation relating to tree management and maintenance, together with the process for handling enquiries regarding appeals concerning decisions relating to COUNCIL TREES. It outlines the mechanisms that Council shall use to address enquiries and the process for resolving appeals.

Exclusion

The following trees are excluded from Policy 4.4 below:

- *Trees that are protected through District Plan provisions.*

Objective 4.4.1.1

Council shall consult with affected parties with regard to proposed tree planting.

Policy 4.4.1.1(a)

Consultation with local residents and property owners will be undertaken, wherever this is appropriate, before any major street tree or reserve planting is undertaken. In commercial areas wider public consultation, with business owners for instance, will be undertaken if necessary. Refer to policy 4.1.2.1(c).

Objective 4.4.1.2

Council shall consult with affected parties with regard to proposed tree removal.

Policy 4.4.1.2(a)

Consultation with local residents and property owners will be undertaken, wherever this is appropriate, before any major tree removal is undertaken. In commercial areas wider public consultation, with business owners for instance, will be undertaken if necessary. Refer to policy 4.3.1.1.

Objective 4.4.1.3

Council shall ensure that consultation and observance of cultural protocols is undertaken where directed by tangata whenua on sites that contain waahi tapu.

Policy 4.4.1.3(a)

Waahi tapu sites include those sites identified in the District Plan. Additional sites on land within the scope of this policy that are identified as waahi tapu by the appropriate hapu or iwi are included in the policy.

Policy 4.4.1.3(b)

For each site observance will be given to the protocols of the tangata whenua.

Policy 4.4.1.3(c)

Consideration will be given to the operations of tree planting, tree maintenance and tree removal including any ground works. This may include guidance of how work may be conducted, dispersement of trimmings and induction and access to the site.

Objective 4.4.1.4

Enquires and appeals concerning trees will be dealt with through established processes that are consistently applied. See Appendix I A, Appendix I B, Appendix I C and Appendix I D.

Policy 4.4.1.4(a)

All external enquiries relating to trees under Parks and Recreation Department's jurisdiction shall be directed to the Council's Customer Relations Centre. The specific processes for dealing with any enquiry are given in Appendix I A, Appendix I B, Appendix I C and Appendix I D.

Policy 4.4.1.4(b)

Contractors undertaking works for Parks and Recreation Department are not authorised to directly represent the Council for public enquiries relating to trees, unless specifically delegated to do so by the Parks and Recreation Manager or his/her representative.

Policy 4.4.1.4(c)

The process by which a resident can appeal a decision concerning the maintenance of trees under Parks and Recreation Department's jurisdiction is:

- (a) The resident should raise the matter, in writing, with the Parks and Recreation Manager.
Where tree maintenance issues involve significant local or community interest the Council may enter into a consultation process to ensure that the wider community interest is considered*
- (b) If the resident is not satisfied with the Parks and Recreation Manager's decision they may then take the matter to Council, in writing, through the Operations Committee, who will determine a response in line with adopted policy.*

Explanation

There will always be differences of opinion when dealing with tree issues - between those who support and enjoy the benefits of trees and those who do not. This policy (Gore District Council District Tree Policy) provides a consistent approach to dealing with such issues and allows for the provision of a high value tree resource. Consultation with individuals and/or groups in the community will be undertaken wherever it is required, in order to provide information, advice and an opportunity to comment or participate. The observance of cultural protocols relating to trees on waahi tapu sites enable local tangata whenua to determine appropriate actions and responses by Council officers.

Processes for dealing with appeals are outlined, as in some instances applications for service delivery may be declined where they are inconsistent with approved policy.

4.5 RESERVE NEIGHBOURS

Objective 4.5.1.1

To minimise the adverse effects generated by trees on reserves on the amenity of adjacent properties.

Policy 4.5.1.1(a)

The Parks and Recreation Department shall take all reasonable steps to maintain a good neighbour relationship with adjacent landowners. However, where appropriate, the demands of neighbours shall not take precedence over the desires of the local community.

Policy 4.5.1.1(b)

To obtain a clearer local picture of significant issues, local opinion may be canvassed before the Parks and Recreation Manager makes the final decision on a course of action. Potentially controversial or significant works shall be reported to Council.

