

# Comprehensive Streets Program: Vegetation Control

City Council Business Meeting

March 6, 2023



# Background and Reference Materials

**Did you know Comprehensive Streets can be about building community through everyone helping do their part?**

Please review EngagePT website for background for all chapters and information to date (2020 to present). This background serves as the fundamental basis for development of funding consideration and actions that comprise development of strategies for sustainable streets. Each chapter of the program is addressed.

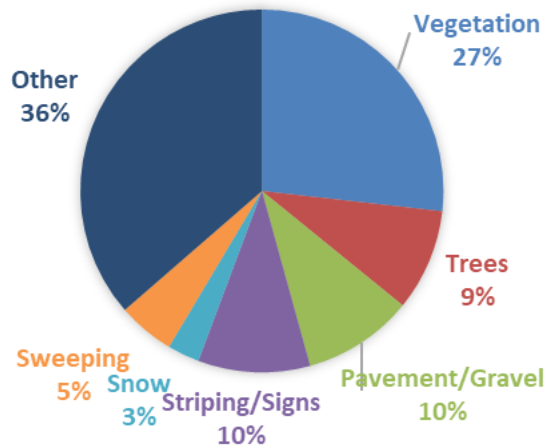
<https://cityofpt.us/engagept/page/infrastructure>



# Background: Street Operations

An element of the Comprehensive Street Program and associated with the 2023 Banked Capacity projects is to shift staff resources away from vegetation control to pavement restoration. Recall labor allocations below.

2021 OPERATIONS WORK ORDER TRACKING



Category	Hours	Labor
Vegetation	1595.00	108,460.00
Trees	540.50	36,754.00
Pavement/Gravel	586.50	39,882.00
Stripping/Signs	594.50	40,426.00
Snow	170.00	11,560.00
Sweeping	301.50	20,502.00
Other	2166.50	147,322.00
Total	5954.50	404,906.00



# Background – Public Rights of Way

As a reference, the fundamentals of rights of way responsibilities were presented to the Parks, Recreation, Trees, and Trails Advisory Board on February 22, 2022. See the video below at 53 minutes into the meeting.

[https://cityofpt.granicus.com/player/clip/2371?view\\_id=4&redirect=true&h=8dc4b24c93af852c46585976103dab24](https://cityofpt.granicus.com/player/clip/2371?view_id=4&redirect=true&h=8dc4b24c93af852c46585976103dab24)

A similar presentation was provided at the July 11, 2022 work session.

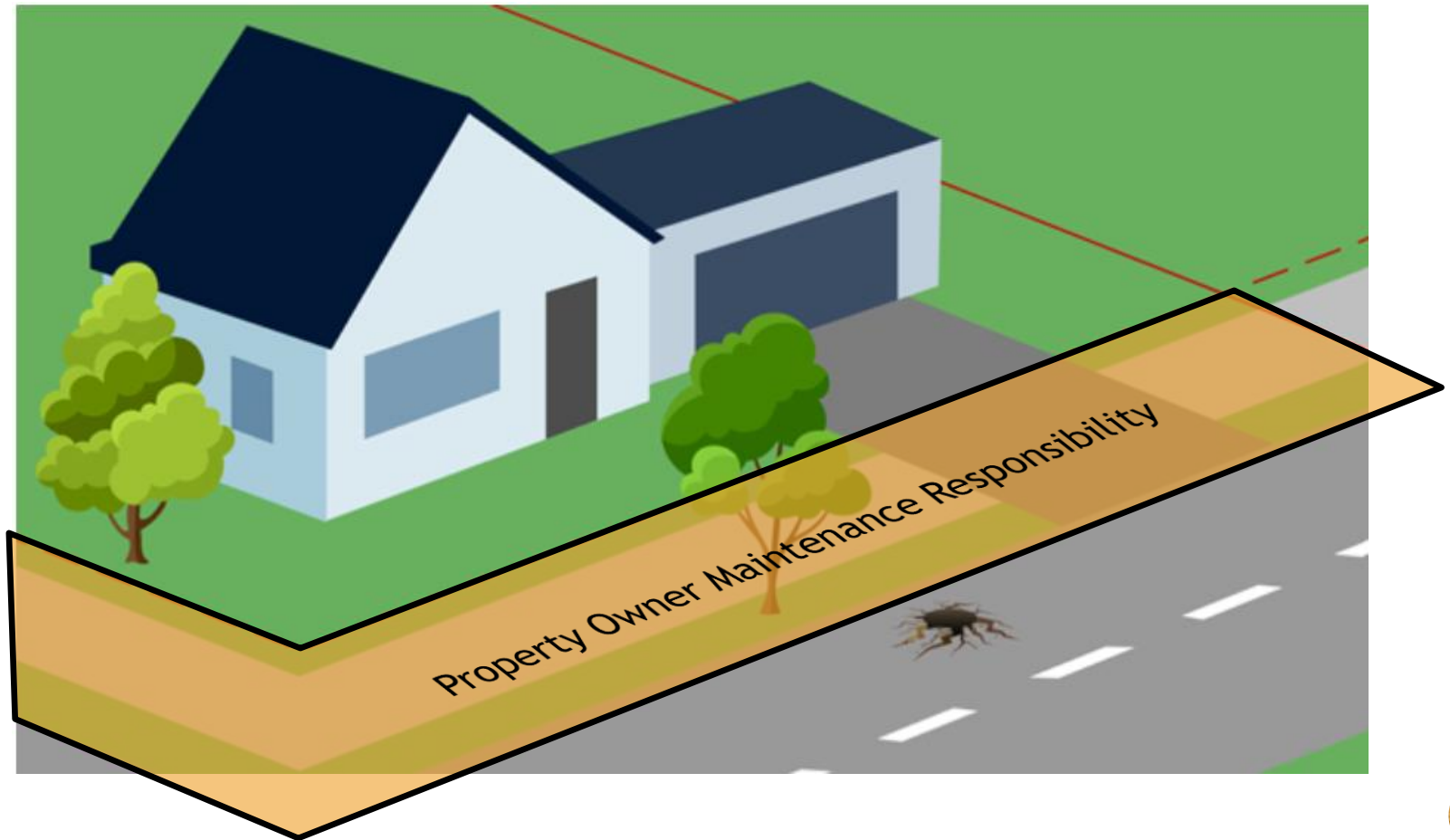
[https://cityofpt.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view\\_id=4&clip\\_id=2440](https://cityofpt.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=4&clip_id=2440)



