

POLICY # 031
POLICY TITLE: Brush Control

APPROVAL DATE AND MOTION:	May 28, 2024; 2024-05-82	CROSS-REFERENCE:	Policy # AG 016 – Weed and Vegetation Management
RESPONSIBILITY:	General Manager - Public Works Operations		Policy # PW 003 – Undeveloped Road Maintenance
		APPENDICES:	Brush Control Agreement Vegetation Management Release to Enter Lands
APPROVER:	Council	EFFECTIVE DATE:	May 28, 2024
REVISION DATE(s)/ MOTION #:		NEXT REVIEW DATE:	May 2027

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.a. **County** means County of Vermilion River (the "County").
- 1.b. **Council** means the Council of the County of Vermilion River.
- 1.c. **Chief Administrative Officer** or **CAO** means the Chief Administrative Officer of the County of Vermilion River, or their designated representative.
- 1.d. **Brush Control** means the mechanical or chemical management of trees and shrubs.

- 1.e. **Property Owner** means a person(s) who are registered under the Land Titles Act as the owner of the property.
- 1.f. **Right-of-way** means the portion of roadway that lies between the center line of the road and the boundary of the property line of adjacent properties and is the responsibility of the **County**.
- 1.f. **Woody Vegetation** means brush, shrubs, or trees.
- 1.h. **Tall Vegetation** means vegetation tall enough to reduce visibility of/in the roadside.
- 1.i. **Control Area** means an area designated by the **County** for **brush control** operations to maintain public safety.
- 1.j. **Herbicide** mean a substance that is toxic to plants, used to destroy unwanted vegetation.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.a. This Policy provides direction on roadside **brush control** within the County of Vermilion River **right-of-way** and on private property.

3. OBJECTIVE

- 3.a. The **County** is responsible for the maintenance and repair of municipal roadways and ensuring the public safety while using municipal roadways. The **Brush Control** policy and the Weed and Vegetation Management policy is intended to work collaboratively to control the growth of **woody vegetation** and **tall vegetation** along **County** roadsides to reduce snow accumulation, facilitate snow removal, enhance road maintenance, increase traffic safety by reducing obstructions in the ditch and improve visibility along roadways and at intersections. Where **brush control** is determined to be necessary on private property to improve visibility at intersections and reduce traffic safety risks, the **County** may enter into agreements with private **property owners**.

4. BACKGROUND

Brush control is done to improve public safety, road quality and to reduce maintenance. Previously the objectives of this policy were achieved under other policies.

4.a. Policy PW 016 Brushing Right-of-Ways Policy

4.a.i Policy PW 016 was rescinded on May 28, 2024 motion 2024-05-78.

4.b. Policy PW 028 Intersection Safety – Private Land

4.b.i. Policy PW 028 was rescinded on May 28, 2024 motion 2024-05-81.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 5.a. Public Works will determine an annual operational budget for **brush control**.
- 5.b. **Brush control** activities within a determined **control area** will be based on annual inspections completed by **County** staff.
- 5.c. Areas for **brush control** will be prioritized within the established annual budget by **County** staff.
- 5.d. The appropriate method of **brush control** undertaken will be at the discretion of **County** staff.
- 5.e. The **County** will not engage in **brush control** on private property unless **brush control** is determined to be necessary by **County** staff to improve site lines at an intersection, and a written agreement between the **County** and the **property owner** is obtained. If the **County** is unable to obtain an agreement to complete **brush control** on private property for the purpose of improving site lines, then the intersection will be evaluated to determine if further traffic control devices will be necessary.
- 5.f. If **brush control** on private property improves the condition of the **right-of-way** but will also aid the **property owner** to build a fence or remove debris the cost will be shared 50/50 with the **County** and the **property owner**.
- 5.g. **Brush control** on private property that has no benefit to the **County** will not be completed by the **County**.

- 5.h. Criteria for determining where **brush control** is completed is:
 - 5.h.i. Reduced sight lines at intersections. Sight lines will be determined based on traffic speeds, existing traffic control devices, and general topography. The Minimum Sight Triangle as described in section D.4.2 of the Alberta Infrastructure Highway Geometric Design Guide will be used as a guide.
 - 5.h.ii. **Woody vegetation** that inhibits the usability of the road significantly.
 - 5.h.iii. Priority will be given to roadways that have been scheduled for a capital improvement project within the calendar year.
 - 5.h.iv. Priority will be given to the highest classification of roadway that meets any of the **brush control** criteria.
- 5.i. **Brush control** in the **right-of-way** will be completed from the edge of the road to the property line.
- 5.j. Undeveloped road allowances are not eligible within the **Brush Control** policy. Requests for **brush control** on undeveloped roads will be addressed under Policy PW#003 – Undeveloped Road Maintenance.
- 5.k. Areas where **brush control** is completed will be communicated annually to the Agricultural and Environment Department to facilitate Weed and Vegetation Management in accordance with Policy #AG016 Weed and Vegetation Management. If **brush control** is completed on private property a Vegetation Management Release to Enter Lands agreement will also be obtained for the Agricultural and Environment Department to apply one (1) application of **herbicide** within two (2) years of the **brush control** being completed.

6. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE/TASK	TITLE (s) OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE
HANDLING INQUIRIES	General Manager – Public Works Operations

MONITORING REVIEWS AND REVISIONS	General Manager – Public Works Operations in conjunction with the Executive Assistant to CAO and Council
IMPLEMENTING POLICY	Council
COMMUNICATING POLICY	Chief Administrative Officer
INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	Administration, Council
EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	Property Owners , Public

7. EXCEPTIONS

There are no exceptions to this policy.

8. POLICY EVALUATION

The evaluation will include the following:

- 8.a. That the **County** will engage in a Policy Evaluation every three years to monitor the effectiveness of the policy and review opportunities for improvement.
- 8.b. Needs assessment if required.
- 8.c. Process evaluation to measure whether the policy is meeting its intended objective; and
- 8.d. Outcome evaluation to determine whether the policy has met its objectives and whether additional opportunities for improvement in the policy can be identified.