



## **Appendix C: Street tree planting inspection guidelines**

*See blue Urban Forestry brochure on Street Tree Planting & Establishment Guidelines for more background information.*

### **1. Planting strip width**

- Use tape measure. Planting strip 2' 4" or larger needed for tree planting.
- Measure from back of curb to sidewalk

### **2. Curb-tight sidewalks and paved-over planting strips**

- In both cases, tree wells need to be cut. PBOT regulates sidewalk cutting.
- Measure from back of curb, look for score lines and joints
- For *paved-over planting strips*, assess based on the width of the section as if it's a regular planting strip and record need for concrete cut
- For curb-tight sidewalks, 8' 6" is needed between back of curb and property line
  - 8' 6" to 9' 0" width = 5' 6" to 6' 0" sidewalk and 3x6' tree wells
  - If width is 9' 6" or greater, there is room for 4x6' tree wells
  - Record B for 3x6' cuts, C or D for 4x6' cuts; record need for concrete cut

### **3. High voltage (HV) overhead wires:** Requires use of power lines tree lists.

- Things to look for to identify HV lines (usually up 40ft+): Lines above transformer; lines on insulators; other trees pruned to clear lines, line connects to top of transformers
- State Utilities Commission regulates clearances from power lines for safety.

### **4. Water meter and hydrants:** Stay 10' from hydrants in all cases. Stay 10' from meters for E, G, and GU strips (>6' wide, no HV lines). For strips under 6', you may plant as close as 5ft, if necessary.

### **5. Gas line:** Look for meter on side or front of building, project line to street. Allow at least a 3' setback in A and B strips (<4' wide) and at least 5' in all other strips. Tip: Look for patches on the street that indicate where the gas line comes out.

### **6. Intersections and signs:** Stay 25' from traffic signals and intersections. Stay 20' from the front of stop signs and other directional and safety signs (e.g. yield, ped crossing, school, speed limit) and 10' from the back of these signs. Stay 10' from the front of others such as parking and street signs, and 5' from the back of these signs.

### **7. Street lights:** For street lights stay at least 25' away for large strips (E and G), 20' away for medium strips (C, D, and F), and 18' away for small strips (A and B).

### **8. Utility Poles:** Stay at least 5' from non-street light utility poles. For E, G and GU strips (>6' wide, no HV lines) stay 10' away.

### **9. Guy wires:** OK to plant under guy wires in strips under 6' wide if tree is at least 10' from anchor and 5' from pole, provided there is room for tree to grow around wire. For E, G, and GU strips (>6' wide, no HV lines), do not plant under guy wires. Consider anchor underground when assessing tree potential beyond guy wires.

### **10. Driveways, walks, and alleys:** Stay 5' away from widest point (apron) of driveway. Stay at least 3' from carriage strips in A and B strips (<4' wide), 5' in other strips. Stay 5' away from alleys. For E, G, and GU strips (>6' wide, no HV lines), prefer to stay 10' away from all.

### **11. Bus stops:** OK to plant near bus stops, but take into account bus clearance and pedestrian circulation. Starting from the bus stop sign, TriMet requires a 10' clear zone for the front door, followed by a 10' middle zone (where a tree could go),

followed by a 10' clear zone for the back door. A tree may be located approximately 15' from the bus stop sign. Buses are approximately 40' long with 20' between doors. There is no set standard for bus shelters.

**12. Property line:** Stay at least 2' from property lines for clear owner responsibility of tree. Look for landscape changes, fences, sidewalk breaks, power poles, and other indicators.

**13. Overhanging trees:** Do not plant street trees under existing canopies that will present a conflict as the street tree matures. There may be room under the high canopy of an overhanging tree. Consider future tree size.

**14. Spacing:** New trees should be 18' apart for A and B strips; 25' for C, CC, D, DC, F, and FU strips; and at least 30' for E, G, and GU strips. Maintain appropriate spacing from existing street trees. Future neighboring planting locations should also be considered. Allow room for tree canopy to develop.

**15. Downsizing:** Generally, downsizing the tree list is not allowed. We want to maximize tree size and create consistency down the block. But in certain situations, it may be warranted. For example, if there is not room for a tree based on standards for that strip size, but dropping down a list would allow for a tree to be planted, then it is acceptable.

**16. Unimproved frontages with a curb (CC/DC):** Trees at these frontages will be planted at the standard 2' setback from the back of the curb. If HV lines are not present, use the CC list and space trees 25-30' apart. If HV lines are present, use the DC list and space trees 25' apart. Denote locations with a white paint mark on the curb.

**17. Unimproved frontages without a curb (GU/FU):** Look for ROW indicators and consider soil conditions when determining locations. Place locations at least 8' back from the edge of the street, if possible. If HV lines are not present, use the GU list and space trees at least 30' apart. If HV lines are present, use the FU list and space trees 25' apart. Mark these locations white paint and pin a white whisker flag into the ground. Also paint a white line on the street perpendicular each tree location.

**18. Landscaping in planting strip:** You can work around existing shrubs, vegetable boxes, pavers, and other landscaping, but not at the expense of losing a tree location. Adhere to the standards, even under property owner pressure. If the homeowner must move something to accommodate a tree location, make an Inspector Note and Homeowner Note (e.g. "Homeowner must move rose bush at least two weeks prior to planting").

**19. Curb marking techniques:** Combine the use of your tape measure and your standard 3' pace when measuring utility setbacks and tree spacing. Leave small, temporary dots of paint or highlighters on the strip to denote potential locations before painting the curb. Bring grey eraser paint to use when needed. Make sure to shield vehicles when painting curbs. Know limitations of paint in rain.

**20. Door hangers:** Fill out and attach door hanger at each house. Leave additional notes on hanger if you feel it's necessary to explain something about the inspection (e.g. "Please remove shrub prior to planting day").

**21. Review:** Urban Forestry will review 10% of sites and provide feedback.

**22. Tree questions from property owners:** Refer street tree health, removal, pruning, and other questions to Urban Forestry at 503-823-TREE.

Items Needed:

- This standards document
- Tree spacing chart
- Tape measure
- Cardboard – to shield parked cars
- 3-4 cans white spray paint, 1 can gray spray paint
- Sheet to record work
- Door Hanger

**Inspection Questions: Call Jim Field at 503-823-4011**