# Background – Public Rights of Way



# Background – Public Rights of Way



# Background – Undeveloped Rights of Way



Each property owner is responsible to the centerline of the right of way



# Background – Existing City Codes

- PTMC 12.04.075 - Private use of rights of way. This Section identifies expectations concerning minor landscaping in the rights of way and trees in the rights of way
- PTMC 12.12.030 - Cleaning of sidewalks
- PTMC 9.08.020 - Nuisances impeding sidewalks, debris, infringements of rights of way
- PTMC 12.08 - Debris in rights of way
- Revised Code of Washington 35.21.310 - Provides authority to municipalities to delegate management of vegetation in the rights of way





# Background: Outreach

This change in vegetation maintenance responsibility to the adjoining property owners has been discussed and vetted with the I and D committee meetings for over 1 year associated with the Comprehensive Streets Program. This change has also been discussed with the Parks Recreation, Trees, and Trails Advisory Board with overwhelming support due to the crude nature of the mowing machine and impacts to vegetation and trees.

The City's newsletter has also included an article foreshadowing this change in the February and March Newsletter.

This presentation will also be posted on social media as well as provided in a press release later this spring.



# Background: Whole City Participation

Historically, many residents already take care of their street frontage. This shift in practice will involve whole city participation of all property owners rather than those who historically accepted this responsibility. This includes the City. The City will take responsibility for mowing all of the frontage along the City's ownership.

A map illustrating the areas the City will be mowing will be available on-line at <https://cityofpt.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html>

Stay tuned for the new map!



