

When and how are trees replaced?

When trees are removed from in front of houses or commercial establishments to permit widening, improvement or maintenance of roads, or management of the roadside, the Road Commission will financially support up to one-half the cost of replanting trees with the other half paid by the property owner.

From time to time, we publish a list of native trees available through the replanting program. The price includes proper planting by a qualified nursery and a one-year nursery guarantee, if the trees are properly cared for by the property owners.

Property owners are responsible for the trees' future health.

How does a property owner appeal proposed tree removal?

When the Road Commission staff has determined that trees must be removed in the interest of motoring safety and convenience, the property owner is notified in person, by phone, or by mail.

For property owners who do not agree with the proposed action, we have developed the following six-step process that permits input and offers several levels of appeal:

Step 1 Within 14 days after receiving the notice, forward a written request for review to the Road Commission's managing

director at the Road Commission's main building. The request should include specific reasons for the objection, as well as practical and viable alternatives that properly address the Road Commission's concerns.

Step 2 The managing director of the Road Commission will schedule a meeting with the property owner to be held within seven days of receipt of the written request.

Step 3 Within seven days of the meeting, the managing director will notify the property owner of the managing director's decision.

Step 4 If disagreeing with the conclusion reached by the managing director, the property owner may request a further review by the Board of County Road Commissioners within seven days.

Step 5 The board will hold a review conference with the property owner within 21 days.

Step 6 Within 14 days, the board will notify the property owner of the final decision. If the decision is removal, no treatment will begin until 14 days after this notification.

If you would like more information about tree care:

- ◆ Ask for our brochure: *Guidelines for Planting Trees and Shrubs Near Roads Maintained by the Kalamazoo County Road Commission.*
- ◆ Consult your local public library.

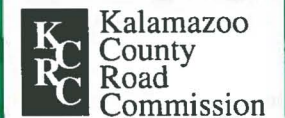
All programs, activities and services are provided equally without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin or handicap.



3801 East Kilgore Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
Telephone: (269) 381-3171
Fax: (269) 381-1760
www.kalamazooountyroads.com

TREES

Removal
Pruning
Preservation
Replanting



(269) 381-3171

What are the criteria for tree removal?

Dead, dying or weakened trees

Dead trees are those in which the growth process has permanently stopped. Dying trees are defined as those that, when viewed with leaves on them, have at least three-quarters of the crown dead or missing. Weakened trees are those where decay, splits, uprooting, disease or other tree conditions are so severe that pruning will not eliminate the potential safety hazard.

Hazardous locations

As the nature of roadsides varies, the hazard-related evaluation of locations is based on daily traffic count, accident probability, applied speed limits, geometric design of the existing traveled portion of the roadway, and location and density of trees or other vegetation.

Forgiving roadside

To provide a reasonably forgiving roadside for errant motorists, the Road Commission has established guidelines that permit consideration of a tree-removal project when there is evidence of vehicle-tree accidents.

In addition, the forgiving roadside criteria allow for removal of trees if they are located:

- ◆ Within 8 feet of the traveled portion of primary roads.

- ◆ Within 8 feet of the traveled area of local roads with a traffic volume of 500 vehicles or more per day.
- ◆ Within 6 feet of the traveled portion of local roads with a traffic count of less than 500 vehicles per day.

Other criteria include trees in a target portion outside of horizontal curves, trees that obstruct adequate sight distances or trees that are particularly vulnerable to vehicle contact.

Consistent tree lines

Trees that break the continuity of a generally established tree line within the forgiving roadside area are removed.

Volunteer tree growth

Trees that have developed on their own are removed to the tree line.

Proper drainage

To ensure proper roadway drainage, trees in the fore slope will be removed and trees in the back slope will be removed to a height of 2 feet above the level of the traveled surface.

What are the criteria for tree pruning?

Trees are pruned to:

- ◆ Remove limbs in the roadside border area to provide increased visibility and a recovery area for motorists who might stray from the road.

- ◆ Remove dead, dying or weakened tree limbs whose removal, in the opinion of the forester, will permit trees that are appropriate to the roadside environment to remain reasonably healthy for at least five years without further pruning.

Under what conditions are trees exempt from removal?

Trees that otherwise might be considered for removal may be retained if they are:

- ◆ In landscaped, park, recreational or residential areas, or where their removal would decrease aesthetic value.
- ◆ Exceptional or unique because of historical significance, if they represent an endangered species or if they have been classified as “big trees” on appropriate lists.
- ◆ Along Natural Beauty Roads, low-speed roads or in low-speed urban areas.
- ◆ In locations where the cumulative loss of trees would result in a significant change in the character of the roadside landscape.
- ◆ Behind nontraversable back slopes or banks; 6-inch barrier curbs, especially in low-speed areas; or guardrails.
- ◆ Ornamental trees that have a diameter of 4 inches or less at a point 4 1/2 feet above ground height.
- ◆ In an area where their removal would adversely affect wetlands or water quality or result in significant erosion or sedimentation effects.

TREES

Healthy trees are a precious natural resource, valued both for their beauty and ecological role. That's why the Kalamazoo County Road Commission's road management policies address preservation as well as motorist safety.

The roadside serves many purposes. It offers space to escape potential accidents, an area for motorized uses, an area for aesthetic and ecological value, an area for managed vegetation, an area for improved driver vision and visibility, improved distances, space for maintenance activities such as snow removal and storage, an area for authorized signs, and an area for proper road drainage.

To ensure that roadside trees do not pose an unacceptable risk to the motoring public either because of their location or condition, the Road Commission has adopted policies covering the removal and pruning. We also consult with qualified professionals to determine whether questionable trees impact the safety of the motoring public. We have a replacement policy for those situations where removal is recommended.

Our tree-removal policy guidelines are flexible. Using the forgiving roadside criteria, we consider such specific road-related factors as traffic volume, road character, curves, crossings and intersections. Trees that exhibit value from a functional, aesthetic, historical, species or size perspective may be exempt from removal.

In addition, our policy includes an appeal process for property owners who disagree with action proposed by the Road Commission.

We hope this brochure answers your questions about our tree policy. If you would like more information, call us at (269) 381-3171. Our office is open 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.