

Puka Uiui o: Kaupapa Here Rākau Tiriti

Consultation Document: Street Tree Policy



MASTERTON
WHAKAORIORI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Introduction

Masterton’s Street Tree Policy is out of date, and your views are sought on a new Street Tree Policy.

This Consultation Document has been prepared in accordance with sections 82 and 82A of the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002. The Proposed Street Tree Policy for consultation is attached.

Consultation is open from Wednesday 25 February to Wednesday 25 March 2026.

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Submissions close Wednesday 25 March

Background

The proposed Street Tree Policy has been developed to provide an updated and fit-for-purpose approach to managing Masterton's street tree network, with respect to:

- New street trees: guiding developers and the Council when planting new street trees along existing roads or along new roads that will later be vested in the Council.
- Existing street trees: supporting the best decisions by the Council about the maintenance, removal, and replacement of existing street trees.

Street trees provide a range of benefits to Masterton's urban areas: streetscape amenity and biodiversity can be enhanced, air quality can be advanced, and shade can be provided. Street trees also hold a range of heritage, cultural and community values.

However, street trees can also bring a range of challenges such as conflict with underground and overhead infrastructure, too much shading, public safety risks, excessive leaf drop that can clog the drains and cause flooding, obstruction of vehicle and pedestrian sight lines, and damage to footpaths and roads.



Our proposal

The proposed Street Tree Policy aims to balance the benefits and challenges of street trees so that Masterton can work towards a well-planned, safe, and healthy street tree network.

The underpinning principle and desired outcome of the proposed Policy is “Right Tree, Right Place”, in the context of legislative and regulatory requirements.

Key proposed changes

Description of proposal	Reason for proposal
An approval process for planting plans for street trees in new developments where a road is proposed to be vested in the Council.	This will support compliance with the policy and legislative requirements, and involve approval through the consenting process.
A list of situations when the Council will consider a street tree for removal.	This will assist Council officers to make considered decisions in a transparent way and ensure street trees are only removed when necessary.

What has been considered in proposing a new Policy?

A range of information has been considered, including:

- The approach to street trees of other Councils (whether in policy or guidance).
- The requirements of the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan 2025 (Appeals Version) and Engineering Development Standard 2023.
- Other relevant national legislation and standards (e.g. Resource Management Act 1991 and NZS 4404:2010).
- Complaints and feedback received by the Council regarding urban street trees.
- Current challenges associated with Masterton’s street tree network, described by Council staff (specifically the Facilities and Open Spaces, Planning, and Roading teams).

Options considered

The Council has considered the reasonably practicable options for renewing its Street Tree Policy.

The advantages and disadvantages of these options are outlined below. The Council's recommended approach is Option 1.

Option 1

Adopt the proposed Street Tree Policy (recommended).

Advantages

- Fit for purpose.
- Removes outdated content.
- Improves transparency.
- Future-proofs the guidance.
- Supports long-term development objectives.
- Supports future administrative efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Disadvantages

- The public may have contrary views on the proposed approach.

Option 2

Do nothing – stick with the current Street Tree Policy.

Advantages

- No further resourcing required.

Disadvantages

- Policy is outdated and not fit-for-purpose.
- Current policy does not address issues being experienced by the Council's staff and by developers.
- No guidance for developers when planting new street trees.
- Lack of guidance for Council when managing existing street trees.
- Additional Council maintenance costs associated with 'wrong tree, wrong place'.

Te āhua o tō tuku kōrero

How you can have your say

We welcome your submissions on the proposed Street Tree Policy. Please submit your feedback by Wednesday 25 March 2026.

You can make a submission in one of the following ways:



Complete our online submission form at: whatsup.mstn.govt.nz



Download a fillable pdf submission form from our website and email to: submissions@mstn.govt.nz.



Pick up a submission form from the Masterton District Library or Customer Service Centre at 161 Queen Street. You can also print out our printer-friendly form from the website above. Post it to Masterton District Council, Freepost 112477, PO Box 444, Masterton 5840, or drop it off to our Customer Service Centre.



Phone the Policy Team on 06 370 6300 between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) and tell us what you think.

Hearing

For those wanting to present their views to the Council, a hearing will be held on Wednesday 15 April 2026. You will need to indicate on your submission form that you would like to attend the Hearing.

