



**Islamic Republic Of Afghanistan
Kabul Municipality**



**URBAN FOREST AND MAINTENANCE POLICY
DEPARTMENT OF GREENERY**

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1.0 Introduction

Trees are an integral part of our communities and the ecological systems in which they exist. They provide significant economic, social and ecological benefits, such as carbon sequestration, reduction of the urban heat island effect, energy savings, reduction of storm water runoff, improvement of water quality, provide healing and calming qualities, and increase the value of business and residential properties. Planting and maintaining trees helps a city become more sustainable and reduce the negative impacts on the ecosystem from urban development. Trees are as necessary as water, infrastructure, and energy to sustaining healthy communities.

Our urban forest is a collection of individual trees and plants that could be living in traditional landscape settings or forest remnants in parks, open spaces, and private property. It encompasses the living components of the complex urban landscape and is an integral part of the Greenery.

2.0 Purpose and Objectives

The purposes of the Urban Forest Policy is to identify and define the common goals and values of citizens, businesses, property owners, and local agencies in Kabul City urban forest ecosystem, and to direct and coordinate management in ways that meet the overall intent to promote, conserve, protect and improve our urban forest, while flexibly accommodating a diverse range of land ownerships, uses and activities.

This policy was created to help our community better understand our urban forest as an important community resource and asset; to keep our community safe and reduce risks from an improperly managed urban forest; and to achieve a more attractive, healthy and livable city. This can be achieved by shifting our focus and thinking from the existing development model to a different model. A model that recognizes the importance of trees and other vegetation and their interaction with the built environment for the improvement of the quality of life in Kabul City should be used.

This Urban Forest Policy strives to preserve, protect, and improve the health and general welfare of the public by promoting the planning, management and preservation of trees and forests.

3.0 Definitions

3.01 Urban forestry is the art and science of planning, managing, and protecting natural and planted vegetation in urban areas.

2.02 Maintenance includes planting, pruning, trimming, watering, feeding, protecting, and any other activity intended to help a tree achieve its mature size, full environmental function, and ensure public safety.

3.03 Landscape management plan or management plan means a comprehensive plan addressing the long-term goals and strategic planning related to vegetation planting, pruning, removal, and maintenance needs to encourage the sustainability of the urban forest.

3.04 Mature Tree is a tree that measures at least 6-inches in diameter at standard height (4½ feet above existing soil grade, also known as diameter at breast height).



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3.05 Native Species, in reference to the urban forest, shall mean plants that were historically found in the region and which are ecosystem appropriate.

3.06 Right-of-way includes the area of land, the right to possession of which is secured by the City for right-of-way purposes and includes the traveled portion of the public streets and alleys, as well as the border area, which includes, but is not limited to, any sidewalks, planting strips, traffic circles, or medians. “Right-of-way” may also be unimproved, such as rights-of-way without pavement and/or grading.

3.07 Street tree means a tree whose trunk is wholly or partially located within the right-of-way.

3.08 Traffic circle is a small raised island in the center of a residential intersection around which traffic circulates.

3.09 Tree Canopy Tree canopy" means the layer of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above and that can be measured as a percentage of a land area shaded by trees.

3.10 Tree Care consists of the maintenance of trees including, but not limited to, pruning, fertilizing, pest or disease treatment, and removal.

3.11 Urban forest management data consists of information such as quantity of canopy cover; forest condition; diversity of genera, species and age class; and identification of pests, diseases and management needs.

3.12 Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) consists of identification and analysis of the structure and nature of the urban forest (including identified areas for enhanced protection, such as historical areas and/or areas with high quantity of threatened species) and the effectiveness of specifications and policies impacting said urban forest. The plan will include the following:

- Prescribed precautions to protect ecosystem health and mitigate the probability of catastrophic events such as fire
- Prioritize planting locations
- Define methods to begin addressing conflicts between trees and infrastructure, canopy loss, and forest health decline
- Identify maintenance issues and practices and define protocols and standards to measure urban forest conditions and health
- Address operations and management of the urban forest
- Recommend education and marketing options to promote the plan
- When necessary, complete a programmatic environmental review.



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3.13 Urban Forestry Program consists of a minimum of the following: An Urban Forester to manage vegetation and carry out an UFMP with supporting goals and management policies consistent with this element.

