

## Tree and Landscape Guidelines - Development Permit applications

This document provides applicants tree and landscaping requirements for development permit applications and includes hyperlinks to helpful resources and relevant documents.

### 1. General Considerations:

- 1.1. Saanich expects developers to make efforts to retain high-value trees (as defined in the [Saanich OCP](#) and [DP Guidelines](#)) as part of new developments, for the benefit of current and future generations and as a means to help achieve the outcomes of [Saanich's Urban Forest Strategy \(2024\)](#)
- 1.2. Applicants should be aware that the [Tree Protection Bylaw \(Bylaw\)](#) and higher policies and strategies allow Parks staff to require adjustments to the location of infrastructure (such as services, driveways and landscape features) to protect existing or proposed trees. Infrastructure must be sited to minimize conflicts with existing trees and to maximize available planting space as part of the overall design.

### 2. Presentation of tree resources:

- 2.1. All on-site Protected Trees as defined by the Bylaw, High Value Trees, boulevard trees and any off-site Protected Trees with a dripline within **4 m** of proposed site activities (including excavation or tree planting) must be included in an [Arborist Report](#). Tree locations must be surveyed for accuracy and have corresponding tree numbers to the arborist report (see below).
- 2.2. Drawings must show both proposed and existing trees to help assess potential conflicts. This includes, but is not limited to, the arborist report, site plan, servicing plans and landscape plans. Drawings must be accurately scaled, use a metric and common scale, and show proposed and existing tree locations consistently through the application. Tag numbers corresponding to the arborist report must be indicated wherever existing trees are shown.
- 2.3. Significant Trees are afforded the highest level of protection in the Bylaw, and Saanich Parks cannot issue a permit for their removal, that requires Council's approval. Applicants may verify if a Significant Tree is present on-site or adjacent to a project, by opening the "Significant Tree" under the "Parks" layer on Saanich's GIS ([Saanich Map](#)).

### 3. Tree Management Plan:

- 3.1. A Tree Management Plan describes how trees will be retained and protected during development activities or provides rationale as to why the removal of trees is required. For further details, refer to Saanich's requirements for Tree Management Plans here: [Arborist Report Guidelines | District of Saanich](#)

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### 4. Tree planting and replacement trees:

- 4.1. Tree planting as part of a development may be necessary for several reasons:
  - To comply with the Tree Protection Bylaw (for both on-site and boulevard trees).
  - To meet the requirements of Schedule 'I' of the [Subdivision Bylaw](#) (for boulevard tree plantings only).
  - To meet the goals of the [Urban Forest Strategy \(2024\)](#) and other overarching outcomes such as the [Saanich Climate Plan \(2020\)](#) and [Saanich's OCP](#).
- 4.2. In cases where boulevard replacement trees are required, the total number of boulevard trees must meet or exceed the requirements of Schedule 'I'.
- 4.3. Summary of information locations:
  - Information regarding requirements for replacement trees are found in Part 7 of the Tree Protection Bylaw. The number of replacement trees required depends on the reason for removal.
  - Schedule 'I' of the Subdivision Bylaw outlines requirements for planting boulevard trees for new developments. Applicants should plant the largest appropriate size class of tree species along the frontage of the development site. Parks recommends applicants review the requirements of this Schedule prior to submission.
- 4.4. The [Urban Forest Strategy \(UFS\)](#) sets canopy cover targets based on land use. A table detailing these targets can be found on page 69 of the UFS. Applicants must endeavour to meet or exceed these targets.
- 4.5. For proposed on-site tree plantings, specific species and numbers should be indicated. The Tree Protection Bylaw requires that all replacement tree plantings meet the minimum size requirements and have specific location requirements. (see sections 44 and 51 of the Bylaw).
- 4.6. For more information on tree planting guidelines, see: [Replacement-Tree-Process.pdf](#)
- 4.7. For boulevard plantings, landscape drawings should indicate the size class of proposed trees (small, medium or large). The largest class of tree possible as appropriate for the area is required. Saanich parks will provide a list of species, based on size class, at the building permit phase of the development. The tree species must be shown on the landscape drawings at the commercial building permit phase of development.
- 4.8. BC Hydro has height restrictions for trees planted near to their infrastructure. Please review these requirements at this link: [planting-near-powerlines.pdf \(bchydro.com\)](#)

