

City of Woodland

Community Development
Department

Tree Plan Information



520 Court Street ❖ Woodland California ❖ 95695

TREE PLAN INFORMATION

Purpose:

Tree Plans, also referred to as Arborist's Reports, are required by Chapter 20A of the Woodland City Code in order to assess the condition of existing trees on properties that are proposed for development projects, as defined by section 65928 of the Government Code, and identify those trees which should be preserved. Development projects include subdivisions, shopping centers, warehouse distribution centers, etc. Tree Plans are required to include the following: 1. Identify the location, size, species and condition of all trees on a property proposed for development. 2. Identify those trees which the applicant proposes to preserve and those which are proposed to be removed and the reasons for such removal. 3. A program for the preservation of healthy trees during and after completion of the development project and for a program for the replacement of any trees proposed to be removed.

When Required:

Section 65928 of the Government Code defines a "Development project" as any project undertaken for the purpose of development. "Development projects" includes a project involving the issuance of a permit for construction or reconstruction but not a permit to operate. "Development project" does not include ministerial projects proposed to be carried out or approved by public agencies. Projects that typically require Tree Plans include tentative subdivision maps, tentative parcel maps, conditional use permits, site plan review, design review and in some cases the preparation of specific plans and environmental documents. Tree Plans are required at the time of initial submittal of plans such as submittal of a tentative subdivision map, tentative parcel map, design review or site plan review and conditional use permits.

Tree Plans are also required for projects subject to the provisions of the Landscaping Ordinance (all new construction except for dwelling structures of three (3) units or less on one (1) parcel of land). The Landscaping Ordinance states that "existing trees are required to be evaluated for their suitability for retention". New construction projects, which have existing trees on the site, must have a Tree Plan prepared to evaluate the tree(s) and a preservation plan prepared if deemed appropriate.

The Community Development Director is responsible for review and approval of all Tree Plans. No public hearing is required unless requested by the Planning Commission or Tree Commission.

Definitions:

Drip line area means the area measured from the trunk of the tree outward to a point at the perimeter of the outermost branch structure of the tree.

Heritage tree: means any valley oak tree with a trunk diameter of thirty-three inches or more at breast height (fifty-four inches) which is of good quality in terms of health, vigor, growth and conformity to generally accepted horticultural standards of shape for its species.

Landmark tree means a tree or stand of trees, which is of historical or public significance as designated by the city council upon the recommendation of both the tree commission and the historical preservation commission.

Major maintenance means and includes major trimming or pruning or cabling, and any other similar act, which promotes the life, growth, health or beauty of trees, excepting watering and minor pruning. Major trimming and pruning shall mean the removal of branches of three inches in diameter or greater.

Specimen tree means any tree of interest because of size or unusual species, other than a heritage tree, which is of good quality in terms of health, vigor or growth and conformity to generally, accepted horticultural standards of shape for its species, as designated by the city council upon the recommendation of the tree commission.

Street tree means any tree growing within the tree maintenance strip whether or not planted by the city

Top means the severe cutting back of tree limbs to stubs larger than three inches in diameter within the tree's crown to such a degree so as to remove the normal canopy and disfigure the tree.

Tree means any live woody plant having one or more well-defined perennial stems with a diameter at maturity of six inches or more measured a fifty-four inches above ground level (breast height).

Pre-Application Review:

While pre-application consultation is not required for Tree Plans, it is encouraged. Pre-application review allows the project sponsor and City staff to discuss the existing trees, the project site and to identify any issues or problems that may arise from the proposed development. By meeting with staff early in the development review process, many issues can be resolved which would otherwise cause later delays.

Application:

The requirements for submittal are listed on this form. Three sets of all paperwork and maps must be submitted initially. If larger than 8.5" x 11", all plans should be prefolded to a 9" by 12 sizes. Once submitted, the application will be reviewed for completeness. You will be contacted if additional information or copies are required. After staff has determined that the application materials are complete, the application will be processed and either approved or disapproved by the Community Development Director. If you have any questions regarding a submittal, contact the Community Development Department for assistance.

Environmental Review:

The California Environmental Quality Act requires that certain types of applications undergo environmental review. Normally, Tree Plans are exempt from environmental review. However, under certain circumstances, environmental review may be required. You will be informed if such review is required for your application. Please refer to the separate "Environmental Overview" handout concerning additional submittal requirements.