4.0 Scope:

This policy applies to the Department of Greenery and all other departments involved in the Urban Forest Management and Maintenance in Kabul City.

5.0 Guidance

The policies listed below are generally applicable and intended for the entire Kabul City Urban Forest existing in rights-of-way, private and public properties.

5.01 Responsibilities:

5.01.01. Trees are recognized as an essential asset of the Kabul Municipality urban forest infrastructure. As with other City infrastructure, regular maintenance and management sustains the benefits provided to the Kabul Municipality; however, an urban forest is a unique infrastructure, in that the value and benefits increase with management over time. In contrast, the absence of management can lead to a range of problems including utility conflicts, property damage from fallen trees, and the spread of infectious pests and diseases. Therefore, proper management is necessary for a healthy and safe urban forest for Kabul's citizens and visitors, including maximizing its contribution to quality of life, wildlife environment and recreational opportunities.

5.01.02. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall consider Kabul City's Urban Forest together with other infrastructure systems when planning, designing, and/or maintaining infrastructure.

5.01.03. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall take reasonable measures to mitigate trees that pose a high level of risk to public health and safety.

5.01.04. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall ensure adequate resources to manage Kabul City's Urban Forest and ecosystem, to educate the public about the benefits of Kabul City's urban forest, to coordinate with others concerning forestry management, and to provide assistance and training on proper forestry practices.

5.01.05. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall establish an Urban Forestry Account for the maintenance, preservation, education improvement, and support of Kabul City's Urban Forest.

5.01.06. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall find or develop new funding sources such as assessment districts, fundraising, donations, grants for projects, or an urban forest utility fee to fund adequate tree maintenance.



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5.01.07. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall create an Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP), consisting of an analysis of existing conditions and a detailed work program for the policy implementation.

5.01.08. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall create, and regularly update, an Urban Forest Manual using the best available science and current best management practices, accepted standards and guidelines to support the UFMP, and this policy.

5.01.09. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall establish an Urban Forest and Open Space Advisory Board to support the development of the urban forestry program and to take an active role in ensuring increased citizen involvement and oversight of urban forestry and open space activities. The Citizen Advisory Board should be broadly representative of community interests and of pertinent technical expertise.

5.01.10. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall develop an approach to educate tree care firms, or individuals that wish to provide professional tree maintenance services, about Kabul Municipality's policies, regulations, and standards to ensure the proper care of our urban forest.

5.01.11. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall develop tree valuation methods that closely reflect the complete value of trees for use when assessing fines, determining damages or estimating loss.

5.01.12. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall Develop partnerships and coordinate and cooperate with local governmental authorities, local community non-profits and the private sector, to preserve, restore, manage, and design our urban forest.

5.01.13. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall provide equitable urban forest resources and services throughout the city regardless of geographic, racial or social differences.

5.01.14. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall achieve recognition from local and national urban forestry programs. Develop a local recognition program for citizens, businesses, and agencies to encourage community stewardship of the urban forest.

5.01.15. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall establish a data management system; Proper integrated management of our urban forest requires basic information to be collected and readily available, such as quantity of canopy cover, condition and health of the forest, diversity of species, etc. Collecting data on the urban forest will help to reduce risks, identify and target priority planting areas, identify current and desired canopy cover, and quantify benefits provided by the urban forest.

5.01.16. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall collect and make available historical and new urban forestry information to the public.

5.01.17. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall collect data regarding Kabul City's Urban Forest, such as quantity of canopy cover, forest condition and diversity of species, to support the creation of an Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP).



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5.01.18. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall be a partner with the Ministry of Agriculture Livestock & Irrigation, non-profit organizations, the private sector and others to share urban forest and ecosystem resources.

5.01.19. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall conduct an outreach special event encouraging families to be active in their urban forest.

5.01.20. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall provide appropriate resources, advice, and educational materials to communicate policies, incentives, standards, and regulations in relation to the management of Kabul City's Urban Forest.

5.01.21. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall increase awareness of urban forest ecosystem issues such as proper plant selection, planting practices, and maintenance, invasive species, insects and diseases, and appropriate use of native species.

5.01.22. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall increase the awareness of the benefits of street trees and the urban forest, and the threats to their health, through a citywide education effort.