Explanation

Neighbouring property owners often raise issues regarding adverse effects of trees in reserves. The Parks and Recreation Department seeks to maintain good neighbour relationships with landowners by minimising adverse effects of trees in reserves on neighbours. However, a wider public consultation process will be considered if necessary.

4.6 PROMOTION AND EDUCATION

Objective 4.6.1.1

To foster public interest, awareness and guardianship of the value of trees in reserves.

Policy 4.6.1.1(a)

Encourage the community to become involved in tree planting and maintenance of selected reserves, through consultation.

Policy 4.6.1.1(b)

Promote the benefits of trees and the added importance of "the right tree planted in the right place".

Policy 4.6.1.1(c)

Develop, maintain and promote a register of tree collections throughout the district.

Policy 4.6.1.1(d)

Promote the Council's trees during regional and national events (such as the Gore Rhododendron Festival).

Explanation

The value of the Council's tree resource is often taken for granted by those who are routinely amidst it. However, it is a very significant landscape feature which gives an immediate impression to visitors to the District. A healthy and well maintained treescape is a reflection of a caring community. It is also a natural asset which is easily lost through poor management and lack of appropriate policy. Many of the issues related to people's dissatisfaction with trees are attributable to a lack of awareness regarding the overall value of trees and their benefits. Policies that educate and inform the public about the positive attributes of trees are an important component of Parks and Recreation Department policies.

4.7 TREE EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Objective 4.7.1.1

Consistent standards will be used to evaluate the health, condition and monetary value of trees, or any potential hazards.

Policy 4.7.1.1(a)

The RNZIH Tree Evaluation System shall be used as the standard for assessing the health, condition and monetary value of trees, unless superseded by a more appropriate method.

Explanation

There are situations where it is necessary to attribute a monetary value to a tree. These situations usually arise when the removal of a tree is proposed. It is important that in these situations the monetary value of the tree is assessed using a consistent evaluation system. The RNZIH Tree Evaluation System is currently the most appropriate nationally recognised assessment system. Where trees are considered unsafe and represent a hazard to people or property a consistent evaluation system will be used.

4.8 SUBDIVISION, DEVELOPMENT AND THE DISTRICT PLAN

Objective 4.8.1.1

To preserve Protected and Significant trees on Council and private property that are threatened by subdivision or developments. Gore District Council also provides for the management and protection of trees on public and private land through tree protection rules and provisions within its District Plan. A tree(s) can be protected:

- *through the permitted standards in the District Plan*
- *as a notable tree that is listed in the District Plan schedule*
- *and/or as an amenity tree within the Gore CBD (excepting excluded species)*
- *as a condition of resource consent.*

Policy 4.8.1.1(a)

The Planning and Roading team shall liaise with Parks and Recreation Manager with regard to the protection of Significant trees during the resource consent process.

Policy 4.8.1.1(b)

Trees on reserves shall be listed as Notable Trees in the Gore District Plan where they meet the Notable Tree criteria, and where they:

- *are considered at risk due to potential threats from development nearby*
- *are deemed to be particularly significant.*

Explanation

There are a number of provisions for the protection of trees within the District Plan.

The subdivision and consent process within the District Plan provides opportunity to assess vegetation on development sites and to attempt to retain or work around trees identified to be of significance. In many cases an assessment will identify vegetation of little significance that may be removed in exchange for retention of any significant trees on the site or mitigation by replacement trees. The intention is not to place unrealistic expectations on the developer to retain vegetation of little value, but to provide assistance on how best to integrate the development and any significant vegetation on the site.

Currently Council provides assistance for Notable Trees on private and public land to promote health and safety of those trees, at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Manager.

4.9 UNAUTHORISED REMOVAL OF TREES

Objective 4.9.1

- *To actively encourage criminal proceedings against any person(s) found deliberately damaging or destroying any Council owned tree*
- *To actively seek all costs associated with damage or destruction of Council owned trees by way of 'accident' ie out of control vehicle damages tree.*
- *Trees protected under the District Plan, if deliberately damaged will be dealt with under the terms and conditions set out in the Resource Management Act 1993.*

Explanation

From time to time residents have taken matters into their own hands and unlawfully removed Council owned trees in streets and reserve areas. These incidences will be treated as acts of wilful vandalism.

5.0 GLOSSARY

The following definitions are given for words and terms found within the texts and appendices of the District Tree Policy.

