

TREE PROTECTION AND REMOVAL INFORMATION

If you are preparing to remove one or more trees on your property, this bulletin can help you to determine which type of permit may be required.

The following information is meant to provide general information and guidance into basic tree removal requirements in accordance with official City regulations only and is not intended to be all inclusive. Furthermore, the following does not include information pertaining to environmentally sensitive area requirements or other land use and building permit requirements and procedures. These requirements can and do sometimes change. You should always verify current requirements with the City Planning and Building Department.

WHEN IS A PERMIT REQUIRED?

A tree removal permit is required for removal of any significant tree. Significant trees are defined as any healthy tree that has diameter of six inches or greater.

Tree removal that occurs in or near a designated sensitive area, such as a wetland, stream corridor, steep slope or any associated sensitive area buffers will require a sensitive areas work permit rather than a tree removal permit. Please contact the Planning Department for additional clarification.

TREE REMOVAL PERMITS

There are three types of tree removal permits:

Administrative Review Tree Permit - For removal of one or two trees in a 36-month period. There is no fee for this administrative tree permit. Property owners are required to replace the trees on a one-to-one basis either on their property or pay into the tree account the value of the replacement tree. The required two-day notice period starts as soon as the property owner applies for the permit at the Planning Department.

Arborist Consultation Permit - This permit is required if the property owner is working within the drip line of a tree, for example putting in a retaining wall or expanding a deck. This permit is also required if the property owner wishes to remove a landmark tree (a tree having a diameter of 28 inches or more). In these cases, an arborist consultation is required and the fee for the permit is \$100. The City will provide the arborist's service without additional cost beyond the permit fee. If trees are being removed, and the property falls below the canopy coverage goal for the lot size category for the property, replacement trees must be planted in numbers large enough to bring the canopy coverage back to the coverage goal or the previous coverage level, whichever is less, in 30 years (see Table 1 below).

Arborist Review Permit - In the case of significant site development or construction, when three or more trees are effected, property owners are required to have an arborist review the site plans and prepare a tree inventory for the site. The property owner may utilize the services of their own arborist or use the City's arborist. The fee for this permit is \$100 plus an hourly rate beyond one hour. If trees are being removed, and the property falls below the canopy coverage goal for the lot size category for the property, replacement trees must be planted in numbers large enough to bring the canopy coverage back to the coverage goal or the previous coverage level, whichever is less, in 30 years (see Table 1 below).

CANOPY COVERAGE GOAL

The City has identified canopy coverage goals for varying properties in the City of Lake Forest Park based on the average tree canopy at the time of adoption. In order to maintain and improve the current tree canopy property owners are asked maintain these levels. When applying for Arborist Consult and Review permits the present tree coverage of your lot will be calculated and used to determine the required replacement.

Lot Size and Use Category	Canopy Coverage Goal	Maximum Tree Removal with Arborist Consult Permit a 36-month period(1)	Maximum Tree Removal with Administrative Permit a 36-month period(2)
Single family Lots greater than 15,000 square feet	58%	2 Significant or Landmark Trees	2 Significant Trees
Single family Lots 10,000-15,000 square feet	39%	2 Significant or Landmark Trees	2 Significant Trees
Single family Lots less than 10,000 square feet	28%	2 Significant or Landmark Trees	2 Significant Trees
Multifamily Lots	15%	1 Significant or Landmark Tree	1 Significant Tree
Commercial Lots	15%	1 Significant or Landmark Tree	1 Significant Tree
(1) Required to remove any landmark tree (28" diameter or greater) or when proposed development activity will occur within the drip line or critical root zone of no more than two significant trees (2) Mandatory replacement plan including 1 replacement tree for each significant tree removed or equivalent payment into tree fund.			

PERMIT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Tree removal permits can be applied for at City Hall. An Administrative Review or Arborist Consultation permit application must be completed in full and the attached notice of application posted on site. A minimum posting period of two days is required and the permit cannot be issued until the posting period has elapsed.

An Arborist Review permit requires greater review by staff and an arborist. An Arborist Review tree removal permit application requires an evaluation by a qualified tree professional that includes:

- A scale site plan depicting the location of existing structures (house, garage, shed, playground), driveways, streets, utilities, all significant trees with their driplines, specifically identify the trees that will be impacted by work, location of replacement trees, and north arrow
- A tree inventory prepared by a qualified tree professional that includes the species, approximate diameter, present health, and the critical root zone distance.
- A report by a qualified tree professional that indicates if each tree will be retained or replaces based on health, hazard, nuisance and suitability of species and the details of tree protection methods.

CONTRACTORS

If you plan on hiring a contractor to remove trees onsite they will need to have a Washington State Contractor’s License and a City of Lake Forest Park Business License. Licensed contractors are required to carry insurance that protects the property owner from liability in the event of an accident or injury. All companies that perform tree work in the City of Lake Forest Park are also required to review the tree protection regulations and sign a statement of acknowledgment.

TREE PROTECTION STANDARDS

All construction activities, including staging and traffic areas, must be located at least five feet from the dripline of any significant tree. Tree protective fencing must be installed at the limits of construction as well as around the dripline of any significant trees. An inspection of these fences is required before any development activity can occur. All tree protective measures should be shown on the demolition, grading and tree protection plans.

SITE DEVELOPMENT & MODIFICATION GUIDELINES

Site improvements must be designed and constructed to incorporate trees as a site amenity; retain a forested look, value and function after development; protect existing and healthy stands of trees; and protect trees that have unique values, such as screening functions, wildlife habitat and land stability. Placement of structures and improvements should be designed and located taking into consideration tree protection opportunities and preservation of open and recreational space. Modifications from these requirements can be granted subject to review by the City on a case by case basis.

TREE REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Replacement trees are required for all Administrative Tree Removal Permits. Under a Arborist Consult or Review Permit replacement may also be required. If the proposed tree removal will reduce the canopy coverage below the coverage goal you will be required to replant trees so the canopy coverage will meet or exceed the canopy coverage goal in thirty years. For properties that are below the canopy goal before any trees are removed they will be required to replant trees so the canopy coverage will meet or exceed the existing canopy coverage in thirty years. Replacement trees must meet the following standards:

- Species must be selected from the City's General Tree List or approved by the City's Qualified Tree Professional.
- Equal or exceed 2-inch caliper for deciduous trees, or six to in height for evergreen trees;
- All trees must be containerized or balled and burlap stock and be planted according to industry standards;
- Meet or exceed current American Nursery and Landscape Association or equivalent organization's standards for nursery stock;
- The applicant is required to provide watering until replacement trees are independently viable. Replacement trees that die prior to meeting the definition of significant tree must be replaced by a replacement tree meeting the criteria of this section and any canopy coverage goal requirements that the expired tree was intended to provide.

All replacement trees must be planted in accordance with best management practices for landscaping and must be completed prior to final approval of construction permits.

For more information please contact:

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