

# **Public Right-of-Way Landscaping Maintenance**

**Who is responsible? You are.**

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**[www.TheParksatMillCreek.com](http://www.TheParksatMillCreek.com)**

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## Why am I responsible to maintain the parking strip landscaping and sidewalk adjacent to my lot?

The public right-of-way in the City of Mill Creek consists of the streets and sidewalks and parking strips and any alteration or maintenance in the right-of-way is governed by the City. In The Parks at Mill Creek community the public right-of-way includes the planting strips between the street and the sidewalk. The street trees and landscaping in these planting strips are also governed by the City. The City designates certain maintenance items, such as keeping the right-of-way clear and maintaining the landscaping, to be the responsibility of the homeowner adjacent to a section of the right-of-way; MCMC 12.06 MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC SIDEWALKS AND PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY. The Parks HOA budgets funds to replace damaged or dying street trees and to prune the street trees to government specifications for aesthetic uniformity.

As street trees mature in the City there is an increasing issue of root damage to the sidewalks. As a result the City annually budgets funds for the replacement or shaving of sidewalk sections that have been raised by tree roots. In 2016 the city began including funds for street tree replacement on a limited scale to mitigate future sidewalk damage. The Parks Homeowners Association does not have the resources for large scale replacement of trees to supplement the City's efforts.

In addition to what the City of Mill Creek and The Parks HOA are able to do there has been an interest by individual homeowners in the replacement of street trees adjacent to their lots at their own expense. The Board of Directors has reviewed this proposal and at the May 16, 2016 Board meeting made the decision to allow homeowners to replace street trees at the homeowner's expense providing certain conditions of application for HOA approval are met. For information about homeowner replacement of street trees refer to the "[Street Tree Replacement Specifications and Homeowner Initiated Replacement Process](#)" pamphlet on the HOA website.

## Now that I know why I am responsible, what do I do?

It's simple. Keeping the landscape configuration in the parking strip of lawn and trees, consistent with the aesthetic theme of the neighborhood, you just maintain it as you would your front yard. Keep it watered, fertilized, mowed and weed free. (For more information on lawn maintenance see the "[Lawn Maintenance Tips](#)" pamphlet on the HOA website.) **DO NOT prune** your street tree; this will be arranged on a regular basis as needed by the HOA for consistency and to city specifications.



Do Not Prune Street Trees

In addition to the landscaping you are expected to keep the sidewalks abutting your lot clear of snow, ice, dirt, debris, leaf accumulations, and any other obstacles or obstructions that would hinder or interfere with safe and easy pedestrian use. Also Plant material such as grass or weeds should be removed from cracks, voids or openings in the sidewalk surface. Sidewalk repair is the responsibility of the city. If you believe your sidewalk needs repair contact the Public Works Department; contact info is on the city's website.

Keeping the street and gutters free of debris also has a financial benefit to you and your neighbors. Although the city cleans the drain basins along the street there are several drain basins in The Parks along with a large storm vault that the HOA is responsible for cleaning. If debris fills the street basins it then flows on to the basins on The Parks property and into the storm vault causing more frequent cleaning. This cleaning is expensive, so doing your part to minimize it helps the HOA Board of Directors to keep your HOA dues the lowest in the area.

## A new tree has been planted in front of my home, how do I care for it?

Very glad you asked, because if the tree fails to thrive due to your neglect it will be your responsibility to cover the cost of its replacement.

Once again it is simple. During the first growing season it is critical that the tree get plenty of water. This is made easier with a tree watering bag (available at local hardware and home improvement centers and online). These will slowly deliver about 12 to 15 gallons of water over about the same number of hours making the chore of hand watering less tedious and eliminating the waste of water running into the street.

In addition to your new tree the surrounding sod that was removed has been replaced with either grass seed or sod and will also need regular watering.

During the city's street tree pilot replacement in Division 7 in the summer of 2016 the city provided the watering schedule guidance below. It worked well. (If your new tree was planted earlier in the year than July, substitute that time for your starting point in the schedule.)



Tree watering bag and tree "ring"

<b>City of Mill Creek—2016 Concrete Replacement Program</b>			
<b>Road Frontage Watering Schedule (July - October)</b>			
<b>60 - 70°F</b>	<b>70 - 75°F</b>	<b>75 - 85°F</b>	<b>85°F+</b>
<b>Every Third Day</b>	<b>Every Other Day</b>	<b>Every Day</b>	<b>Twice A Day</b>
<b>•Soak mulch around tree for 5 minutes</b>			
<b>•Lightly spray grass area for 3 minutes</b>			
<b>•Fill water bag</b>			
<b>*On days with heavy rain, skip a day of watering</b>			



The new city planting specifications require an area of mulch around the tree to inhibit competition for nutrients between the tree and grass. This must be maintained and should be renewed every couple of years. If you would like to add a tree "ring" to define the border between the grass and mulch and to better contain the mulch you can add a low profile border of not more than 2" above the level of the sidewalk and curb. Please remember to submit your plans for the addition of a tree "ring" to the ACC for approval.