<i>Adventitious (adventive)</i>	Growth that arises from (normally) suppressed buds, or from those plants which invade or inhabit a site first.
<i>Amenity value</i>	Provides positive features and qualities in the landscape.
<i>Approved arborist</i>	A suitably qualified person who can demonstrate proven experience, competency and ability in the field of arboriculture.
<i>Arboriculture</i>	The planting and care of trees.
<i>Arterial routes</i>	Route or road of regional or district strategic importance as identified on the GDC District Plan Maps.
<i>Bollards</i>	Post of fixture that serves to protect trees from vehicle and environmental damage.
<i>Branch collar</i>	The raised rim of bark tissue at the connection point between a branch or stem.
<i>Cambium zone</i>	The area of dividing tissue within a tree found between the outer bark and the woody stem.
<i>Canopy</i>	The extent of the foliage cover of any tree or plant.
<i>Carriageway</i>	Area designated for vehicular movement.
<i>Circumferential</i>	The area within a circumference.
<i>Climax vegetation</i>	Vegetation which will ultimately form the canopy of the forest area or final stage of succession.
<i>CODIT</i>	An acronym for the term Compartmentalisation Of Decay In Trees, meaning a two part descriptive model on the process of decay in a trees.
<i>Co-dominant stems</i>	Stems of similar size originating from the same position on the main stem.
<i>Compaction</i>	Ground that has hardened/compressed as a result of constant wear by environmental or mechanical means.
<i>Containerised plants</i>	Plants that have been grown in pots or receptacles in a nursery environment.
<i>Covenant</i>	Legal mechanism that provides agreement to protect a feature.
<i>Crown lifting</i>	Removing the lower branches of a tree to provide clearance for buildings, vehicles, pedestrians, services and vistas. Lifting is carried out to no greater extent than 1/3 the overall height of the tree in proportion to the tree's canopy.

<i>Crown thinning</i>	Removal of dead, declining and secondary growth to increase air movement and light through the crown. Thinning is carried out to no greater extent than 20% of the canopy in proportion to its size.
<i>Cultivar</i>	Variations of plant species specifically selected and produced by people.
<i>Directional pruning</i>	Removal of branches at the stem to encourage overall growth away from a feature or fixture.
<i>Ecological</i>	Modes of life, habits and relationships of living organisms and their environment.
<i>Ecosourcing</i>	Replanting with only locally occurring natural genetic plants materials.
<i>Encroachment</i>	A situation where the public recreational use or appreciation of the reserve is reduced or obstructed by the private use of the reserve. Alternatively when roots or branches of a tree grow over or into neighbouring property.
<i>Endemic</i>	Refers to a plant found only in a particular area.
<i>Environment</i>	The physical and biological factors within a given site.
<i>Exotic</i>	Plant or animal introduced from another country.
<i>Formative pruning</i>	Pruning a tree to enhance the branch structure in relation to a tree's long term shape and structural strength.
<i>Gro-tubes</i>	Tree shelter designed to protect plants from stock.
<i>Growth points</i>	The position from which growth occurs.
<i>Guardianship</i>	Providing for the fostering and care of a feature or entity.
<i>Hazardous tree</i>	A tree which has physical, structural and/or biological defects that has been identified or evaluated as representing danger to life or property.
<i>Indigenous</i>	Plant or animal that occurs naturally to an area.
<i>ISA</i>	International Society of Arboriculture. A world-wide organisation representing professional arborists.
<i>ISA Tree Hazard Evaluation Method</i>	Standard evaluation method that identifies the hazard rating of trees.
<i>Landscape values</i>	Those features of the land that make up the wider visual appreciation of an area when viewed as a whole, such as trees, vegetation, water, landform.
<i>Local Character species</i>	Those species that define the local character of the district.
<i>Local pioneer species</i>	Plants that establish easily and provide the first tree cover, occurring naturally in the district.