### 5. General Soil volume and spacing:

- 5.1. On-site tree plantings the required soil volume is per the [Canadian Landscape Standards](#). The soil volume is determined by comparing the recommended minimum area of 10 m<sup>2</sup> per tree to the recommended soil depth: 600 mm to 1000mm for at grade landscapes and 750 mm to 1000 mm over structures. This gives a range of 6 to 10 m<sup>3</sup> depending on location, trees species and surrounding landscape. For example, a tree over structure should have a minimum of 7.5 m<sup>3</sup> of soil volume. Information regarding soil area around trees can be found under Section 6.3. 3. 2 and soil depths under Section 5 Table F in the Standards.
- 5.2. Boulevard tree planting has differing soil volume requirements to achieve long term tree viability due to the nature of the boulevard environment and what Saanich has historically found to be successful:
  - **8 m<sup>3</sup>** for small class trees,

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- **12 m<sup>3</sup>** for medium class trees and
  - **16 m<sup>3</sup>** for large class trees.
- 5.3. If sufficient soil volume cannot be provided, soil cells under the adjacent hardscape is the preferred method of providing soil volume. This should be indicated on the landscape drawings.
- 5.4. Where soil volume can be achieved in boulevard planting areas without the use of soil cells, Saanich recommends installing root barrier (UB-18/UB-24) along all hardscape surfaces adjacent to tree planting locations. The barrier should extend a minimum distance of **4 m** on center from each tree. Depending on tree species and site conditions, additional root barrier may be required.
- 5.5. Minimum spacing guidelines for tree planting (exceptions may be considered based on-site conditions and tree species suitability):
- **1.5 m** horizontally from underground services
  - **2 m** from driveways and fire hydrants
  - **3 m** from pad mounted transformers (refer to BC Hydro specifications)
  - **5 m** from power and service poles, and streetlights
- 5.6. In general, trees should be spaced appropriately for the mature size class of the tree. These distances can be adjusted depending on the species planted – for example, some narrow growing species may be planted closer together.
- **5 m** spacing for small class trees,
  - **7 m** spacing for medium class trees and
  - **10 m** spacing for large class trees
- 5.7. Boulevards which are to be used for tree planting should be a minimum of **1.5 m** wide, with **1.8 m** or wider preferred. Boulevards less than **2 m** in width may require the use of soil cells or alternative construction methods to ensure sufficient soil volume.
- 5.8. For boulevard plantings, a minimum of **1 m** from the back of the curb and/or sidewalk is required. If the boulevard is too narrow to meet this requirement, Parks may consider approval based on site conditions and tree species suitability.
- 6. Irrigation:**
- 6.1. All future on-site and boulevard tree plantings should include irrigation systems suitable for tree watering. Boulevard plantings can be watered either from the development site itself (for smaller sites), or from a separate water meter (for larger sites).
- At the development permit phase, landscape drawings must indicate the proposed method of boulevard irrigation.
- 6.2. During the commercial building permit and site servicing phase of development, detailed irrigation drawings will be required. The servicing and landscape drawings will need to provide specifications for the sleeving used, if applicable. All irrigation must comply with District of Saanich [Landscape Irrigation Specifications for Work on Public Land](#) and IIABC (Irrigation Industry Association of British Columbia) [Specifications](#).
- For all irrigation systems that will become the District of Saanich's require site inspections by Saanich staff prior to backfilling to ensure the system is installed according to the specifications.
- 7. Inspection and landscape bonding return:**
- 7.1. For an overview of the replacement tree process, including requirements and procedures, please refer to this document: [Replacement-Tree-Process.pdf](#)