5.01.23. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall be partner with the Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation & Livestock, local governmental jurisdictions, Non-profit Organizations, the Private Sector and others in education and outreach efforts.

5.01.24. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall encourage and promote the preservation of trees, whenever practicable and appropriate, through education, outreach and incentives.

5.01.25. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall recognize, differ land use needs and characteristics, structure regulatory approaches in a manner that provides flexibility and various options to support the preservation of trees.

5.01.26. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall promote the long-term health and survival activities of trees that are retained during construction.

5.01.27. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall contribute to, and preserve the integrity of, the native remnant forest both within and adjacent to the right-of-way. Encourage the planting of native species, or compatible trees and plants that are found not to be a threat to the ecology of the native forest remnant in adjacent areas.

5.01.28. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall pursue retention of existing trees and vegetation that help stabilize steep slope areas in order to increase public safety, maintain slope stability, decrease soil erosion, and retain environmental function and natural character.

5.01.29. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall be partner with the Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation & Livestock, local governmental jurisdictions, Non-profit Organizations, and the Private Sector to increase sound preservation of our urban forest.

5.01.30. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall prioritize tree planting and landscaping in street and freeway rights-of-way, in particular in highly visible locations such as



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business districts and major corridors. Include utility rights-of-way, parks, school sites, and other publicly owned property when and where appropriate.

5.01.31. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall encourage the selection of project, location, and site condition appropriate species. Avoid and/or minimize conflicts with existing public infrastructure, natural systems, and/or utility facilities.

5.01.34. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall maintain a tree program to provide free trees for citizens to plant in the rights-of-way. Encourage residents and property owners to plant and maintain trees on their own property, especially in areas where planting strips are too narrow to sustain mature shade trees.

5.01.35. Encourage the planting of native species, especially trees, where appropriate.

5.01.36. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall help identify and encourage removal of invasive species and harmful wildflowers to protect native plant and animal habitat. Provide public education about the detriment of invasive and harmful wildflower species to the urban forest.

5.01.37. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall refrain from removing non-native plants solely because they are non-natives.

5.01.38. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall promote the survival of newly planted trees through proper maintenance using community education, management standards and regulations.

5.01.39. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall ensure that landscaping in new developments is properly cared for and survives, both during the plant establishment period and in perpetuity through such means as landscape management plans, maintenance agreements, and monitoring.

5.01.40. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall be partner with Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation & Livestock, local governmental jurisdictions, Non-profit Organizations, the Private Sector and others to increase the reforestation in Kabul City.

5.01.41. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall establish coordination among Kabul Municipality departments and utility providers when planning and designing public projects that include landscaping and tree planting.

5.01.42. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall be involved while design streets, sidewalks and other infrastructure with thorough consideration of trees during the planning, design and construction processes.

5.01.43. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall encourage retention and use of native soils for areas intended to be used for plants in new developments.

5.01.44. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall discourage the compaction of soils and encourage soil amendments in areas intended to be used for plants to increase or maintain infiltration of storm water on-site and reduce run-off.



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5.01.45. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall Provide adequate species diversity and an appropriate mix of tree types (evergreen vs. deciduous). Provide varied forms, textures, structure, flowering characteristics and other aesthetic benefits to enhance the types of street environments found in Kabul City.

5.01.46. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall encourage wide-ranging distribution of species throughout the Kabul City to protect the health of our urban forest.

5.01.47. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall provide a mixed-age tree population. Recognize and plan for growth and aging of the urban forest over time.

5.01.48. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall recycle all green waste generated by the maintenance of the urban forest. Encourage the highest and best sustainable uses of wood from removed trees.

5.01.49. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall discourage over-fertilization and reduce storm water runoff pollution by avoiding use of synthetic fertilizers, especially those with high nutrient levels, in landscapes. Encourage the use of low-nutrient naturally derived products to provide a more sustainable nutrient source to the urban forest when needed.

5.01.50. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall encourage the use of native and/or regionally produced edible plants or seeds for use in urban agriculture. Educate citizens about the selection and care of plants in a manner that does not threaten the health of the urban forest ecosystem.

5.01.51. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall increase support for urban agriculture and community gardens through partnerships and resource sharing.

