UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Tree Preservation Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to create a policy for tree preservation on the University of Michigan Ann Arbor campus. Preservation, rather than relocation/removal, should be the first priority or many of the significant trees on campus would be at risk. If preservation of a particular tree is not possible, relocation should be the second option. If the tree size, location, or other factors make this infeasible, removal becomes the last, and least desirable, option.

Preservation

The preservation of existing trees in any campus development is of the utmost importance. Urban trees influence local climate, carbon cycles, energy use and climate change. In order to provide a healthy and sustainable urban forest resource, the existing tree canopy on campus needs to be preserved. Maintaining a continuous level of canopy cover will enable the urban forest to be resilient to changing pressures through enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem health, management for long-term growth and use of a broad mixture of tree ages and species. Many of the trees on campus are significant due to their size, species or because they have some historic identity. Large canopy trees may take 100 years or more to reach their full size. When a large tree is removed, the impact is immediate and a part of campus history is lost. The removal of small to midsize trees is not as dramatic; however, the impact on the future campus landscape is significant – today's elimination of small to midsize trees is the elimination of majestic large trees of the future. We enjoy the large trees on the campus today because of the preservation efforts of those who came before us.

Specific Procedures for Preserving Existing Trees

A tree survey will be conducted as part of the initial design work on any campus development project. The survey will show the locations of the existing trees directly on the site, as well as on any surrounding areas that may be impacted by the project. When a small woodlot or natural area exists within the project area, and it is more efficient for the UF to conduct a visual assessment of the site, the University Forester (UF) will document the overall quality and variation of species on the site prior to tree removal. A Vegetation Assessment should be provided by the UF to the Campus Planner (CP) and Project Lead (PL) using an aerial photo or site plan with accompanying notes in lieu of tagging trees and providing a survey.

1. The PL will meet with the UF to categorize the trees on the survey using Grounds Services (Grounds) Tree Evaluation Methodology (Methodology) and corresponding tree rankings. The Methodology, developed by Grounds lead staff, is based on International Society of Arboriculture evaluation standards and more than 50 years' combined experience evaluating and maintaining trees on the U-M Ann Arbor Campus. The Methodology is used to provide a condensed evaluation of tree quality for planning and construction purposes utilizing a ranking system of 1 to 5. Determining factors in the ranking of campus trees includes species, form, health and

condition and aesthetic value.

2. The trees will be categorized as follows:
   a. Trees to remain and be protected
      - Trees ranked 1, 2 or 3+/-
   b. Trees recommended to be relocated or removed
      - Trees ranked 1, 2 or 3+/-
   c. Trees to be removed if necessary
      - Low quality trees ranked 4 or 5
3. This information will be recorded on the survey or Vegetation Assessment and provided to the designers. The designers will be instructed to develop building and site concepts that will protect trees ranked 1-3+/- as identified on the survey to remain.
4. Tree protection methods will be reviewed and approved by the UF during the design development phase. This includes all areas impacted by the project as well as those outside the construction limit line.
5. Trees ranked 1, 2 or 3+ can only be removed with the approval of the Associate Vice President for Facilities and Operations (AVPFO). The CP will prepare and submit a written summary developed in cooperation with the PL and UF that describes the significance of the tree and reasons for removal to the AVPFO for review and approval.

Protection

Upon determination that existing trees are to be preserved, it becomes critical to protect them during construction. Construction damage to existing trees is not always apparent and its effects may take years to emerge. The most common construction damage is root damage due to soil compaction.

Specific Procedures for Protecting Trees

1. Trees rated 1, 2 or 3+/- to remain and be protected will be clearly identified on the site plans. The protective zone around each tree will also be clearly identified. Where possible, the protective zone will extend to the tree canopy drip line.
2. The methods of protection will be determined by existing University specifications or by the UF in special cases. The installation of the tree protection will be the responsibility of the contractor.
3. In accordance with provisions set out in the standard general conditions, site contractors will be instructed that no activity, including parking or storage of materials, will be allowed within the protective zones, and that protective fences or other methods of protection will not be moved, removed or altered.
4. The UF or designated university site safety inspector will be allowed to periodically inspect the tree protection areas for compliance. The UF will contact the PL with concerns. If there is not sufficient resolution, the UF will pursue higher administrative action up to the AVPFO in a timely manner.

Relocation and Removal

Relocation of existing trees from the site requires transplantation by either tree spade or by the balled-and-burlapped method. The UF along with the CP will determine the new location.

Removal includes cutting the tree down and debris disposal. The decision to remove a tree ranked 1, 2 or 3+ can only be made by the AVPFO. This includes removals requested during any phase of a project, including the initial design phase and construction operations.

Specific Procedures for Removal, Relocation and Replacement

1. The UF and PL will decide whether the removal will be completed by in-house crews or by the building contractor. Debris from removals will be disposed of off-site within 24 hours of the removal unless otherwise approved by the PL.
2. The PL will give the UF a minimum of two weeks' notice before removals take place, unless there is a safety concern. In these cases, the PL will give the UF as much notice as possible.
3. The project responsible for removing the trees will fund the cost of transplantation or permanent removal by cutting the tree down.

Acronyms:
AVPFO – Associate Vice President for Facilities and Operations
PL – Project Lead
UF – University Forester
CP – Campus Planner