



HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM

The Heritage Tree Ordinance (#010-08) was adopted by City Council on June 10, 2010 which established a Heritage Tree Program for Williamsburg. The purpose of the program is to identify, promote awareness, maintain and protect designated Heritage Trees located within the City. The Program acknowledges that Heritage Trees, whether located on public or private property, are distinct and unique living resources of the community. It is the intent of this Heritage Tree Program to increase public awareness of Heritage Trees located in the City as well as to provide reasonable assurance that Williamsburg’s tree heritage will continue for future generations. The intent of this Program is not to be regulatory or punitive but rather to heighten public consciousness by informing and educating the public of the benefits that not only Heritage Trees, but trees in general, provide to the community. The Program is not intended to be a means to obstruct or stop the development of private or public property. The Heritage Tree Program may be amended from time to time by the City Manager.

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HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM GOALS:

The Williamsburg Heritage Tree Program has four major goals:

- To establish a process of designating Heritage Trees located on either public or private property.
- To encourage proper maintenance, care and protection of Heritage Trees.
- To inform and educate the public regarding the notable tree resources in the City.
- To increase public awareness of the environmental benefit of Heritage Trees and trees in general.

TREE DEFINITION:

A tree as defined below can be considered for Heritage Tree nomination:

Any perennial plant or grove of perennial plants growing on public or private property, having a self-supporting woody main stem or trunk usually characterized by the ability to grow to considerable height/size and the development of woody branches at some distance above the ground.

CRITERIA FOR HERITAGE TREE NOMINATION:

Any tree as defined above growing on public or private property within the boundaries of the City of Williamsburg that meets the following criteria as described below can be considered for Heritage Tree nomination.

Any tree that is being considered for nomination as a Heritage Tree must meet the following three criteria:

1. Must be architecturally sound, true to its genetic form, and not topped or poorly pruned.
2. Must have full potential to reach mature size and form, taking into consideration site constraints such as adjacent buildings, roadways, utilities, etc.
3. Must be visible from publicly accessible location(s).

Upon meeting the above three criteria, any tree being considered for nomination as a Heritage Tree then must meet at least one of the following descriptions:

1. Heritage tree – Notable for its historic or cultural significance.
2. Memorial tree – Commemorating memorial to a person, location, or event.
3. Specimen tree – Notable by virtue of its outstanding size and quality for its particular species.
4. Street tree – Notable grove or tree located in the public right-of-way or on private property as authorized by the owner and placed or planted there by the city.

CATEGORIES OF HERITAGE TREE DESIGNATION:

- **Designated Heritage Tree** – Private Property
- **Designated Heritage Tree** – Public Property

Designated Heritage Tree - Private Property

The City shall provide the following incentives to encourage private property owners (Owner) to preserve and protect Designated Heritage Trees:

- The City will provide a Heritage Tree plaque for trees so designated.
- The City will provide to the Owner recommendations regarding the proper care and maintenance of a Designated Heritage Tree.
- A Designated Heritage Tree may be pruned by the Owner. The Owner is encouraged to trim a Designated Heritage Tree in accordance with ISA standards so that the pruning would not reduce the tree's height or crown diameter, alter the tree's general appearance, increase the tree's susceptibility to insects or disease or otherwise increase its risk of mortality. Upon request, the City will consult with the Owner regarding acceptable pruning methods and techniques.
- If considering removal or an action that would damage a Designated Heritage Tree, the City will, upon request, consult with the Owner regarding possible alternatives to address the condition(s) necessitating removal or potential damage to the tree.

Designated Heritage Tree – Public Property

The following conditions shall apply to designated Heritage Trees on public property:

- The City is responsible for maintenance of designated heritage trees on City property.

- The City Manager must approve in writing removal of heritage trees on City property or any activity that may result in potential damage to a designated heritage tree.

HERITAGE TREE NOMINATION (Form Attached):

Nominations for Heritage Tree designation, for trees located on either public or private property may be made by any resident, property owner or business owner of Williamsburg and shall be filed with the City Manager’s Office.

