

## Guidance for Tree Trimming

Use the tree trimming diagrams inside this brochure as a guide when trimming trees around streets and sidewalks.

- Begin by raising the tree's canopy by removing branches so the branchless trunk is 1/3 the height of the tree. This is called the 1/3 rule (ex. A 15-foot tall tree should have a 5-foot trunk). Remove these branches all the way back to the main trunk.
- With the canopy elevated, any branch that sticks out into the branch-free zone can be trimmed back only to the curb or sidewalk and not all the way back to the main trunk. As the tree grows taller, branches will need to be trimmed back to the main trunk by following the 1/3 rule.
- It is necessary to use something ridged when measuring the height of branches. An extendable painting pole is a useful tool that can be adjusted to appropriate heights of 10, 12, or 16 feet. Use this pole to determine if a branch is in the branch-free zone by placing the pole next to the branch. If the pole hits the branch, then the branch needs trimming.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **How do I know which tree to trim?** The survey will identify properties that need trimming but is not designed to identify which or how many trees need trimming.
- **My tree is not very tall. Am I expected to remove all branches below 10 feet?** Young trees require shaping so the branch tips do not interfere with the street or sidewalk. The lower third of the tree should be branch-free.
- **I don't know how to trim or prune trees. Where can I get more information on pruning trees?** You can find information about tree pruning at [www.siouxfalls.org/TRIM](http://www.siouxfalls.org/TRIM). At the bottom of the page there is a video titled *Project T.R.I.M. Guide To Trimming Street Trees*. You may also click on "Tree Tips" in the Division Resources section for tips to help you take better care of your trees.
- **What if I don't trim the street tree by the deadline?** If we find a tree during reinspection that is still not in compliance, we will leave a door hanger to inform you of the need for additional trimming and establish a new deadline. If the tree is not trimmed after the second due date, City crews will complete the work and bill you for the cost.
- **I have contacted an arborist to do my tree trimming, but they won't be able to come until after the deadline. Can I get an extension?** Under certain circumstances, Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation will provide an extension. Call 367-8150 for details.

## Survey of Low-Hanging Branches

In an effort to keep streets and sidewalks safe, the Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Forestry Division surveys properties for low-hanging branches in the public right-of-way. The survey determines if trimming is needed, and the property owner is notified.

Each year the City of Sioux Falls receives complaints regarding property damage, personal injury, and general nuisance from low-hanging branches over the streets and sidewalks. The abutting property owner is responsible for any damage or injury caused by low-hanging branches and also to maintain these trees for public safety.

## Schedule

Project T.R.I.M. (Tree Raising Improvement Methods) ensures trees in the public right-of-way are being properly maintained. Trees need to be trimmed so not to block signage, interfere with proper street lighting, and to have a minimum clearance over the sidewalk and the street/alley. Project T.R.I.M. is structured as a five-year cyclic street tree trimming program. The city is divided into five districts, with one district surveyed each year. A district is divided into three sections with each section being surveyed at a specific time during the year (February, June, and September). For a complete schedule go to [www.siouxfalls.org/TRIM](http://www.siouxfalls.org/TRIM).

## Clearance Standard for Branches

City Ordinance requires the abutting property owner to keep travel corridors over street and sidewalks free from low-hanging branches. Arterial and collector streets require a clearance of 16 feet over the streets. All other local streets require a 12-foot clearance over the street. The abutting property owner is also required to maintain a clearance of 10 feet over the sidewalk.

## Options for Trimming

**You have three options for tree trimming:**

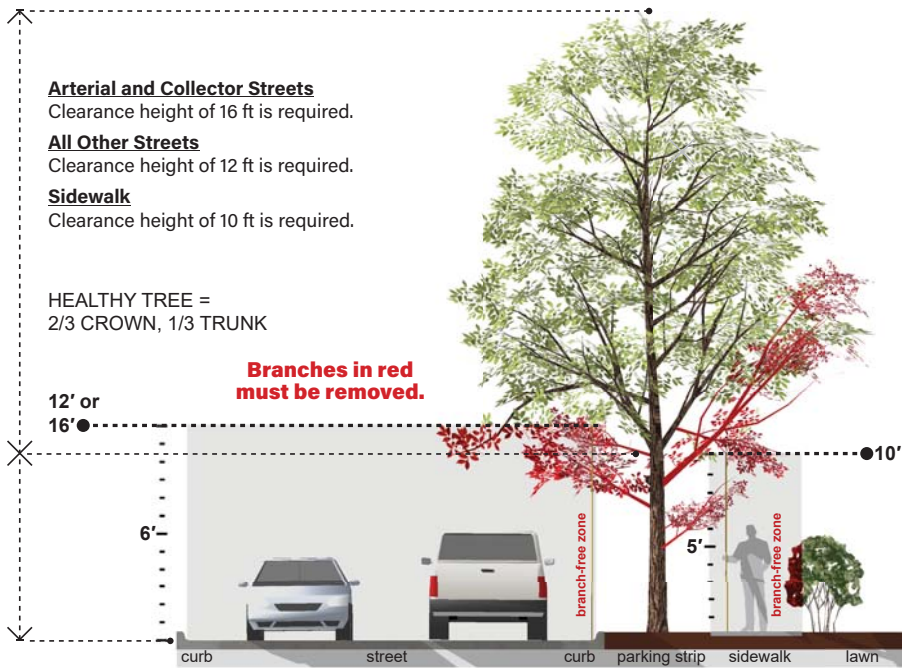
1. The property owner may trim the tree to the required height.
2. The property owner may hire a licensed arborist.
3. If the property owner fails to bring the trees into compliance, the City will do the work and bill the costs to the property owner. The cost is \$150 per hour, with a minimum charge of one hour.