Long term value	Providing positive and useful effects over a long period. Usually over 50 years.
Loss of enjoyment	Term of the Property Law Amendment Act 1975 that refers to an adverse effect on property and enjoyment of it.
Mitigate	Moderate or neutralise the effects of an activity.
Mulch	The woody debris arising from the chipping of trees and plants, that can be used to suppress weed growth and enhance nutrient and micro organism activity around desirable plantings.
Non endemic native plants	Native plants that are not found naturally in the Southland Ecological Region.
Notable tree	A tree or group of trees that are considered significant for their historical, botanical, landscape, amenity or cultural values and are identified as such in the Gore District Plan.
Arboricultural Operations Manual	The operational instruction manual that sets out the standard method for contractors to follow when commissioned to carry out arboricultural work.
NTP	An abbreviation for the term Natural Target Pruning - a model demonstrating the proper position and sequence of cuts to be made when pruning.
NZAA	New Zealand Arboricultural Association. A national organisation representing professional arborists.
Photosynthate	A substance (usually sugars and carbohydrates) derived from photosynthesis - the complex process of conversion of light energy to chemical energy.
Pioneer species	One of the first naturally arising plant species to appear on any landscape.
Pollarding	A pruning method of training branches, used on some large-growing trees, where the tree is pruned to the same growth points (annually or regularly), to maintain the crown to a particular size.
Proactive	Activity carried out before it becomes a necessity.
Protected trees	A protected tree is either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Nominated through the permitted standards in the District Plan- A notable tree that is listed in the District Plan schedule- Nominated as a condition of resource consent.
Reactive	Activity that is carried out in direct response to an enquiry or observation.
Reduction pruning	The shortening and/or removal of select branches within a tree to reduce the overall size of the tree canopy.
Regenerative pruning	The removal and/or pruning of branches or stems to encourage a plant's recovery from damage or stress.

Remedial pruning	Pruning to correct imbalances or deformities in tree shape and form, to reduce duplication in branch formations, to remove damaged tissue (includes deadwood).
Remnant	The natural vegetation remaining from an original tree stand or plant colony which has been modified.
RNZIH evaluation method	A national standard (compiled by the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture) used to assess the contribution of a tree(s) within the landscape, using a points system to determine health, condition and monetary value.
Root ball	The mass of roots surrounding and from a tree or plant, usually x10-12 the trunk diameter (measured outwards from the trunk) and to a depth determined by root density.
Root grafting	The inter-connected growth of roots from two or more trees, that allows potential sharing of water and nutrients.
Root zone	The area covered by the full extent to which roots spread from a tree(s).
Secondary growth branches	All growth arising within a plant or tree that is secondary to the main branch/stem framework.
Short term value	The limited contribution, in terms of lifespan and/or beneficial attributes, of a tree or plant within any landscape. The time scale is usually less than 50 years duration.
Significant tree	A tree identified as having long term life expectancy and/or high amenity value.
Soil conditioners	Additives (synthetic or organic) that increase the capacity of soils to function as a healthy medium for plant growth.
Soil pan	A layer(s) within the soil which is impervious, inhibiting the movement of water and air.
Solar access	The availability or penetration of sunlight.
Structural safety	The inherent capacity of a tree or plant, observed by examination of its structure, shape and form, to withstand wind loading and/or other physical force in order to resist failure, breakage or collapse.
Sucker growth	Fleshy shoots and growth arising from below a graft union or from the base of a tree or plant.
Suppressed growth/branches	Branches or stems under severe stress due to competition for light or nutrient. Usually these branches or stems will die in the short term.
Sustainability	The capacity to endure or maintain any given level of activity or appearance.

<i>Topping</i>	A lay person's term meaning the removal of the head or top most section of a tree or plant. Topping is not an accepted professional arboricultural practice.
<i>Trade-off</i>	A negotiated outcome that provides benefit to all parties and may mean limited compromise.
<i>Tree</i>	Tree means a perennial woody plant at least 6 metres in height at maturity, having an erect stem/s or trunk/s and a well-developed crown or leaf canopy.
<i>Trees isolation systems</i>	Built structures or manufactured products that isolate a tree from potential damage (such as a protective cage or ground-level surround that prevent damage from stock or mechanical damage.
<i>Urban tree collection</i>	A formal planting of specialised botanical or feature interest. Usually designed, recorded and maintained as a long term permanent asset.
<i>Vista</i>	A view, view shaft or framed view point.

6.0 APPENDICES

This section contains appendices which support and clarify the District Tree Policy Part I text.

