

Development and Trees

How We Preserve and Protect our Urban Forest



Introduction

A new Tree Protection Bylaw came into effect on July 1, 2014. Awareness of trees and the regulatory requirements for their preservation and protection is important at every stage of development from initial planning and design, to engineering and construction, and installation of landscaping. The purpose of this information sheet is to provide a brief summary of the regulations related to trees during development. Contact Parks Staff or refer to Tree Protection Bylaw No. 9272 for more detailed information.

The Tree Protection Bylaw regulates any alterations to "Protected Trees" within Saanich. A tree cutting permit is required before altering, cutting, damaging or removing a "Protected Tree" or any tree located on land designated as a steep slope area on Schedule "A" of the bylaw.

What is a "Protected Tree"?

If a tree meets any of the following criteria, then it is considered a "Protected Tree".

- The following tree species if they are taller than 2 m in height or are 4 cm or more in diameter, measured 15 cm above natural grade: Arbutus, Garry Oak, Pacific Dogwood, and Pacific Yew.
- The following tree species if they have a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 30 cm or larger: Douglas-fir, Grand Fir, Big Leaf Maple, and Western Red Cedar.
- Any tree species having a DBH of 60 cm or larger.
- Any tree that has been planted as a "Replacement Tree" or was required to be "Retained" under an approved development application (i.e. Subdivision, Rezoning, Development Permit, Blasting Permit, Building Permit, Fill Permit, or Plumbing Permit).
- "Significant Trees" listed in Schedule "B" of the Tree Protection Bylaw.
- Trees with evidence of a nest or use by raptor (eagles, falcons, hawks, vultures, or owls), heron or osprey.

If you are uncertain if a tree is protected under the Bylaw, contact Parks Staff at parks@saanich.ca or 250-475-5522.

NOTE: It is important to consider that trees may be protected through other means, such as restrictive covenants. In addition, areas within a Streamside or Environmental Development Permit Area may require a Development Permit for disturbance to any trees or vegetation, or alterations of the land.

How is a development proposal affected?

Trees can be significantly impacted by disturbance or damage to the tree trunk, its limbs, the foliage or the land surrounding the tree containing the roots of the tree. Land improvements such as the construction of buildings or structures, installation of infrastructure or utility services, and building roads, driveways or parking areas should all consider how they impact trees. Tree removal before development approvals are granted is not permitted.

Development proposals include all applications for Rezoning, Subdivision, Development Permits, Development Variance Permits, Building or Demolition Permits, Blasting Permits, Plumbing Permits, or permits for the placement of fill. Applications for development must include all relevant tree information and are referred to Parks Staff to confirm compliance with the Tree Protection Bylaw. Parks Staff will review the information and confirm if, and how many, replacement trees are required and the necessary tree protection measures to minimize impacts on trees to be retained.

What tree information is required with an application?



At minimum, development applications should clearly indicate all trees impacted by the proposed development. Depending upon the proposal, a tree survey and Arborist Report may be required. Arborist Reports and tree surveys are required to identify:

- The tree species, condition, and location of all on-site trees within the property boundary.
- The location of any off-site protected trees that may be impacted by the proposed development.
- The extent of the root zones of all trees that should be protected to preserve tree health.
- A site plan showing the trees and their root zones, existing and proposed building footprints, and any proposed services (sewer, water, storm or utility lines) and driveway/parking areas.
- Recommendations of the arborist report to reduce impacts and encourage tree preservation.

For more information on the Arborist Report requirements, see the brochure “Consideration for Building on a Site with Trees” at www.saanich.ca/treebylaw.

What are the “Replacement Tree” requirements?

If replacement trees are required as part of a permit for the construction of buildings, blasting, fill or plumbing, then generally one replacement tree is required for each protected tree removed. For each protected tree to be removed to allow for site servicing of a subdivision connected to a rezoning or development permit application, then generally two replacement trees are required.

Replacement trees should be located on the same lot as the development; however, where this is not practical a property owner may alternatively contribute to Saanich’s Urban Forest Fund to support trees planted elsewhere in the neighbourhood.

Preference will be given to replacing protected tree species with the same species to be removed. For more information on acceptable replacement tree species and recommendations for tree location and successful planting practices, see the brochure “Consideration for Building on a Site with Trees” at www.saanich.ca/treebylaw.

What does it cost?

- The fee for tree cutting permits related to subdivision or permits for buildings, blasting, fill or plumbing is \$40 for the first tree and \$25 for each additional tree.
- The fee for tree cutting permits related to rezoning or development permit applications is \$75 for the first tree and \$25 for each additional tree.
- A security deposit of \$300 is required for each replacement tree. After a tree has been planted in accordance with the permit conditions and inspected by Parks Staff, 50% of the deposit will be returned. After one year if the tree remains viable, the remainder of the deposit will be returned.

What happens when there are lots of trees to be retained?

Where non-protected trees are going to be retained on the property, under certain conditions Parks may provide a credit for each tree preserved in lieu of requiring a replacement tree. Within a proposed subdivision, up to two credits may be transferred between lots.

What is required to protect trees to be retained during development?

Tree protection fencing must be installed during development to prevent damage to trees and their root zones from construction activities. Additional protection measures based on an arborist’s recommendations may also be required, such as using floating driveways through root zones or removing climbing ivy or selective limbs to improve the health and vigor of the tree.

For more information on preserving and protecting trees:

Visit www.saanich.ca/treebylaw.

Contact Parks Staff at: parcs@saanich.ca or 250-475-5522