Private Property Heritage Tree Nomination:

Nominations for trees located on private property shall be submitted by the Applicant using the Heritage Tree Nomination form which includes the following:

1. Contact Information
Provide the name, address, email address and telephone number of the Applicant submitting the nomination and the owner of the tree if different from the Applicant.
2. Description of Nominated Tree(s)
Identify tree species, estimate diameter, height, crown width, and age, as well as any additional characteristics on which the nomination is based.
3. Location of Nominated Tree(s)
Street address (nearest to tree), location within a park.
4. Justification
Using Criteria for Heritage Tree Nomination listed above, provide rationalization and justification specific to the tree(s) being nominated for Heritage Tree Designation.
5. Property Owner Consent
Private Property owner(s) must consent in writing to a tree nominated for Heritage Tree designation. The owner of the tree must signify consent by signing the Heritage Tree Nomination form. The signature of the applicant authorizes the City to enter the property to view the tree submitted for nomination.

Public Property Heritage Tree Nomination:

Nominations for trees located on public property shall be submitted by the Applicant using the Heritage Tree Nomination form which includes the following:

1. Contact Information

Provide the name, address, email address, and telephone number of the Applicant submitting the nomination.

2. Description of Nominated Tree(s)

Identify tree species, estimate diameter, height, crown width, and age, as well as any additional characteristics on which the nomination is based.

3. Location of Nominated Tree(s)

Street address (nearest to tree), location within a park.

4. Justification

Using Criteria for Heritage Tree Nomination listed above, provide rationalization and justification specific to the tree(s) being nominated for Heritage Tree Designation.

5. Consent

The City Manager must consent in writing to a tree nominated for Heritage Tree designation by signing the Heritage Tree Nomination form.

Upon receipt of a nomination for a public property or private property Heritage Tree designation, the Heritage Tree Committee shall review same for completeness. The Applicant can re-submit the nomination upon addressing any noted deficiencies.

CONSIDERATION OF A HERITAGE TREE NOMINATION:

A Heritage Tree Committee (Committee) as described below shall meet twice annually to consider each Heritage Tree Nomination:

- City representative shall be the Landscape Superintendent or as assigned by the City Manager
- Colonial Williamsburg Foundation representative
- College of William and Mary representative

The City manager shall be responsible for designating members to serve on the Committee. He may also modify the makeup or size of the Committee.

As determined by the Committee, an ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) Certified Arborist may also assist the Committee in the review and consideration of nominated tree(s).

The Heritage Tree Committee may nominate and recommend tree(s) for heritage tree designation by City Council in accordance with the above guidelines.

A tree nomination as determined by the Committee to be complete and meeting the intent, purpose and spirit of the Heritage Tree Program shall be approved

and recommended to City Council for designation as a Heritage Tree. The Committee may, at its discretion, include conditions of approval to the designation.

A tree nomination as determined by the Committee to either not be complete or not meet the intent, purpose and spirit of the Heritage Tree Program shall be disapproved.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

A key goal of this Program is promoting awareness by informing and educating the public of the benefits that Heritage Trees and trees in general provide to the community. This goal will be achieved by:

- A Heritage Tree Nomination Form was designed for uniformity and consistency of application and consideration of nominated trees shall be developed. The Form will also be used as a tool in the historical record keeping of nominated as well as designated trees.
- Development of a Heritage Tree Plaque that would be placed at each designated Heritage Tree to promote public awareness. The Plaque would clearly identify the tree species, and other information as may be determined by the Committee.
- Members of the Heritage Tree Committee will act as Ambassadors to inform the community of the Heritage Tree Program.
- Members of the Committee in concert with the City's Communications Specialist will promote the Heritage Tree Program in City mailings, City's web page, cable channel, and social media.
- The City's Landscape Superintendent or another designee of the City Manager shall prepare and maintain an inventory of all designated Heritage Trees. The Heritage Tree Inventory shall include the location, brief description, photograph(s) and other relevant information of each designated Heritage Tree. The inventory will be available to the public via the City's website.