

Tree Removal & Replacement

DEVELOPMENT & USE REVIEW



Lake Forest Park [Municipal Code 16.14](#) regulates tree canopy preservation and enhancement. This help topic is intended to answer some frequently asked questions regarding the tree permit process.

DO I NEED A TREE REMOVAL PERMIT?

A Tree Removal & Replacement Permit is required for any tree:

- In an environmentally critical area or Tree Conservation Easement (TCE).
- Over six inches in diameter (outside of a critical area or TCE).
- That has been planted as a replacement tree for a previous permit.

A Tree Removal & Replacement Permit is **not** required for:

- Dead trees - tree with no live crown and no functioning vascular tissue
 - No permit is required, but photos must be sent to aplanner@cityoflfp.com for confirmation before removal.

WHAT TYPES OF TREES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BE REMOVED (even with a permit)?

- Exceptional Trees meeting the size threshold listed in [LFP MC 16.04.030](#) (see also: definitions and Table 1 in this document)
 - Trees must also be viable, meaning low-risk, in good health, wind firm, suitable for its location, and worthy of long-term retention
- Viable trees in a Tree Conservation Easement
- Trees in environmentally critical areas that are low-risk or moderate -risk, as determined by an ISA-certified arborist with a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ)
- Removal of viable significant trees is prohibited on properties that have undergone Major Development Activity* within the last five years and for which no new major development activity or minor development activity is proposed

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT TYPE OF TREE(S) I HAVE?

Significant Tree

- A tree six inches or greater in diameter at breast height ([DBH](#)) or a required replacement Tree of any size – (Dead Trees shall not be considered Significant Trees)

Landmark Tree

- A tree that is at least 24 inches in DBH

Exceptional Tree

- A viable tree, which because of its unique combination of size and species, age, location,

and/or health, is worthy of long term retention, as determined by the City's Qualified Arborist

- To be considered exceptional, a tree must have a diameter at breast height (DBH) that is equal to or greater than the threshold diameters listed in the Tree Code (see some common species below)

Table 1: Exceptional Tree Species and Their Threshold Diameters

Species	Threshold Diameter (DBH)
Bigleaf MAPLE – <i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	42 inches
Douglas FIR – <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	42 inches
Grand FIR – <i>Abies grandis</i>	33 inches
MADRONA – <i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	12 inches
Western HEMLOCK – <i>Tsuga heterophylla</i>	36 inches
Western Red CEDAR – <i>Thuja plicata</i>	42 inches
Western White PINE – <i>Pinus monticola</i>	36 inches

HOW DO I MEASURE MY TREE(S)?

“DBH” is an acronym for tree diameter at breast height which means the diameter of existing trees measured 4.5 feet above the ground line on the high side of the tree

- For help converting the circumference of tree trunks to diameter, refer to our [tree circumference converter tool](#), or divide your measurement by pi ($\pi = 3.14$)

WHAT TYPE OF PERMIT WILL I NEED?

([Tree permit type tool](#))

Major Permit

- When one or more Landmark Trees is proposed for removal
- When three or more Significant Trees are proposed for removal within any 36-month period
- When any Tree proposed for removal is a Protected Tree or is located in an environmentally critical area or buffer
- When any Major Development Activity* is proposed
- When any Minor Development Activity** is proposed within the Critical Root Zone (CRZ) of Significant Trees

- When Trees are proposed for removal on a property on which Major Development Activity has occurred within the last five years
- Requirements to apply for a major permit include:
 - A site map (to scale) with a north arrow depicting accurate location of site features including buildings, driveways, environmentally critical areas and buffers, forest groves or open-grown single or clusters of significant trees; the CRZ of the grove, cluster, or individual tree, along with any off-site trees that may be impacted by tree removal, excavation, grading, or other development activity proposed; and
 - A tree inventory and assessment report prepared by a qualified arborist that includes at a minimum: trees to be removed and protected (including CRZ), trees in the vicinity of construction or that could be impacted by the proposed development activity, tree protection fence location, timeline for tree protection activities, list of protection measures and conditions to be taken during all development activities to ensure code compliance during development activities; and
 - A report including, at a minimum, information on tree species, diameter at breast height, condition (health), risk level, existing and proposed canopy coverage, and when applicable, design of a land use proposal that prioritizes healthy trees in accord with LFPMP [16.14.070](#)(D)(3).

Minor Permit

- When two or fewer Significant Trees are proposed for removal within any 36-month period unless the Trees are Protected Trees or are located in a critical area or buffer
- When any number of [Invasive Trees](#) are proposed for removal, except when those Trees are located in a Critical Area or buffer
- When any Tree(s) explicitly covered by an approved Proactive Forest Management Permit is proposed for removal

HOW IS REPLACEMENT DETERMINED?

Major Permits

- An arborist assessment of the lot's total [canopy coverage](#) will determine if tree removal causes the lot to fall below its canopy coverage goal. If so, the applicant must replace trees to bring the property back up to the coverage goal
- If the lot is below the goal prior to tree removal, the applicant must replace trees to reach the canopy level that existed prior to removal

Note: If tree removal associated with a Major Permit causes canopy to fall below the goal, the applicant must record the tree permit conditions with King County

Minor Permits

- At least one tree must be replaced for each tree removed, and the total canopy coverage replaced must be equal to or greater than the canopy coverage removed

Table 2: Canopy Coverage Goal	
Zoning and Lot Size	Canopy Coverage Goal
Single-family lots greater than 15,000 square feet	58%
Single-family lots 10,000 – 15,000 square feet	39%
Single-family lots less than 10,000 square feet	28%
Multifamily	15%
Commercial	15%
Southern Gateway Single Family	15%
Southern Gateway Transition	10%
Southern Gateway Corridor	5%

WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE TO ENSURE THE HEALTH AND LONGEVITY OF MY FORESTED PROPERTY?

If you own a large wooded lot or lots, and are seeking to maintain, manage, preserve, or enhance the trees living there, a Proactive Forest Management Permit may be right for you. It involves:

- Collaborating with a qualified arborist to come up with a plan for maintenance, pruning, removal, planting & enhancement
- Committing to a forest enhancement plan spanning five or more years

EMERGENCY ACTIONS

Emergency actions necessary to remedy an immediate threat to people, property, or public health, safety or welfare by a high-risk or extreme-risk tree may be undertaken without a previously-issued permit. Emergency actions include:

- Measures necessary to control a fire and
- Measures necessary to correct a Forest Health Emergency

Any Person undertaking such an action shall take the following actions:

- Notify aplanner@cityoflfp.com within one business day following commencement of the emergency action
- Complete a tree removal application within one week of the emergency action and post the application in accord with LFPMP 16.14.040.D
- Tree replacement may be required

***Major Development Activity** means subdivision or short subdivision; construction or demolition of single family, multi-family, or commercial buildings; and alterations, repairs, enlargements or additions that add 1,000 square feet or more of impervious surface coverage.

****Minor Development Activity** means any activity that requires federal, state, or local approval for the use or modification of land or its resource, except those defined as "Major Development Activity." For example: additions, enlargements, or alterations to existing structures.