



## Responses to Questions Posed During & Post the Tree Planting Partner Biannual Meeting

The following question was posed during the Department of Parks & Parkways (PKW) Tree Planting Partner Biannual Meeting on July 14, 2023.

1. A planting partner was “in discussions with PKW about possibly leaving stakes inground for 2 years due to increasing weather events and looks forward to the final edict.”

**PKW RESPONSE:** PKW approves leaving stakes in the ground for 2 years, provided the ties are removed from the trunk by November 30<sup>th</sup> of the first full year of establishment. The stakes must be removed by November 30<sup>th</sup> of the second full year of establishment.

The following questions were submitted to the PKW after the Tree Planting Partner Biannual Meeting.

1. “We would like to clarify your standards with regards to small/medium/large trees. In your [Residential Tree Planting Permit Process brochure](#) it is stated that a small tree is a tree with a mature height under 40ft. It is also stated that a small tree is a tree with <20’ canopy diameter at maturity. I would like to confirm that a small tree is a tree with mature height under 40 ft.”

**PKW RESPONSE:** Confirmed; trees 40 feet in height or less at maturity meet the PKW definition of “small.”

2. “We would like to discuss plans for planting understory trees. In the past, many of our requests for understory plantings have been rejected. In order to reach 10% canopy goals, we will need to plant understory trees. Will your guidelines be updated to include understory trees?”

**PKW RESPONSE:** PKW must plant sustainably, bearing in mind the limited resources available for long-term maintenance, public safety, and the need for fiscal responsibility. PKW is committed to the ecological benefits of understory trees, particularly in parks and wide neutral grounds. PKW policy for understory trees remains contingent upon the proposed location of the understory tree not undermining the long-term viability of trees located near pedestrian and vehicular activity (i.e., heavy shade causing weakened growth, shortened life span, pathogen susceptibility, limb dropping, tree damage due to crossed limbs, etc.). This is for the protection of pedestrian and property concerns as well as for limiting dispatch of maintenance crews.

3. “Can we plant medium trees (ex: Kay Parris Magnolia or Red maples) under taller power lines? There is precedent for red maples under power lines in parts of the city.”

**PKW RESPONSE:** Permission for larger tree species under power lines must be granted by Entergy.

4. “We have several new tree types we are interested in potentially planting. Is there a standard form for your RFP for new or alternative species?”

**PKW RESPONSE:** Requests for new or alternative species should be submitted in writing to [parksandparkways@nola.gov](mailto:parksandparkways@nola.gov). Confirm the proposed species meets the criteria outlined in the [Checklist for Right-of-Way Planting Projects](#).

5. “Some of our trees were moved. When this happens, can we please be updated on where they are moved to?”

**PKW RESPONSE:** PKW will provide locations of relocated trees upon request, depending upon availability of that information.

6. “When we see trees in danger, what should do at that point beyond reaching out to 311/Roadwork? What is your best recommended course of action to ensure the tree is kept safe in the interim before 311/Roadwork can get there?”

**PKW RESPONSE:** The [Roadwork.NOLA.gov](http://Roadwork.NOLA.gov) website includes the City’s designated point of contact information for each construction project. PKW recommends contacting the representative directly with [parksandparkways@nola.gov](mailto:parksandparkways@nola.gov) copied. Additionally, the issue should be reported to 311. All construction projects affecting City property are bound to the tree protection specifications and details available on the DPW and PKW websites.

7. “Technically, [PKW] is responsible for maintenance after 1 yr. We will remove our tie and stakes, but technically it's up to you to straighten everything after a storm and to prune. This is not getting done - we have been staking all our trees that need assistance after storms, and throughout the year. Residents are concerned about maintenance and pruning. We need to be able to tell them that it is your responsibility and have it actually get done. How can we work together to ensure that all the trees are taken care of and properly maintained?”

**PKW RESPONSE:** Per the [Checklist for Right-of-Way Planting Projects](#), in cases where applicants receive permission for installation of trees of less than 2-inch caliper size, the organization that installs the tree(s) or adjacent property owner accepts responsibility for maintenance until the tree meets the 2-inch caliper requirement. Pruning of public trees must be approved in advance by PKW and must be supervised by a licensed arborist. PKW will provide a tree maintenance workshop in November 2023 for planting partners.