Submissions close Wednesday 25 March

He aha atu anō?

What happens next?

Following the consultation period and the hearing, submissions received will be deliberated by the Council on Wednesday 20 May 2026.

The final Proposed Street Tree Policy will be considered by the Council on Wednesday 24 June 2026.

If adopted, the revised Street Tree Policy will take effect from Wednesday 1 July 2026.

Kaupapa Here Rākau Tiriti

Street Tree Policy



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Pūtake | Purpose

The Street Tree Policy determines Masterton District Council's approach to the planning, planting, maintenance and removal of Street Trees within its district. Principles to guide best practice and legislative requirements are reflected in the Policy.

Horopaki | Context

The Street Tree Policy does not override the statutory responsibilities in the Wairarapa Combined District Plan or in New Zealand legislation.

This document replaces the Street Tree Policy adopted in May 2010.

Te Tūranga, te Haepapa hoki a te Kaunihera mō te taha ki ngā Rākau Tiriti | **The Council's Roles and Responsibilities in relation to Street Trees**

Chief Executive: This Policy will be implemented through procedures developed within the operational framework of the Council, based on expert advice and input.

Facilities and Open Spaces: responsible for the management of the Street Tree network and implementation of the Policy through procedures that are developed within the operational framework of the Council, based on expert advice and input.

Planning: Street Tree planting plans may be required as part of resource consent applications for new developments and subdivisions where a road is proposed to be vested in the Council; and resource consents may be required for pruning and removal of trees, on a case-by-case basis.

Policy: monitors the effectiveness of the Policy and undertakes reviews when required.

Roading: owner of all roading assets (including the Street Tree network).

Whakahaere Kōnae | **Version Control**

Policy Reference: MDC018			
Version	Date	Summary of Amendments	Approved By
1	May 2010	New Street Tree Policy	Masterton District Council
2	June 2026 (TBC)	Revised Street Tree Policy to replace version 1	Masterton District Council

Arotake Kaupapa Here | **Review of Policy**

The Policy will be reviewed and approved by the Council every five years.

Ngā Tohutoro | **Referenced Documents**

Land Transport Act 1998.

Local Government Act 1974.

NZS 4404:2010 Land Development and Subdivision Infrastructure.

Operative Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region 2013.

Wairarapa Combined District Plan (Decisions Version, 2025) (the District Plan), specifically the Notable Trees chapter.

Resource Management Act 1991.

District Plan – Engineering Development Standards 2023.

Wairarapa Consolidated Bylaw (Part Two – Public Places (including Parks and Reserves) 2025.

Tuhinga Hāngai | **Related Documents**

Climate Change Response Act 2002.

Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003.

Government Rooding Powers Act 1989.

Masterton District Council Long-Term Plan 2024-2034.

Masterton Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021.

National Planning Standards 2019.

Public Works Act 1981.

Whānuitanga | Scope

In Scope

This Policy applies to all Street Trees (as defined in the Definitions section of this Policy) in the Masterton District.

Aligned Scope

Trees in reserves or parks are managed under the Reserves Act and the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

Trees planted in parks or reserves will be planned and managed by the Council in accordance with the principles set out in this Street Tree Policy.

Out of Scope

This policy does not apply to:

- Notable trees,¹ which are listed, protected and managed under the District Plan, as noted in the Definitions.
- Trees on private property.
- Trees in rural areas.
- ETS (Emissions Trading Scheme) trees on Roads, which are created under the Climate Change Response Act 2002 and overseen by Forestry New Zealand and the Environmental Protection Authority.

¹ Trees with cultural significance are identified and assessed using the Standard Tree Evaluation Method (STEM) under the Wairarapa Combined District Plan, which recognises cultural, spiritual and community values as part of the notability assessment. Trees meeting the required STEM score threshold are scheduled as Notable Trees.

