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Technology saves historic banyans

Townsville City Council engineers and arborists have gone to special lengths to preserve some much-loved trees.

Crews have worked to accommodate more than 12 large banyan trees (figs) as part of a major upgrade to a section of Burke Street, North Ward.

Infrastructure planners worked with arborists from the Council's parks department to ensure the locally significant trees were not stressed or damaged by the work to create kerb and channel and to lay new asphalt on the road.

North Ward representative and Environment and Sustainable Development Committee chairman Cr Vern Veitch said the mature figs were a much-loved part of the streetscape.

"With the Townsville Sports Reserve, Tennis Townsville and a high school all serviced by this road, the need for this work to improve drainage and create formalised parking was overdue," Cr Veitch said.

"However, these trees are much loved and it was important to think outside the square in terms of preserving them."

Arborists advised on the best method for ensuring the extensive root systems of the trees remained intact, with the road planners designing parking bays to curve around the root balls.

A hydro excavator that uses water to excavate soil from around the roots plus a vacuum attachment to remove loose dirt has been used as a gentler way to open up the ground around the trees.

A sealer has been used to stop infections in the tree while a root barrier has been poured in behind the kerbing to stop root damage to the roadway.