Process/Scheduling:

Once the Tree Plan is determined to be complete, it is formally accepted. Copies of the application are sent to the Tree Division of the Public Works Department and Parks and Recreation and Community Services Department for review and comments. No public hearing is required. Once the review agency comments are received, the Community Development Director will review the application, and will either approve it, request modifications or disapprove it. His decision will be based on criteria contained in this instructional guide, the Zoning Ordinance, the Tree Ordinance, and City staff's comments. The process usually takes two to three weeks to complete, depending on the workloads of the three departments. The Director's decision can be appealed to the Planning Commission. Information on appeals may be found in a separate information sheet.

Submittal Requirements:

- A. The Tree Plan shall include the following minimum information:
1. Contour map showing the location, size, species and condition of all existing trees which are located upon the property proposed for development;
 2. Botanical name of tree(s) by tree number;
 3. Common name of tree(s) by tree number;
 4. Location of tree(s) by tree number;

5. Diameter at breast height (DBH) by tree number;
6. Height by tree number;
7. Drip line radius by tree number (measure longest radius);
8. Condition by tree number; and
9. Arborist's Recommendations.

B. Determination of Tree Condition: The information on tree condition shall be developed as follows:

1. Rating System. The condition of each tree is to be considered when determining a tree's rating according to the following categories: excellent (it is rare that a tree qualifies in this category); good; fair to good; fair; fair to poor; or poor.
2. Factors to be considered: The following factors shall be considered in light of the tree's life expectancy under existing and planned conditions when determining a trees rating:
 - a. The condition and environment of the tree's root crown (also roots, if applicable).
 - b. The condition of the trunk, including decay, injury callusing or presence of fungus sporophores.
 - c. The condition of the limbs, including strength of crotches, amount of deadwood, hollow areas, and whether there is excessive weight borne by them.
 - d. The condition and growth rate history of the twigs, including pest damage and diseases.
 - e. Leaf appearance, including abnormal size and density as well as pest and disease damage.
 - f. The Dripline environment, including evidence of grade changes and presence of watercourses or ponding.
3. Formulation of Tree Condition: Using an averaging of the above factors together with the Arborist's best judgement, the tree shall then be described using the above rating categories. It is important to rate the tree's structural condition separately from the tree's vigor condition if they are different. Root crown, trunk and limb ratings relate most to structure, while twigs and foliage, including growth rate relate most to vigor. The structure of the root crown-trunk area is of primary importance and takes precedence over any other factor. This information should not be considered to be a formula but simply a guideline to help describe a tree's condition.

Arborist's Recommendations. The Arborist's recommendations shall be developed in compliance with the following:

A. Recommendations by tree number: Based upon the conditions and findings, recommendations should be made that logically follow the report conditions. For instance, if weak crotches are reported, cabling would be a logical recommendation to include in the report. These recommended mitigation measures should be spelled out and in some cases may even improve the tree's condition ratings. Trees recommended for removal should include the detailed reasons for their removal based on their condition and the existing and planned site conditions

B. General Recommendations: Specific and general preservation measures to be taken for each tree not being removed. The specific recommendations must consider the impacts from the construction activities proposed.

C. Tree Preservation Plan: The Plan shall include recommendations for the preservation of street trees, heritage, specimen, landmark trees and trees with aesthetic value (trees with a nine-inch diameter or larger, measured fifty-four inches above the ground, in healthy condition) during and after completion of the development project. The Tree Plan shall follow the policies and procedures for approved work noted below.

D. A Program for the replacement of any trees proposed to be removed, as required by Section 20A-1-100 of the Tree Ordinance.

Policies and Procedures for Approved Work

This section defines procedures necessary to protect the health of trees to be preserved. These policies and procedures apply to all encroachments into the drip line of preserved/retained trees.

A. Trenching Procedure: Trenching within the drip line of a preserved tree, when permitted may only be conducted with hand tools or as otherwise directed by an Arborist, in order to avoid root injury.

B. Cutting Roots:

1. Minor roots less than one (1) inch in diameter may be cut, but damaged roots shall be traced back and cleanly cut behind any split, cracked or damaged area.
2. Major roots over one (1) inch in diameter may not be cut without approval of an Arborist. Depending upon the type of improvement being proposed, bridging techniques or a new site design may need to be employed to protect the root and the tree.

C. Ground Surface Fabric. If any native ground surface fabric within the drip line must be removed for any reason, it shall be replaced within forty-eight (48) hours.