Appendix I A: Request for Service: District Tree Policy - Trees other than Protected Trees

Appendix I B: Request for Service: District Plan - Protected Trees - All Enquiries

Appendix I C: Request for Service: District Plan - Protected Trees - New Listing

Appendix I D: Request for Service: District Tree Policy - Planting of Street Trees

Appendix I E: District Tree Policy - Part II Appendices - Table of Contents

**APPENDIX I A –
Request for Service for
District Tree Policy Trees Other than Protected Trees**

*REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR
DISTRICT TREE POLICY TREES
OTHER THAN PROTECTED TREES*

REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR DISTRICT TREE POLICY TREES OTHER THAN PROTECTED TREES

EXTERNAL REQUEST

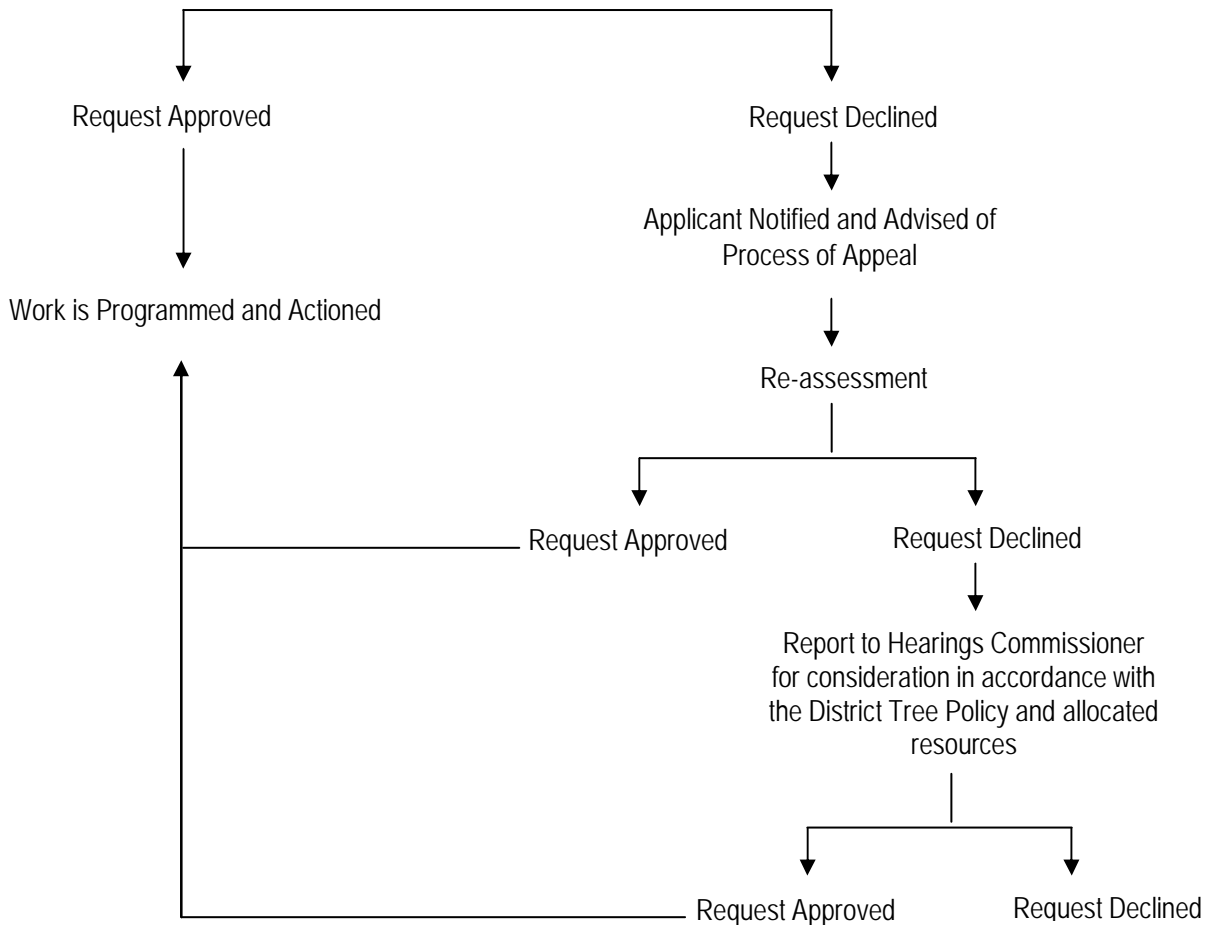
Mail/Phone/Fix-A-Gram

INTERNAL REQUEST

Councillor, Community Board, Liaison
Groups, Lessees, Other Council
Departments

PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER

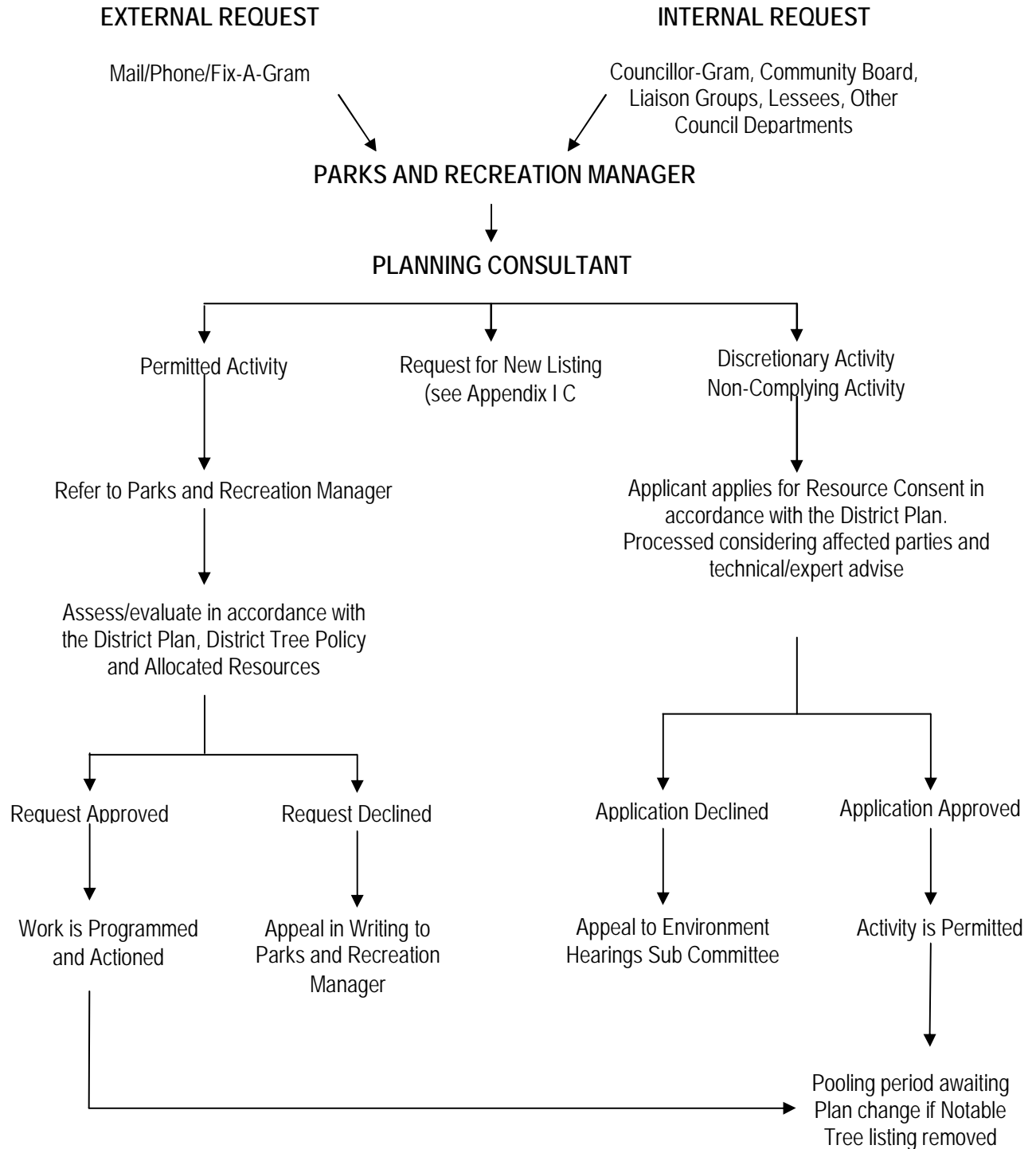
Assess and evaluate in accordance with the
District Tree Policy and Allocated Resources