5.01.52. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall identify existing and potential community garden sites and give high priority to community gardens in appropriate locations, in consideration of the full range of community benefits. Work to secure additional community gardening sites through long-term leases or through ownership as permanent public assets.

5.01.53. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall adopt zoning regulations that establish community gardens as a permitted or conditional use in appropriate locations.

5.01.54. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall apply proper management of the urban forest includes an understanding and agreement of who is responsible for maintaining and who owns trees and vegetation in the rights-of-way. Street trees are trees growing in the rights-of-way, usually next to an improved surface, such as a street, alley, or sidewalk.

5.01.55. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall develop partnerships for maintenance and enhancement of the rights-of-way and public property, such as Business Improvement Areas, Local Improvement Districts, and community stewardship groups.

5.01.56. Trees and other vegetation in the improved rights-of-way are typically owned by and shall be the responsibility of the against property owner to maintain in perpetuity, with proper permitting, unless the trees and other vegetation were planted by and/or routinely and historically maintained by Kabul Municipality or other public agency.



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5.01.57. Medians that are planted within the City on public streets, unless otherwise designated, shall typically be the responsibility of the Kabul Municipality to maintain. Medians may be used for natural drainage systems to manage storm water or landscaping. Where there is safety concerns, medians should not be used for community gardens.

5.01.58. Traffic circles and other similar traffic calming devices in neighborhoods are typically the responsibility of the neighborhood to maintain with proper permitting. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall encourage planting of trees and shrubs that are low maintenance. Plantings shall not pose a public safety hazard. Due to safety concerns, traffic circles, bulb-outs, and other similar traffic calming devices should not be used for community gardens.

5.01.59. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall consider potential approaches to support, facilitate and/or actively manage the ongoing maintenance of street trees, in recognition of the benefits they provide to the public and the capacity of Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery to effectively maintain them.

5.01.60. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall maintain and update the Recommended Street Tree List to encourage diverse plantings in developments, especially those that support wildlife habitat.

5.01.61. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall prohibit poor practices that harm the health of the tree, such as topping or indiscriminate pruning, and the inappropriate use of spikes, of street trees and trees located on Kabul Municipality land.

5.01.62. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall increase the dedicated airspace and dedicated root volume available for street tree planting to provide better accommodation of large canopy street trees and assist with achieving the optimum canopy coverage goal.

5.01.63. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall aim to preserve trees when sidewalk infrastructure conflicts occur, whenever practicable and appropriate, provided the species is appropriate for its location. Explore the use of alternative sidewalk materials as appropriate.

5.01.64. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall develop standards and educate the public about appropriate species when planting under overhead utilities, over underground utilities and adjacent to streets to reduce future conflicts.

5.01.65. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall allow street trees and trees located on Kabul Municipality-owned property to be trimmed away from buildings, if desired by the abutting property owner.

5.01.66. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall retain existing street trees whenever practicable, appropriate and desired by the abutting property owner(s). Provide education and assistance for their necessary care.

5.01.67. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall retain as many mature trees as practicable and appropriate during development of Municipality-owned land.

5.01.68. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall discourage the removal of safe, healthy and appropriate trees located on Kabul Municipality property or within rights-of-way,



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while recognizing the abutting property owners' discretion to remove street trees, with proper permitting.

5.01.69. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall develop standards for park trees, and other vegetation.

5.01.70. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall develop Park Management and Maintenance plan.

5.01.71. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall protect designated publicly beneficial views through proper ongoing maintenance and management of open space areas, subject to resource availability.

5.01.72. Kabul Municipality Department of Greenery shall achieve a balance between the often-conflicting needs/desires of the public and private interest in trees and vegetation through accepting, allowing and working toward partial views over or through Kabul Municipality properties and rights-of-way.

5.01.73. In the case of areas that have been landscaped to enhance the pedestrian experience, such as parkways and avenues, the landscaping plan/design should be given precedence in tree management decisions of Kabul Municipality.

6.0 Policy Evaluation

This policy should be regularly evaluated to ensure it is enabling and effectively moving Kabul Municipality towards its sustainability goal.

7.0 Policy Enforcement

The contents of this policy are enforceable after His Excellency the Mayor's approval.