

STREET TREE POLICY 12/05/06

This policy is being implemented as a set of guidelines applied when there is any proposed installation of vegetation within the public right-of-way. Developers required to install trees within the right-of-way will continue to provide a landscape plan to the city for review and approval. Publicly funded road improvements will likewise be reviewed and evaluated according to these guidelines.

Placement Guidelines

The placement of trees within and along the public right-of-way is gauged to the posted speed limit. The following chart details the various factors:

	POSTED SPEED LIMIT		
	30 mph or less	35 mph	40 mph or more
Setback off road pavement*	Minimum of 6 feet	Minimum of 10 feet	Minimum of 3 feet behind sidewalk ***
Setback off sidewalk*	Minimum of 3 feet	Minimum of 3 feet	Minimum of 3 feet
Spacing**	Average 80 feet	Average of 120 feet	Intermittent clusters
Setback from end of intersection curb return	Minimum of 30 feet	Minimum of 30 feet	Minimum of 30 feet
Setback from fire hydrant	Minimum of 5 feet	Minimum of 5 feet	Minimum of 5 feet
Distance from street light	Minimum of 10 feet	Minimum of 10 feet	Minimum of 10 feet
Setback from driveway throat	Minimum of 25 feet	Minimum of 25 feet	Minimum of 25 feet

* If no existing sidewalk, place to accommodate future installation

** Curvature of roadway may warrant greater spacing

***if part of publicly funded project install tree on private property through easement with one year warranty

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) sets forth in its Roadside Design Guide, desirable clear zone distances for fixed objects in the vicinity of the edge of a driving lane. The clear zones is an unobstructed, relatively flat area beyond the edge of the traveled way that allows a driver to stop safely or regain

control of a vehicle that leaves the traveled way. Staff has drawn upon this information in the formulation of the posted speed limit table. The relative slope adjacent to the street pavement and the presence of a stand-up versus roll curb on the edge of the pavement are factors that will have an effect on the relative amount of distance needed for a vehicle leaving a particular section of roadway.

These guidelines will be relied upon to determine the placement of street trees along new public streets and for reconstruction projects. The replacement of existing trees as well as the installation of new trees will be governed by these guidelines.

Species of trees- Trees placed in the vicinity of a street must take into account overhead utility wires, utilities placed underground, sidewalk disturbance, streetlight coverage and clear zones for motor vehicles. These factors must take into account not only the size of the tree at planting but, more importantly, the characteristics of the mature tree. Upon review of the Kent County Road Commission Tree Planting Policy and the Street Tree Fact Sheets published by the Municipal Tree Restoration Program (with the support of the USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry and 21 State forestry agencies) the following list of trees are considered desirable in the street right-of-way.

Desirable Species

Amur Maple, Tatarian Maple, Eastern Redbud, Kousa Dogwood, Thornless Cockspur Hawthorn, Washington Hawthorn, Spring Snow Crabapple, and the Ivory Silk Japanese Tree Lilac.

Undesirable Species

Ash, Willows, Box Elder, Poplars, Silver Maple, Elms and Oaks

Background

Over the past several years there has been considerable discussion concerning the placement of trees in the public right-of-way. Safety and aesthetics have been major factors while maintenance has emerged as another consideration. Trees in the public right-of-way can be perceived in a number of ways such as: a significant fixed object that creates a hazard to vehicles leaving a roadway; an enhancement to the beauty and value of the roadway and adjacent development; a buffer that provides protection to pedestrian traffic on adjacent sidewalks; a cause of disturbance for sidewalks; and an object that narrows the driver's perception of the roadway resulting in lower vehicle speeds. At the urging of the Mayor and the City Commission, representatives of Engineering, Police and Planning collaborated to reach a common ground.

Relevant Streetscape Regulations

The City of Kentwood Subdivision Control Ordinance requires the proprietor of any subdivision to provide for street trees in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance and any guidelines adopted by the City Commission. Section 3.06 of the Zoning Ordinance

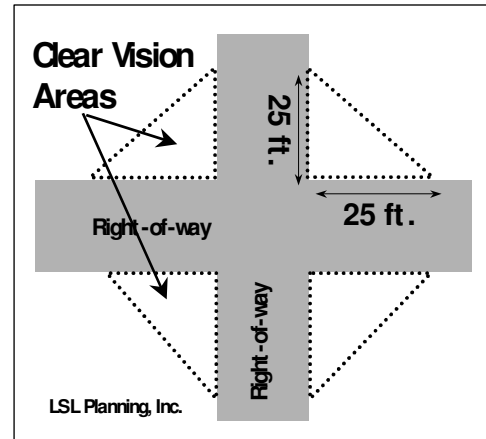
requires a clear vision area for any corner lot or along any driveway that will likely result in the obstruction the view of a vehicle driver approaching the intersection or entering or exiting the driveway:

A. No plantings or structures shall be established or maintained on any corner lot or along any driveway that will likely result in obstructing the view of a vehicle driver approaching the intersection or entering or exiting the driveway.

B. On corner lots, the clear vision area shall mean a triangular area formed by the street property lines and a line connecting them at points twenty-five (25) feet from the intersection of the street lines or in the case of a rounded property corner from the intersection of the street property lines extended.

C. This shall not prohibit the maintaining of shrubbery less than thirty (30) inches in height in this area.

D. Tree branches shall be a minimum of ten (10) feet above the adjoining street level within the clearance corner.



Section 19.03.B of the Zoning Ordinance contains the following requirements for street trees in residential projects:

1. One (1) canopy street tree shall be provided for every eighty (80) feet of lot frontage along a public or private street.
2. Single and Two Family and Site Condominium Lots: Where possible, street trees shall be provided between the sidewalk and the curb, but at a minimum within the front yard on each lot.
3. Multiple Family Developments: Where possible, street trees shall be provided within the front yard area of the units.
4. Existing trees three (3) inch caliper or greater, preserved in good condition, may be allowed to be counted towards this requirement.
5. Where the installation of street trees is deferred until after construction of housing units, the City shall require a performance guarantee for street tree planting.
6. Where overhead power lines exist, the type and/or location of street trees shall be adjusted to avoid conflict as the trees mature.

Section 19.03.I of the Zoning Ordinance contains the following for right-of-way landscaping:

Right of Way Landscaping: The area between the street paving or curb line and the property line or sidewalk, with the exception of driveways and walkways, shall be

used exclusively and maintained as landscaped area with grass, trees and other plants and materials as approved by the City.

Section 34-31 of the City of Kentwood Code of Ordinances declares the following to be a “public nuisance”:

(6) Any vegetation, earthwork or object, including but not limited to, rocks, fences and basketball setups caused to be within a street right-of-way, except the following:

a. Mailbox posts...

b. Trees, by permit only from the City. Planting will be done in the exact location indicated on the permit.