**APPENDIX I B –
Request for Service for
District Plan Protected Trees - All Enquiries**

*REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR
DISTRICT PLAN PROTECTED TREES -
ALL ENQUIRIES*

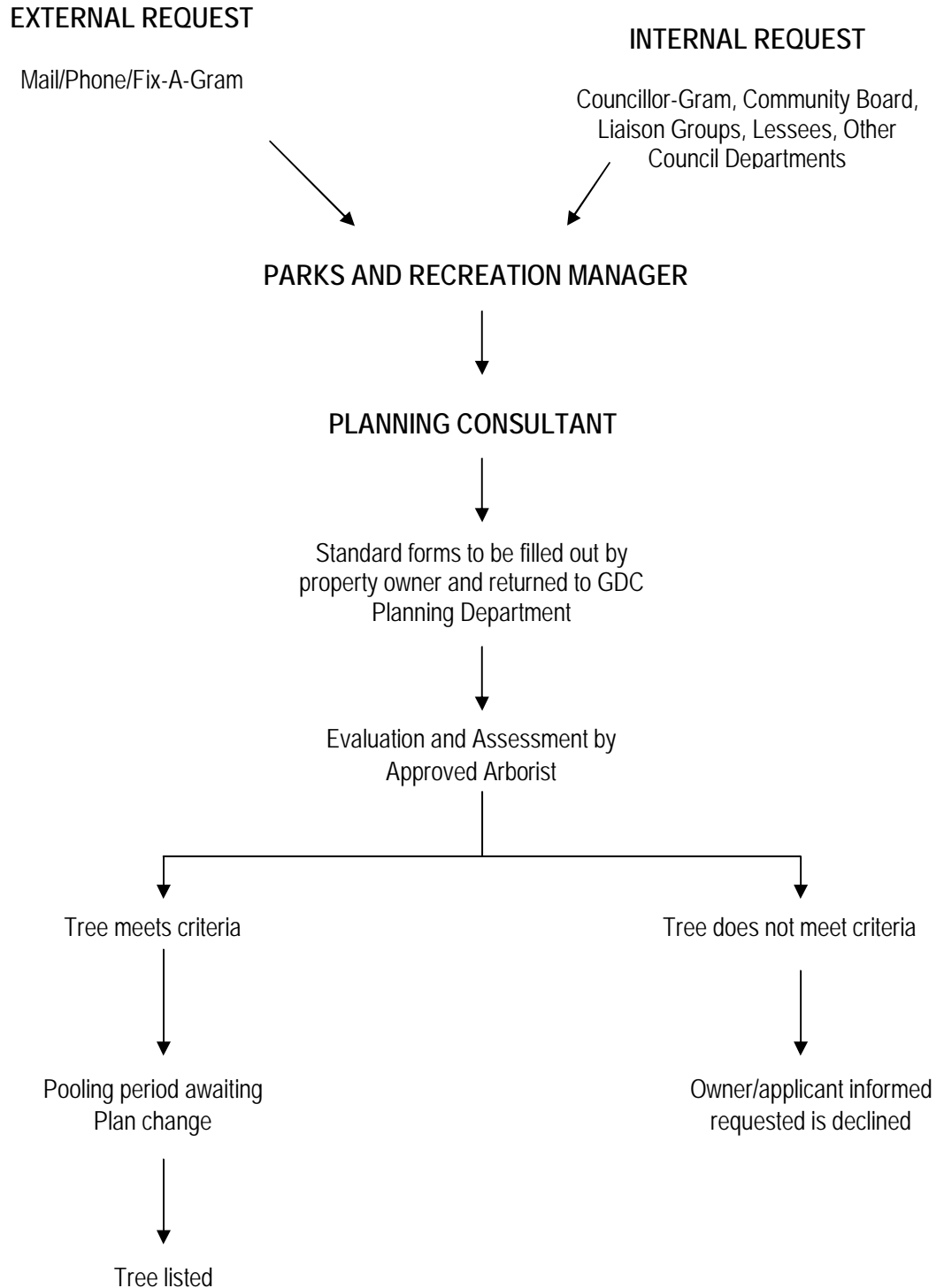
REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR DISTRICT PLAN PROTECTED TREES - ALL ENQUIRIES



