



Photo by: Zač Gudakov

## PERMIT REVIEW USER GUIDE: Tree Removals on Private Property / No Development

Updated in 2024, Bellevue’s tree codes apply to development scenarios under Bellevue’s Land Use Code (LUC) and non-development scenarios under Bellevue City Code (BCC). The Development Services Department reviews tree removal permit applications to ensure that Bellevue City Code (BCC) [23.76.060](#) Clearing – Vegetation Preservation & Replacement requirements are met. The following guide streamlines the permit review process for tree removals on private property and ensures that permit submittals meet the purpose and intent of the code.

### STEP 1. Determine if / what type of permit is required for the proposed tree removal activities.

- Are the proposed tree removals located within the Critical Areas Overlay District per [LUC 20.25.H](#) or the Shoreline Overlay District per [LUC 20.25.E](#)?

*If the proposal includes tree removals that are located within Shoreline and/or Critical Area/Critical Area Buffer jurisdiction, tree removals must be reviewed under the associated codes’ permit requirements. If the proposal does not include trees within critical area/shoreline jurisdiction, proceed to check for any related development activity below.*

- Are the proposed tree removals related to the disturbance limits or landscaping requirements under [LUC 20.20.520](#) or the development activity defined in

[LUC 20.20.900](#), such as short plats, subdivisions, increases to impervious surfaces, or changes to lot coverage that may be subject to review under a building or development permit?

*If the proposal includes tree removals subject to the landscaping and development requirements described above, tree removals must be reviewed under the associated code permit requirements. Refer to the Development Review User Guide for Tree Retention and Replacement on Private Property.*

*If the proposal is unrelated to development activity and the tree removals are not within Shoreline and/or Critical Area/Critical Area Buffer jurisdiction, a Clearing and Grading permit may be required. Proceed to Step 2.*

### STEP 2. Determine if tree replacement requirements apply.

- Are the proposed significant/landmark tree removals located on sites within the residential land use districts identified in [BCC 23.76.060.G.1](#) and do the remaining replanting requirements?

*Based on the site size, prior tree removal history and if the site is located within the residential land use districts identified above, if the number of proposed significant and landmark tree removals and the remaining trees on site meet or exceed the thresholds established in Table 23.75.060.G, tree replacements are required.*



Review of the proposal through a Clearing and Grading permit is required. Proceed to Step 3.

- Are the proposed significant/landmark tree removals located on sites other than the residential land use districts identified in [BCC 23.76.060.G.1](#)?

The removal of any significant/landmark trees outside the residential land use districts identified above require replanting per BCC 23.76.060.G.2, except hazard trees described below. Replacement tree ratios and/or tree density apply. Proceed to Step 3.

- Do the proposed tree removals meet hazard tree criteria outlined in [LUC 20.20.900.C.3](#)?

Replacements are not required for hazard tree removals. Note that any trees previously required to be retained or planted in association with development requirements must be retained, apart from hazard trees. Review of the proposed removal of hazard trees is required through a Clearing and Grading permit. Proceed to Step 3.

**STEP 3. Do the submitted materials meet a preliminary completeness check?** To proceed with your review, check files in Bluebeam for:

#### ■ Clearing and Grading Drawings

A Tree Protection Plan prepared by a Qualified Professional per [BCC 23.76.060.E](#) showing:

- Significant/landmark trees identified by number.
- Proposed tree removals indicated by an 'x' or ghosted out.
- Fencing, shown drawn to scale at the boundary of tree protection zones (TPZ), per the Clearing and Grading Development Standard BMP T101: Tree Protection Requirements.
- Proposed locations of any replacement trees, if applicable ([BCC 23.76.060.E](#)) that meet standards for single-stemmed form, minimum 2" caliper (for deciduous trees) or 6' height (for conifer trees).
- Tree Inventory Table with tree ID number, species, DBH and any notes.

#### ■ Arborist Report\*

Prepared by a Qualified Tree Professional per [BCC 23.76.060.E](#) that identifies:

- Significant/landmark trees by number, corresponding to the site plan.
- Minimum Tree Density Credits, if applicable.
- Proposed planted tree species, if applicable.

#### ■ Tree Hazard Declaration Form

Completed by a Qualified Tree Professional for any hazardous tree(s) per [BCC 23.76.030.G](#). The Tree Hazard Declaration Form will need to include a completed ISA Basic Tree Risk Assessment for each hazardous tree.

\* Although not explicitly specified under Clearing and Grading Drawings code, application requirements and level of detail for clearing and grading permits may be established administratively per [BCC 23.76.035.E](#).



**STEP 4. Review materials for tree removal and tree replacement requirements.** Check that the total number of proposed significant/landmark tree removals do not exceed the tree removal thresholds allowed within a continuous twelve-month period, per property size, without replacement trees as shown below. If the total number of any significant/landmark tree removals exceeds the annual tree removal allowance or if the remaining trees fall below the minimums, replacement trees are required per [BCC 23.76.060.G.1](#):

Property Size	Annual Replanting Threshold	Significant or Landmark Trees Remaining on the Site
Up to 10,000 square feet	Removal of 1 landmark tree or 2 significant trees	2
10,001 to 20,000 square feet	Removal of 1 landmark tree or 3 significant trees	3
20,001 to 40,000 square feet	Removal of 1 landmark tree or 4 significant trees	4
40,001 square feet or greater	Removal of 1 landmark tree or 4 significant trees	8

Additional replacement ratios and/or requirements may apply as follows:

- For each significant tree removal, the permittee shall plant one replacement tree on the site.
- For each landmark tree removal, the permittee shall plant either three replacement trees, or two large conifer species trees approved by the director, on the site.
- Replacement requirements do not apply to any hazardous tree, as determined by a Qualified Tree Professional consistent with [LUC 20.20.900.C.3](#), except when required to maintain any applicable landscaping standards or tree retention requirements from a prior approval, including but not limited to [LUC 20.20.520](#).
- Where not associated with a prior approval, permit, or landscaping requirement, the Director may reduce the number of replacement trees required to be planted on the site may be reduced by the director if the permittee demonstrates that the site will still meet the applicable minimum tree density provided in [LUC 20.20.900.E](#) and any other applicable landscaping standards, including but not limited to [LUC 20.20.520](#).
- Trees located in Shoreline and/or Critical Area/Critical Area Buffer are subject to separate mitigation standards per LUC 20.25E and 20.25H, respectively.



**STEP 5. Schedule a site visit, if needed, to field-verify information shown on the Clearing and Grading permit application.**

There may be trees on site that were omitted from the submittal materials. Sometimes, DBH and hazard tree condition may not be accurate, which can affect tree protection fence placement and tree replacement requirements.

If the site visit reveals that submittal materials are missing information or are not accurate, make a correction/revision request for the missing and/or incorrect information as part of any other corrections/revisions you are requesting.

**STEP 6. Provide permit determination.**

Enter determination (approved, approved with conditions, denied, revisions requested, etc.) into AMANDA.

*If a revision or correction is necessary, upload all Land Use requested corrections to [mybuildingpermit.com](http://mybuildingpermit.com).*

**STEP 7. After permit issuance, conduct a site visit to verify that clearing limits have been marked in the field.** Coordinate scheduling with the inspector.

*If clearing limits are not marked and tree protection measures are not installed, notify the applicant.*

**STEP 8. Memorialize review comments or approval.**

Once review is completed, each reviewer will upload their comments to [mybuildingpermit.com](http://mybuildingpermit.com), Sharepoint, and update their AMANDA process line to “revision requested” status. When the permit can be approved each reviewer will complete required steps in the AMANDA system and Bluebeam per Department procedures.