# Project T.R.I.M. Tree Raising Improvement Methods

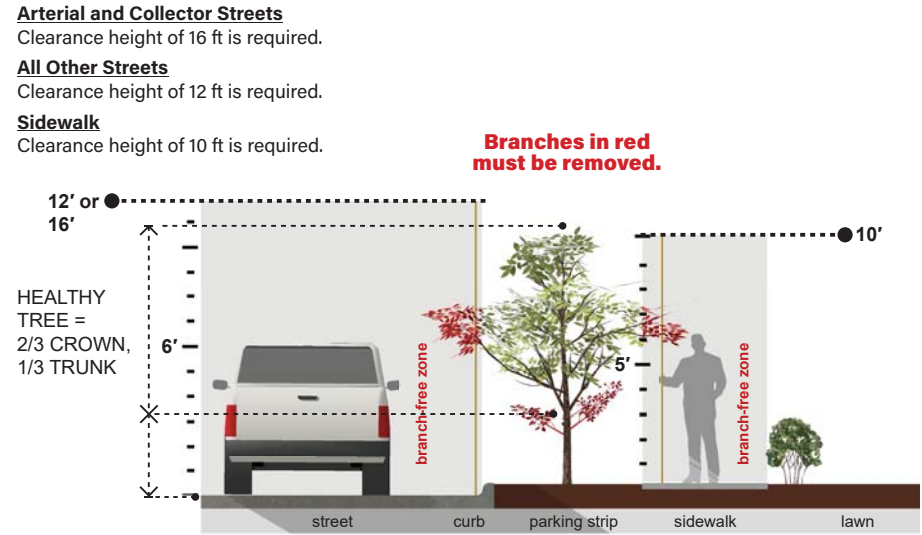


# Project T.R.I.M.—Tree Trimming Diagram

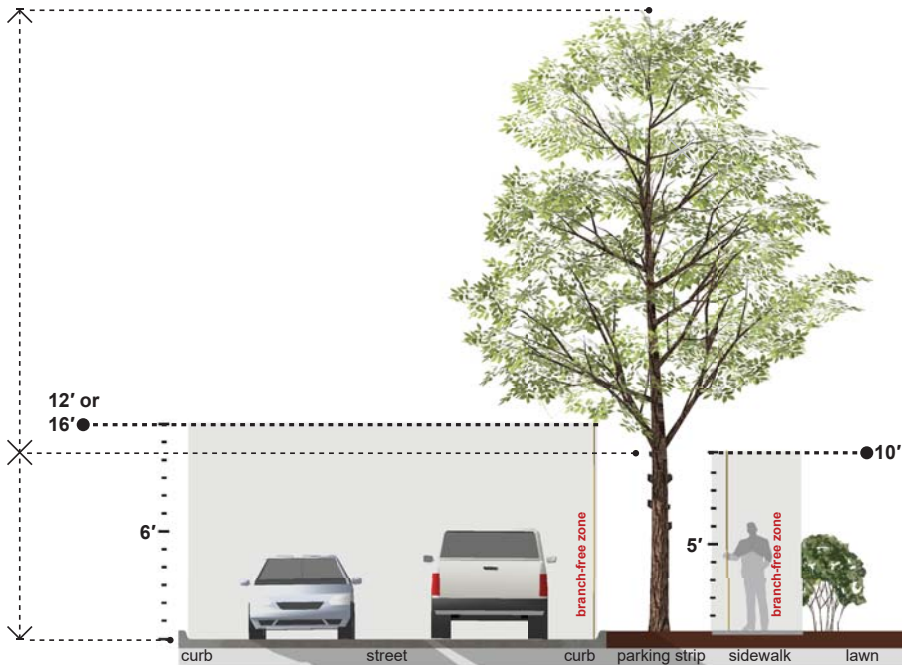
Mature Tree—Before Pruning



Young Tree—Before Pruning



Mature Tree—After Pruning



Young Tree—After Pruning