**APPENDIX I C –
Request for Service for
District Plan Protected Trees - New Listing**

*REQUEST FOR SERVICE
FOR DISTRICT PLAN PROTECTED TREES -
NEW LISTING*

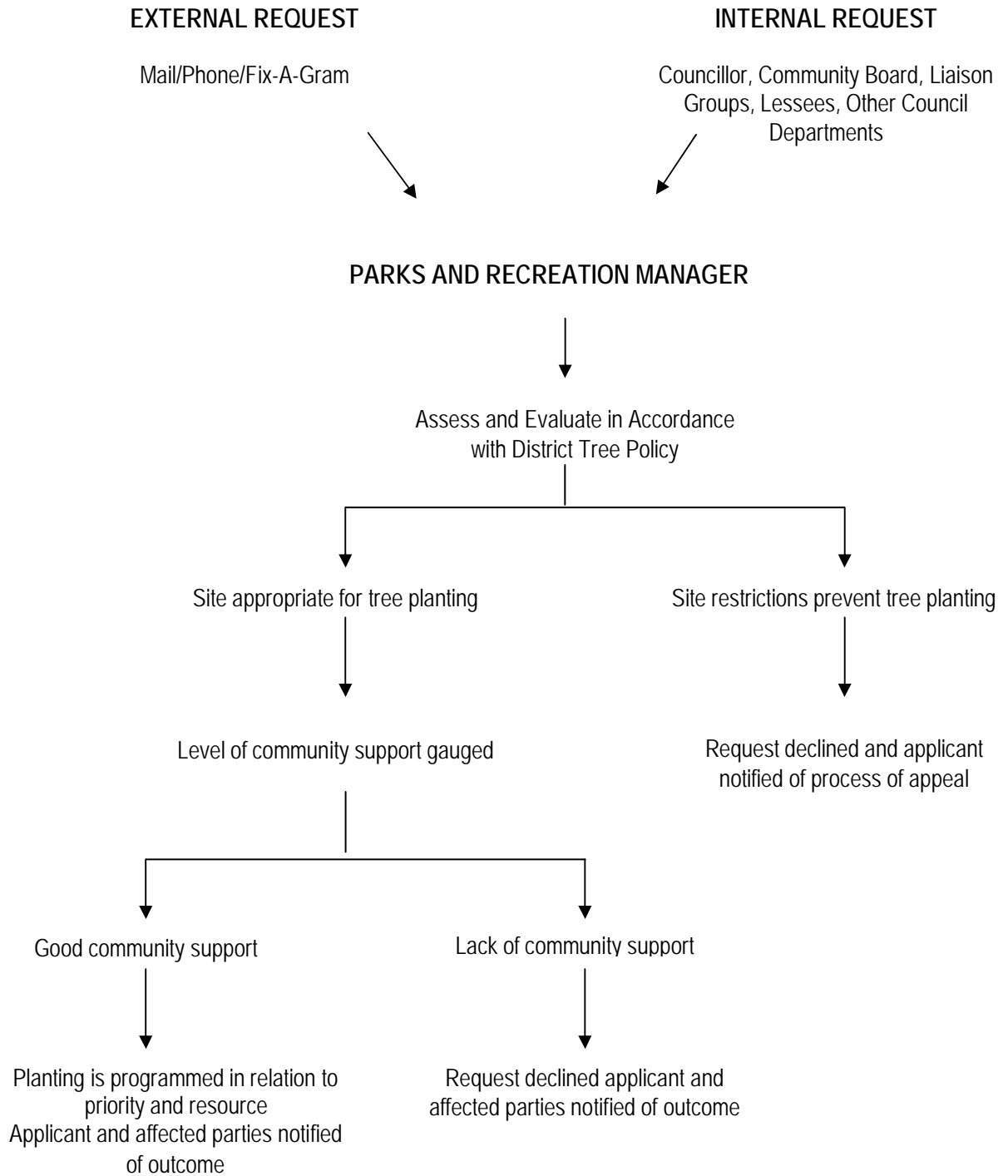
REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR DISTRICT PLAN PROTECTED TREES - NEW LISTING



**APPENDIX I D –
Request for Service for
District Tree Policy Planting - Street Trees**

REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR DISTRICT TREE POLICY - PLANTING STREET TREES

REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR DISTRICT TREE POLICY - PLANTING STREET TREES



APPENDIX I E - The District Tree Policy - Part II - Table of Contents