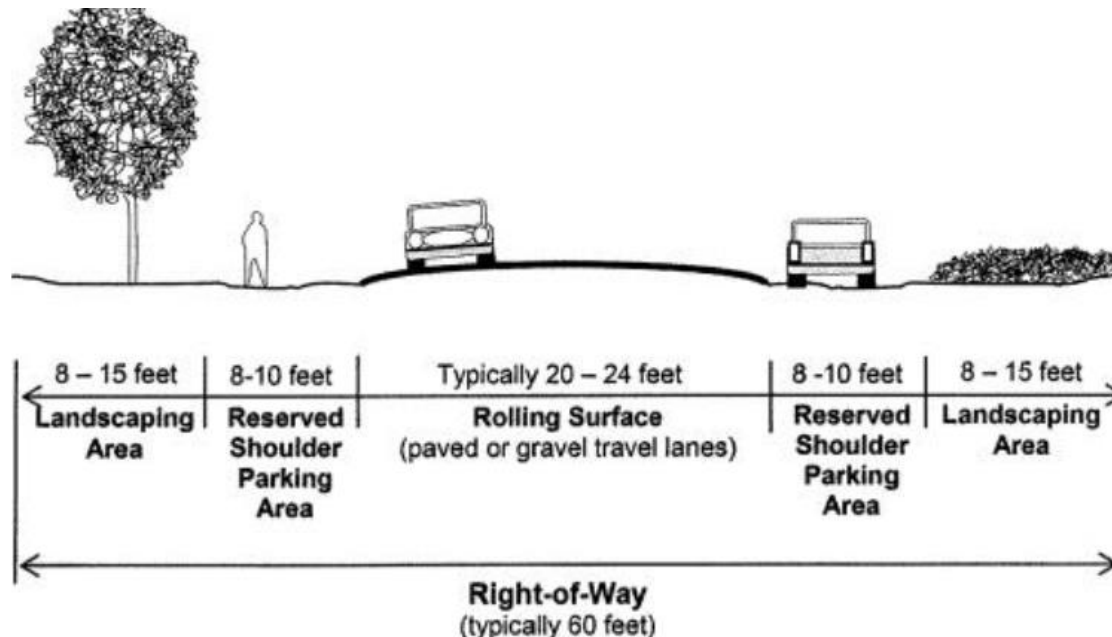
# Presentation Objective

1. Provide a photo presentation illustrating the responsibility of adjoining property owners to maintain the rights of way frontage.
2. Provide a preview of coming code updates to clarify requirements.
3. Receive City Council and Public Feedback



# Location and Extent

Keep vegetation along the street trimmed to ensure drivers visibility and pedestrian clearance: Vegetation should be controlled with a minimum of 5' and a goal of 10' clear zone from the edge of pavement, 5' clear zone from the ditch line, and 1-2' clear zone from the back of the sidewalk. (This means controlling brush such as snow berries, wild roses, blackberries etc.) Trees should be trimmed up 15' above the roadway and a minimum of 7 ft with a goal of 9 ft above pedestrian paths and sidewalks.



# Location and Extent



Occasional trees, bushes and landscaping features are ok in the clear zone area



# Location and Extent

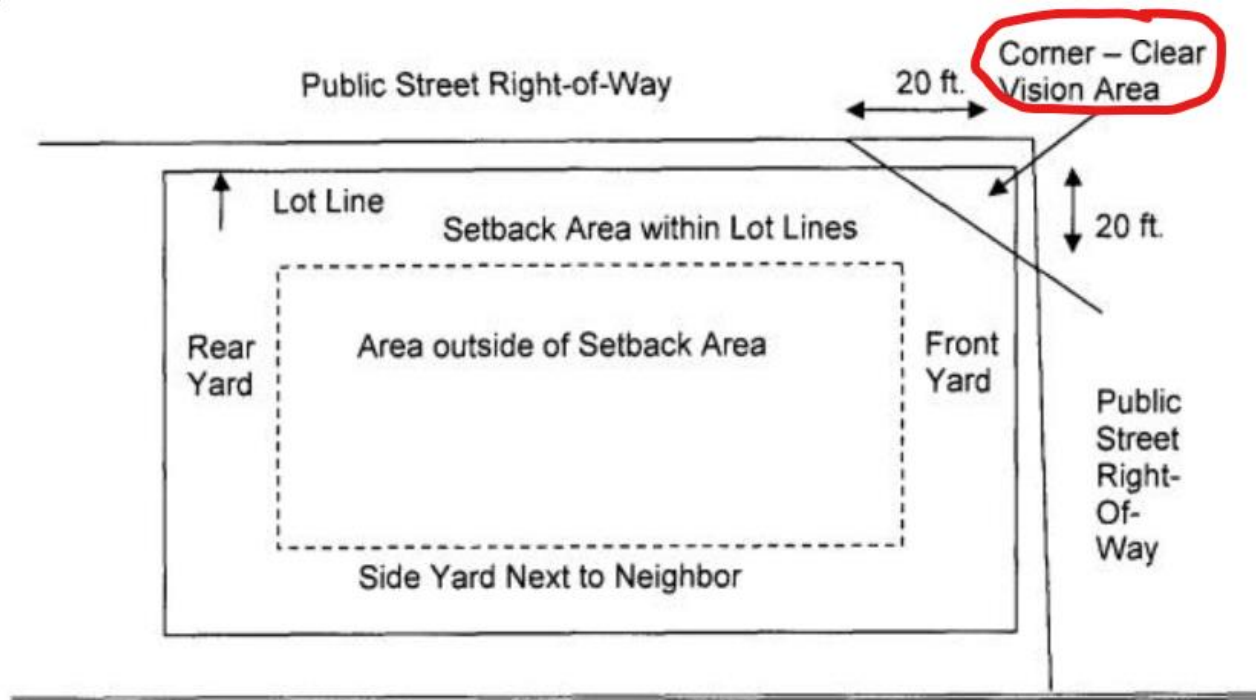


Nice roadside maintenance  
Thank you!



# Street Corners

Keep vegetation on street corners trimmed to ensure drivers visibility:  
Vegetation should be controlled with a 20' clear zone measured from the sidewalk or edge of pavement at roadway intersections.



