

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 300 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 768-4141 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • INTERNET: [www.honolulu.gov](http://www.honolulu.gov)




KIRK CALDWELL  
MAYOR

ROY K. AMEMIYA, JR.  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
  
GEORGETTE T. DEEMER  
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR

Mayor's Directive No. 20-14  
July 1, 2020

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: ALL DEPARTMENT AND AGENCY HEADS

FROM: KIRK CALDWELL, MAYOR 

SUBJECT: CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU ACTIONS TO ADDRESS  
INCREASING TEMPERATURES AND THE URBAN TREE CANOPY

**I. PURPOSE**

It is the purpose of this Directive to establish policies and institute practices that improve management of City and County of Honolulu (City) trees in accordance with the City's *Urban Tree Plan* (Plan; March 2019, available at [tiny.cc/oahutrees](http://tiny.cc/oahutrees)) and Action 33 of the City's *O'ahu Resilience Strategy* (Strategy; May 2019, available at [resilientoahu.org/resilience-strategy](http://resilientoahu.org/resilience-strategy)). A healthier tree canopy will improve the quality of life in the City and mitigate the increasing temperatures from climate change measured across our communities.

**II. BACKGROUND**

As climate change is dually caused by heat trapping carbon emissions and loss of the ecosystem components which mitigate those emissions, such as trees, it is necessary to expand the City's shade-providing, carbon-sequestering urban forest as both a climate change mitigation and adaptation action. The City's urban tree canopy assessment (UTC; revised 2017, available at [tiny.cc/oahutrees](http://tiny.cc/oahutrees)), revealed that the City's public and private urban forest declined nearly 5 percent from 2010 through 2013.

Trees are long-term green infrastructure investments in our future with significant returns on investment, providing critical environmental and social services in urban areas. For example, the heat mitigation and stormwater management benefits of a healthy urban forest can result in significant dividends on cooling and polluted runoff management costs, while also working to address other community environmental and social justice disparities. A 2007 Honolulu

Municipal Forest Resource Analysis of the City's trees (available at: [tiny.cc/oahutrees](http://tiny.cc/oahutrees)) concludes that for every dollar spent on tree care, there is \$3 in benefits.

Therefore, it is important that the City maintain accurate information on the numbers and condition of City street and park trees for asset management.

The 2007 analysis concluded there were an estimated 235,800 municipal trees in the City, 60% of which were street trees and the remainder trees in city parks. A subsample of nearly 44,000 trees were determined to provide the following benefits: 1) electricity saved – \$8/tree/year; 2) carbon dioxide storage – 25,529 tons; 3) net carbon dioxide removal – 3,340 tons carbon dioxide/year, valued at \$22,314; and 4) stormwater runoff management – 35 million gallons/year, valued at \$350,104. Trees are one of the few pieces of City infrastructure that accrue value over time. The management of our inventory of urban trees is an important municipal service.

Additionally, to prepare ourselves for a changing climate and to provide for connectivity and social cohesion in our communities the City must invest now in a tree canopy that will be able to mature over time to provide the shade, cooling and ecosystem services that will be increasingly required over the coming decades. The Hawaiian practice of mālama 'āina (care for the land) urges us to improve our environments not only in conservation lands, but equitably and fairly throughout the communities and neighborhoods that will be most impacted by climate change and urban heat.

### **III. SCOPE**

These guidelines shall apply to all executive branch City departments and agencies.

### **IV. POLICY**

Each City department and agency shall, consistent with the Plan and Strategy, consider the climate change mitigation and environmental benefits of a healthy urban tree canopy when making decisions that affect the City's trees. This policy requires the protection of existing trees that pose no threat to human health or safety or undermine an essential government function, and the planting of more trees to expand our urban canopy.

**V. PROCEDURES**

All City departments and agencies are required to:

1. Use the most current versions of the Plan and Strategy, as well as, the O'ahu Community Heat Assessment (Heat Assessment; 2019, available at [bit.ly/oahuheatmap](http://bit.ly/oahuheatmap)), and UTC to inform and prioritize actions to maintain and enhance the urban forest;
2. Adhere to the existing policies and ordinances of the City to effectuate a healthy and expanding urban forest (see, "How Hawaii's Counties Regulate Trees, Reference Guide and Research Tables" (2019; available at [dlnr.hawaii.gov/forestry/lap/kaulunani/resources/](http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/forestry/lap/kaulunani/resources/)))
3. Work cooperatively to consolidate disparate policy sections and standards within the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, and establish and implement a comprehensive tree ordinance consistent with the policies of this Directive;
4. Obtain an independent tree assessment prior to the design phase on projects that may affect existing trees or the potential for new trees, (for example, road repaving, sidewalk reconstruction, City facilities, and complete streets projects) and submit it to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Division of Urban Forestry (DUF) for review and approval;
5. Receive approval from DPR DUF for any and all requests for City tree removals and/or relocations prior to the preparation of construction plans, except when emergency situations necessitate the removal of a tree or trees (e.g., sewer failure/spill, tree failure, or vehicle accident), and notify DUF of the tree removal within three business days;
6. For projects that impact trees, the preparation and execution of public notification (e.g., The Outdoor Circle, neighborhood board, district councilmember, State legislators, community interest groups), and any action necessary to defend and justify the work is the responsibility of each Department. Early public notification announcements, including attending informational meetings during the project design phase is encouraged;
7. Calculate the value of trees using a method approved by DPR to determine the current annual benefits and future opportunity costs of proposed tree removals in order to evaluate the impact of removal or mitigate the removal with acceptable compensatory measures (at this

time, DPR approves of the US Forest Service i-Tree platform (available at: [itreetools.org/tools](http://itreetools.org/tools)));

8. Authorize and recognize the utilization and expenditure of short-term capital funds for the design, installation, establishment, and early tree care period of new tree plantings;
9. Record directly and/or provide sufficient data on a monthly basis to DPR DUF to ensure that all new trees either planted directly by the City, by City contractors, or accepted from new development are recorded in the “100k Trees O’ahu” GIS mapping system (available at: [bit.ly/100ktreesoahu](http://bit.ly/100ktreesoahu));
10. Work cooperatively with community partners, non-profits, businesses, and residents to facilitate partnership programs for the planting, watering, and early tree care for new City street and park trees; and
11. Work cooperatively to establish and implement a comprehensive carbon offset ordinance, ensuring that the carbon emissions of each department and agency are mitigated on an annual basis through an internal carbon offset budget item that supports tree planting and maintenance in the urban forest canopy.

## **VI. RESPONSIBILITIES**

All City departments and agencies under the Mayor’s jurisdiction shall work cooperatively to ensure the success of the missions outlined above. When appropriate, all City departments and agencies under the Mayor’s jurisdiction shall share this directive with independent agencies, City-affiliated entities, and City-related institutions and encourage them to work to help advance these efforts and adopt similar initiatives. All actions and outcomes shall be in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws.

## **VII. GENERAL**

This Directive shall take effect on July 1, 2020 and remain in effect until amended or rescinded in writing by the Mayor.