D. Irrigation Systems. An independent low flow drip irrigation system may be used for establishing drought tolerant plants within the drip line of a preserved tree. Irrigation shall be gradually reduced and discontinued after a two (2) year period.

E. Plant Materials under Oaks. Planting live material under native oak trees is generally discouraged, and it will not be permitted within six (6) feet of the trunk of a native oak with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of eighteen (18) inches or less, or within ten (10) feet of the trunk of a native oak tree with a DBH of more than eighteen (18) inches. Only drought tolerant plants will be permitted within the drip line of native oak trees.

F. Protective Fencing:

1. Type of fencing. A minimum five (5) foot high chain link or substitute fence approved by the Director shall be installed at the outermost edge of the drip line of each preserved tree or group of preserved trees. Exceptions to this policy may occur in cases where protected trees are located on slopes that will not be graded. However, approval must be obtained from the Department to omit fences in any area of the project.
2. Fence installation. The fences shall be installed in accordance with the approved fencing plan prior to the commencement of any grading operations or such other time as determined by the Director. The developer shall call the Community Development Department for an inspection of the fencing prior to grading operations.
3. Signing. Signs shall be installed on the fence in four (4) equidistant locations around each individual preserved tree. The size of each sign must be a minimum of two (2) feet by two (2) feet and must contain the following language: "Warning, this fence shall not be removed or relocated without written authorization from the Woodland Planning Department".
4. Fence removal. Once approval has been obtained, the fences shall remain in place throughout the entire construction period and shall not be removed without obtaining written authorization from the Department.

G. Retaining Walls and Root Protection. Where a tree preservation plan has been approved for construction of a retaining wall(s) within the drip line of a preserved tree, the developer will be required to provide for immediate protection of exposed roots from moisture loss during the time prior to completion of the wall. The retaining wall shall be constructed within seventy-two (72) hours after completion of grading.

H. Preservation Devices. If required, preservation devices such as aeration systems, oak tree wells, drains, special foundation systems, special paving and cabling systems must be installed per approved plans and certified by the developer's Arborist.

I. Grading:

1. Every effort should be made to avoid cut and/or fill slopes within or in the vicinity of the drip line of any preserved tree.
2. No grade changes are permitted which causes water to drain to within twice the longest radius of the drip line of any preserved tree.
3. No grade changes are permitted which results in the ground being lowered on all sides of the tree.

J. Chimney Locations. A chimney for woodburning fireplaces or stoves shall not be located within the canopy of the tree or in such a location that sparks emitted from the chimney may damage a tree.

K. Certification Letters. Certification letters are required for all regulated activities within the drip line of preserved trees. The developer's Arborist will be required to submit a certification letter to the Department within five (5) working days of completing any regulated activity, attesting that all work was conducted in accordance with the approved tree preservation plan.

L. On-site Information. The following information must be on-site while any construction activity is on going for a project with a tree preservation plan:

1. Tree Preservation Plan;
2. Tree location map and a copy of the tree fencing plan
3. Approved construction plans;
4. Tree Preservation Guidelines; and
5. Approved planting and irrigation drawings

M. Information on Standard Policies and Procedures. The developer shall be responsible for informing all subcontractors and individuals that will be performing work around preserved trees of the Standard Policies and Procedures for working around trees, requirements of the Tree Preservation Plan and any conditions of approval. This information shall be provided in writing to the subcontractors and employees by the general contractor or applicant.

N. Utility Trenching Pathway Plan. As a condition of the Tree Preservation Plan, the developer will be required to submit a utility trenching-pathway plan for approval following approval of the project improvement or civil plans.

1. Contents. The trenching-pathway plan shall depict all of the following systems: storm drains, sewers, easements, water mains, area drains and underground utilities. Except in lot sale subdivisions, the trenching-pathway plan must show all lateral lines serving buildings. To be completely effective, the trenching-pathway plan must include the surveyed location of all preserved trees on the project as well as an accurate plotting of the drip line of each preserved tree.
2. Standards for plan. The trenching-pathway plan should be developed considering the following general guidelines:
 - a. The trenching-pathway plan must be developed to avoid going into the drip line of any preserved tree on its path from the street to the building.
 - b. Where it is impossible to avoid encroachment; the design must minimize the extent of such encroachment. Encroachment and mitigation measures must be addressed in a supplement to the Tree Protection Plan.

O. Final Certification of Tree Work. All of the tree preservation measures required by the approved Tree Preservation Plan shall be completed and certified by the developer's Arborist prior to issuing any occupancy permit.