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Thank you!





# Sidewalks and Pedestrian Ways

Keep the sidewalk free and clear of obstructions or defects, including, but not limited to, snow, ice, and mud. Trim vegetation to allow pedestrians to pass. If there is parking along side the road, then a clear zone of 5 feet should be maintained beyond the parking location to allow pedestrians to pass around the parked car without walking in the street. Parking areas also need to maintain existing ditch lines for drainage control.



Please make space for pedestrians and wheelchairs by keeping full sidewalk width clear including 1-2 ft behind the walk.



# Sidewalks and Pedestrian Ways



Thank you!



# Sidewalks and Pedestrian Ways

1-2 feet of clearance from sidewalk

Temporary tree protection

Clear space for pedestrians



Thank you!



# Noxious Weeds

Control noxious weeds - Since noxious weeds easily spread, property owners will need to manage noxious weeds on your property and to the edge of street. Noxious weeds are identified per the County weed ordinance. Priority control shall be made for poison hemlock and scotch broom.



JEFFERSON COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

## FACT SHEET



### POISON HEMLOCK (*Conium maculatum*)

- Poison hemlock grows four to ten feet tall.
- The stem is branched and **hairless**, mottled with purple spots.
- The leaves are shiny green, fern-like and finely divided, with a musty smell, but **no hairs**.
- The white flowers are in umbrella-shaped heads.
- Carrot family.



# Vegetation Mowing and Garbage

Mow and remove garbage - In the area between the edge of pavement in the clear zone described above, mow grass and low ground cover. This includes ditches and the area between the roadway and sidewalk where sidewalks exist.



If you see this after a good wind please pickup and help keep our roadsides clear from garbage.



# Vegetation Mowing

Mow and remove debris - In the area between the edge of pavement in the clear zone described above, mow grass and low ground cover. This includes ditches and the area between the roadway and sidewalk where sidewalks exist.

Thank you!



# Ditches

Keep ditch lines clear - To control drainage and preventing clogging of drains and culverts, all loose vegetation and garbage need to be removed from ditch lines at all times. The City may periodically excavate ditch lines due to sediment from the street. The City also may improve shoulders of the street to ensure water can drain from the pavement to the ditch.



Ditches with debris clog culverts and fill in over time. Vegetation can overtake a ditch



# Ditches



Ditch allowed to be overgrown near vacant lot. Will need to be brushed back.

Ditch maintained along with fire hydrant clearance.  
**Thank you!**





# Ditches



Above. This ditch has been maintained by the City. This responsibility will transfer to the adjoining vacant lot.

Below. Ditch between the sidewalk and road maintained by the property owner.  
**Thank you!**



# Tree Preservation

Preserve Street trees and significant trees - Trees are highly valued by our community. Any work involving pruning, planting, or removal of trees must be permitted through the City. Vegetation control and clearing does not mean removal of trees unless approved by city permit.

Beautiful  
Madrona Tree  
preserved in the  
right of way.



City of Port  
Townsend

**Urban Forestry**  
Trees in the right of way



Permit Requirements for Planting,  
Pruning and Removing Trees in the  
City Right of Way (ROW)



The City of Port Townsend is a proud  
member of Tree City USA

<https://cityofpt.us/publicworks/page/urban-forestry-trees-row>



# Landscaping

Minor landscaping in the right of way is encouraged and needs to meet the requirements of city code 12.04. Please see landscaping brochure



**Very Nice!**

<https://cityofpt.us/publicworks/page/landscaping-right-way>

City of Port  
Townsend

**Landscaping in the  
Right of Way**



What is allowed in the City right of way (ROW) and when a permit is required.



# Summary

- After touring the city streets, 90%+ are in good shape and need to be maintained as they exist today. Most properties with homes on them already maintain the landscaping in right of way adjoining their property.
- The majority of properties in which the City has been maintaining vegetation are vacant properties or double frontage properties. This is where the largest impact will be felt by property owners, especially for larger properties.
- These sets of vegetation maintenance goals set forth a progressive approach to all property owners doing their part to maintain the vegetation in the right of way. Fulfilling this responsibility allows city tax dollars to be spent on streets and drainage rather than vegetation control.



# Next Steps

1. Staff will continue to put forth public information on the change in maintenance practice and responsibility of property owners.
2. Staff will be drafting new nuisance codes with clarity in the definitions and requirements for property owner vegetation control in the rights of way. Staff anticipates new code first reading April 3<sup>rd</sup>.
3. Staff recommends streamline nuisance code, relying on notice and opportunity to remedy the problem with class IV infraction.



# Questions and Comments

Encouraging the public to be involved through Engage PT

[www.cityofpt.us/engagept](http://www.cityofpt.us/engagept)