8. “Other cities are limiting planting of one species to 10% of the total to increase bio-diversity. While we are not necessarily suggesting that (it is hard to find quality trees in that many types at this point), we do think it would be beneficial to bring in additional tree types to help protect the overall canopy against pests/diseases, help create a more diverse habitat for wildlife and bring variety to plantings.”

**PKW RESPONSE:** PKW agrees, increasing tree diversity to prevent the vulnerability created by monoculture of species is a longstanding goal of PKW. PKW utilizes a combination of native and adapted species for this purpose. PKW encourages additional canopy diversification via the Species Selection process outlined in the [Checklist for Right-of-Way Planting Projects](#).

9. “How do we ensure that all partners are being treated equitably and abiding by the same rules?”

**PKW RESPONSE:** All planting partners are held to the same permitting standards, which are publicly posted on the PKW website. Any changes to the standards will be shared during the subsequent Biannual Tree Planting Partner Meetings and updated on the PKW website. Meeting Notes, Addendums, etc. will be distributed to all partners and posted on the PKW website to ensure all partners are familiar with the standards, being treated equitably, and are abiding by the same rules, including uniform access to City personnel.

10. “We need to be ready to hit the ground running when the funding comes down so we don’t lose a planting season. How can we streamline permitting...for partners planting thousands of trees in a year?”

**PKW RESPONSE:** PKW is working to increase dedicated staffing in anticipation of the need for additional permitting.

11. “Is there a way partners can work together to solve the tree supply problem? Does [PKW] have any insight into this issue?”

**PKW RESPONSE:** Planting partners may consider using trees as small as 5 foot in height for planting projects, provided the trees are not proposed for neutral grounds and that the additional maintenance terms are met per the [Checklist for Right-of-Way Planting Projects](#). Additionally, partners may consider teaming up to procure larger tree shipments from more distant nurseries, provided the trees are sourced within the latitude requirements of the PKW [Planting Specifications](#). Tree sourcing websites, such as [PlantANT.com](#), are also great resources for sourcing plants.

12. “Can we streamline/standardize the permitting process for not only right of ways but also public areas (parks/schools/bioswales)? Who should partners be working with and how should that go?”

**PKW RESPONSE:** Permission from the property owner must be secured for planting on properties owned by schools and other non-City stakeholders. PKW will assist where possible, however, PKW does not have jurisdiction in such locations. The current planting policies for trees on City rights-of-way and parks will continue to apply to all projects, regardless of funding source.

The following questions are regarding the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service’s Urban and Community Forestry Program, which may not pertain to all planting partners.

13. “If full funding happens, how should we proceed with the plans for these areas - does [PKW] want to plan and have us plant or should we get plans approved by [PKW]?”

**PKW RESPONSE:** PKW has applied to install trees on neutral grounds as part of the USDA Program application. Partners must confirm there are no duplications of effort prior to planning for any neutral ground tree installations. If the USDA funds are granted, PKW may assist partners with planting plan development of additional neutral ground and park locations upon request.

14. “We are very concerned about the possibility of shortening the tree planting window, especially with regards to [USDA] funding as our proposal (and all of our funding proposals) was written with a 6 month planting window in mind. With or without that funding, planting on the scale that we need to as a city to meet reforestation plan goals needs the longer window. It is a lot of work and not a lot of time to complete it as is. We do need to do something to make sure we have healthy and well-established trees, but hopefully it will not be something that takes months off of our planting window.”

**PKW RESPONSE:** PKW shares this concern. PKW must adapt to emerging climactic trends, taking into consideration the unprecedented dual heat and drought conditions New Orleans is experiencing. PKW is observing casualties of established trees around the city, in addition to increased challenges establishing newly installed trees. At this time, PKW encourages as much planting as possible between November and January, however, there are no changes planned regarding the existing policy defining the planting season as November through March 15<sup>th</sup>.