Kuputaka | Definitions

Amenity Values	Refers to the environmental characteristics of an area that contribute to the pleasantness and attractiveness of that area as a place to live, work or visit.
Council or the Council	Means the Masterton District Council (or qualified arborists engaged by the Council).
Emergency Situation	Where a Street Tree poses immediate risk to life, property, infrastructure, or public access.
Infrastructure	Has the same meaning as in section 2 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the RMA), as set out below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. pipelines that distribute or transmit natural or manufactured gas, petroleum, biofuel, or geothermal energy:b. network for the purpose of telecommunication as defined in section 5 of the Telecommunications Act 2001:c. a network for the purpose of radiocommunication as defined in section 2(1) of the Radiocommunications Act 1989:d. facilities for the generation of electricity, lines used or intended to be used to convey electricity, and support structures for lines used or intended to be used to convey electricity, excluding facilities, lines, and support structures if a person –<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. uses them in connection with the generation of electricity for the person's use; andii. does not use them to generate any electricity for supply to any other person:e. a water supply distribution system, including a system for irrigation:f. a drainage or sewerage system:g. structures for transport on land by cycleways, rail, roads, walkways, or any other means:h. facilities for the loading or unloading of cargo or passengers transported on land by any means:i. an airport as defined in section 2 of the Airport Authorities Act 1966:j. a navigation installation as defined in section 2 of the Civil Aviation Act 1990:

- k. facilities for the loading or unloading of cargo or passengers carried by sea, including a port related commercial undertaking as defined in section 2(1) of the Port Companies Act 1988:
- l. anything described as a network utility operation in regulations made for the purposes of the definition of network utility operator in section 166.

Network Utility Means a project, work, system, or structure that is a network utility operation undertaken by a 'network utility operator' (as defined in section 166 of the Resource Management Act 1991).

Notable Tree A tree listed in Schedule 3 of the District Plan that has been identified as having significant value for botanical and/or for historic, cultural, spiritual, landmark, or other community reasons.

Refer to the 'TREE – Notable Trees' chapter and 'Schedule 3 Notable Trees' in the District Plan.

Qualified Arborist Means a person suitably experienced and competent in arboriculture, having acquired through training, qualification (a minimum of a level 5 NZQA advanced certificate in arboriculture or equivalent arboriculture qualification) and/or equivalent experience, the knowledge and skills enabling that person to perform the required tasks.

Road Has the same meaning as "Road" under section 315 of the Local Government Act 1974 and the Land Transport Act 1998.

The "Road" includes the full width of the corridor from private boundary to private boundary, encompassing the carriageway, footpaths, verges and grass berms.

Street Tree Any tree where the trunk is located within the Road.

If any part of the Street Tree Policy includes a reference to a repealed enactment or an amended definition, it must be read as a reference to its current replacement.

Te tūāpapa mātāpono o te kaupapa here Rākau Tiriti | Principles Underpinning the Street Tree Policy

This Policy has been developed to give effect to the following principles, to ensure that each decision and action relating to Street Trees is grounded in these values and consistently applied in practice.

Right Tree, Right Place	Street Trees are appropriately planned and planted according to the site conditions to maximise Street Tree health, minimise conflict with Infrastructure and private property, and minimise ongoing maintenance requirements.
Community Benefit & Amenity	Street Tree species and placements are prioritised to enhance neighbourhood character, provide an appropriate level of canopy cover and shade, improve air quality, protect Infrastructure, and create attractive and safe neighbourhoods.
Safety & Functionality	Street Trees are managed to prioritise public safety, protect infrastructure, and support long-term sustainability. Where conflicts arise, safety, infrastructure integrity, and network functionality take precedence.
Sustainability & Climate Resilience	Street trees are planned and managed to enhance resilience to climate change, support biodiversity, improve groundwater absorption as natural bio-sinks, and contribute to long-term ecological health.
Partnership & Engagement	Street Trees are highly valued by the community. The Council works in partnership with mana whenua, developers and the community to ensure street trees are appropriately planned, maintained, and valued.
Roles & Responsibilities	<p>The Council oversees the planning, approval, and long-term management of all Street Trees.</p> <p>All physical works on Street Trees are undertaken or supervised by the Council, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Council.</p>
Best Practice	Best arboriculture practices and review management approaches are applied and updated regularly as new knowledge, community needs, and environmental challenges emerge.

Rākau Tiriti Hou | **New Street Trees**

Purpose

To provide a consistent approach for the planning, planting, and establishment of new Street Trees to enhance the urban environment, support biodiversity, reflect cultural and community values, minimise maintenance, and avoid conflict with Infrastructure. The approach is consistent with the underpinning Policy principles.

