



AGENDA REPORT

City Council Meeting

TODAY'S DATE: May 12, 2026

MEETING DATE: May 20, 2026

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Erik Bush, PLA; Project Manager, City Forester

SUBJECT: Update - draft City Code Amendment and Arboricultural Manual Update

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

The City of Sandpoint has an adopted Arboricultural Manual (2003) that establishes specifications, standards, and practices related to the City's urban forestry program. Section 7-15-13 of City Code references criteria for historic and heritage trees as described in the Arboricultural Manual; however, the manual does not currently contain a section specifically addressing Heritage Trees or associated evaluation criteria.

Over the past year, the Urban Forestry Commission met to discuss, refine, and ultimately recommend definitions and evaluation categories for Heritage Trees. The Historical category definition was also reviewed and confirmed by the Architectural and Historic Preservation Commission.

The proposed Heritage Tree categories are as follows:

- Historical — A tree which by virtue of its association with or contribution to a historical structure or district, or its association with a historical event.
- Specimen — Age, size, health, or aesthetic factors may qualify the tree as unique among the species in Sandpoint, Idaho.
- Rare — One or very few of a kind, or is unusual in some form of growth or species.
- Significant Grove — Outstanding or significant groups of trees that impact the city's landscape.
- Ecological — A tree that provides a unique ecological benefit or service to the urban environment.

In addition to the proposed definitions, the Urban Forestry Commission also developed evaluation criteria and defining metrics for each category to help ensure Heritage Tree nominations are reviewed consistently and objectively.

The proposed Arboricultural Manual update would establish a formal Heritage Trees Recognition Program and incorporate these definitions, evaluation criteria, nomination procedures, and program guidance into the manual.

The proposed code amendment also clarifies that Heritage Tree recognition is voluntary and non-regulatory and does not impose restrictions on property rights, maintenance obligations, permit requirements, or future land use.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A; Proposed Code Amendment and Arboricultural Manual will come back to council for a approve at a future meeting in June.

ACTION:

N/A.

WILL THERE BE ANY FINANCIAL IMPACT? N/A HAS THIS ITEM BEEN BUDGETED? N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

Proposed Amendment to City Code 7-15-13

Proposed Amendment to the Arboricultural Manual