



WCRC's Tree Policy FAQs

The Washtenaw County Board of County Road Commissioners is in the process of developing a tree policy to provide clear guidance to staff working on trees in the road right-of-way. This draft was developed after consulting staff and legal counsel, reviewing existing practices, and surveying other road agencies, townships and cities. [Click here to learn more.](#)

WCRC held a virtual public meeting on December 3, 2020 to receive public comment on this topic. WCRC is also collecting written comment on this draft policy through December 18, 2020.

There are three ways to provide written comment on this draft:

1. [Click here to complete an online comment form.](#)
2. Email comments to wcrc@wcroads.org
3. Mail comments to WCRC, RE: Draft Tree Policy, 555 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

WCRC staff and board will review all the public comments received and consider adjustments to the draft policy at the January 19, 2021 working session.

Frequently Asked Questions

At the December 3, 2020 public meeting, a number of questions were asked of WCRC Staff. Below are the answers to these questions and more. Still have questions? Contact WCRC at (734) 761-1500.

Q: Does this policy include special consideration for “landmark” or “champion” trees?

A: In its present draft, no, there is no provision for the size or type of tree, including landmark or champion trees.

Q: Can WCRC relocate trees instead of removing them?

A: In most cases tree relocation is not feasible for WCRC for both economic and future maintenance reasons.



Q: Can WCRC prioritize removing dead tree and branches along the road?

A: Unfortunately, WCRC simply doesn't have the resources to remove every dead or dying tree/branch along the road quickly.

Historically there has been a major backlog of requests to remove dead or dying trees and branches. WCRC is still trying to catch up. In the last 5 years (2014-2019), we have spent more than 17,000 hours removing trees that have fallen into the road.

If a property owner wants to remove a tree located in the public road right-of-way, the property owner must seek WCRC permission through the permit application process before the owner engages in any such work. The permit application fee may be waived at WCRC's discretion.

Q: Distracted driving is the cause of many crashes, why not just teach people to be better drivers?

A: Distracted driving is a major problem in the county, state and country. We support any effort to teach people to be safer, less distracted, drivers.

As a road commission, we don't have control over how people drive but we can help to make the road environment safer which sometimes means removing trees along the roadside.

Q: What specific guidelines do WCRC staff or contractors follow when trimming trees?

A: When resources allow, WCRC staff are instructed to trim trees to ensure a clear way of travel and to minimize the frequency of future tree trimming. This is for the safety of the traveling public, including taller commercial vehicles such as school buses, fire trucks, garbage trucks and delivery vehicles.

In addition, WCRC takes the threat of Oak Wilt seriously. We strive to avoid trimming between April 15 and July 15 when oaks are particularly susceptible. If cutting is required, a sealant is immediately applied to the final cut to help prevent infection.

Q: What happens to a roadside tree once you cut it down?

A: It depends on the situation.

If the impacted property owner has asked for the wood, it will be placed at an agreed upon location on the property owner's private property.

If the property owner has declined the wood, it will either be placed away from the traveled portion of the road, chipped up on site or removed from the site for disposal.