Policy Statements

- New Street Trees must only be planted following approval of a planting plan by the Council, either through the consenting process when a new road is proposed to be vested in the Council - including species, location, and design – or as part of a Council-led planting plan.
- Compliance with all relevant legislative documents is required with any new planting.
- The Council can impose Street Tree-related conditions on a resource consent where a road is proposed to be vested in the Council.²
- The design and implementation of Street Tree planning and planting reflects industry best practice in species selection, planting, and establishment, to the satisfaction of the Council.
- New Street Trees are appropriate to the climatic conditions, and the scale and character of the area, require low maintenance, provide adequate shade during the hot months, and attract bird life.
- New Street Trees must recognise cultural values and mātauranga Māori, with native tree species prioritised where appropriate to reflect local identity and cultural significance.
- New Street Trees must be planted in suitable locations, using appropriate planting methods and at spacings to minimise conflict with Roads, vehicle access, Infrastructure and Network Utilities.

² Under sections 108 and 108AA of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) the Council may impose conditions on subdivision consents it considers appropriate to mitigate environmental and amenity impacts arising from a subdivision, including those arising from Street Trees (sections 108(AA)(1)(b)(i) and 108AA(1)(c) particularly apply).

Compliance with the Engineering Development Standard 2023 (the Standard) provides a mechanism for the Council to exercise its section 31 functions under the RMA by ensuring that subdivision infrastructure, including Street Trees, is designed, approved, and constructed in a manner that manages adverse effects on the environment and public amenity. Clauses 1.B.1.1 and 1.B.1.3, read in conjunction with NZS 4404:2010, support the Council's statutory functions by providing guidance on infrastructure layout, tree species selection, spacing, and maintenance requirements.

- New Street Trees must not be planted under overhead utility lines.
- The Council maintains a register of all Street Trees, recording their species, location, condition, and planned or completed maintenance.

Rākau Tiriti o Nāianeī | Existing Street Trees

Purpose

To provide guidance for the management of existing Street Trees to ensure they are retained wherever possible, managed to protect public safety and Infrastructure, and replaced appropriately when removal is unavoidable.

Policy Statements

- The Council is committed to retaining existing Street Trees wherever possible, recognising their environmental, cultural, community and Amenity Values.
- Street trees are only considered for removal if they:
 - Are dead or in poor health.
 - Cause damage or risk to Infrastructure, Network Utilities, or Roads.
 - Prevent access to the Council's Infrastructure for maintenance purposes.
 - Create safety risks (e.g. impede traffic visibility, limit pedestrian access, result in falling branches).
 - Create growth issues (e.g. overcrowding with others, limiting growth, causing excessive shading and canopy cover, causing streetscape imbalance).
 - Have maintenance requirements (e.g. trimming, pruning, leaf litter, root clearing, etc.) that are unreasonably high compared with community benefit and Amenity Values.
- Where a Street Tree is causing issues as outlined above, alternatives to removal (such as trimming, pruning, or engineering solutions) must be considered before removal goes ahead, provided it is not an Emergency Situation.
- In Emergency Situations, removal or mitigation may proceed without prior assessment of alternatives. Actions must be documented (after the fact), and reasonable precautions must be taken.
- The Council carries out or supervises all physical works on Street Trees, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Council.
- When Street Tree removals are proposed, the Council will notify relevant members of the community where possible, except in Emergency Situations.
- Any Street Tree approved for removal must be replaced by a new tree in the same place or in the nearest suitable location, unless otherwise determined by the Council. Any removed Street Tree must be considered for relocation to a different, suitable site. This shall be assessed by Council on a case-by-case basis.
- Replacement Street Trees must be planned in accordance with the 'New Street Trees Policy Statements'.

- Street Trees on berms must not be altered or interfered with by private individuals, except where property owners have the appropriate berm maintenance responsibilities recorded on their land title. Otherwise, only routine lawn maintenance is permitted on berms.
- Any complaint regarding a Street Tree that may have caused damage to private property, shall be investigated and managed by the Council on a case-by-case basis.
- Resource consents will be sought from the Council's Planning department for trimming, pruning, or removal, when required under the District Plan.

Phone

06 370 6300

Email

submissions@mstn.govt.nz

Call into

Masterton District Council
161 Queen Street, Masterton
9am - 4pm

Write to

Masterton District Council
PO Box 444, Masterton 5840

[whatsapp.mstn.govt.nz](https://whatsapp.com/channel/00299a61111111111111)



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