Roads, Parks & Forestry
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Pre-Building Approval Process

Forestry Checklist and FAQ

When is a Forestry review required?

Whether you are proposing exterior work at grade or proposing a secondary story renovation, regulated trees must be considered when planning your project. If you are working around regulated trees that are privately or City-owned, you will need to apply for a tree permit for review by the City's Forest Protection branch. Information on how and where the construction activity will occur must consider the minimum tree protection zone of regulated trees on your own lot and those on an adjacent lot and along the municipal right of way. For more information on what is considered a regulated tree, what is considered construction activity, how to identify what a minimum tree protection zone is, or to understand defined terms, refer to the remainder of this document and the City's **Guide to Tree Protection**.

Do I need an arborist report?

Is an arborist report required? Answer the questions below.	**Select**
Will the proposed **construction activity** occur within the **minimum tree protection zone** of a **regulated tree(s)** on the subject lot?	
Will the proposed **construction activity** occur within the **minimum tree protection zone** of a **regulated tree(s)** on public property (e.g., within the municipal boulevard)?	
Will the proposed **construction activity** occur within 6 metres of a **regulated tree(s)** that is located on an adjacent property?	
Will the proposed **construction activity** require the destruction and/or removal of a **regulated tree**?	
If YES to any of the questions above, an arborist report and tree protection plan is required. Arborist reports must be prepared by a qualified tree professional	
See defined terms for the bolded words in the sections below.	

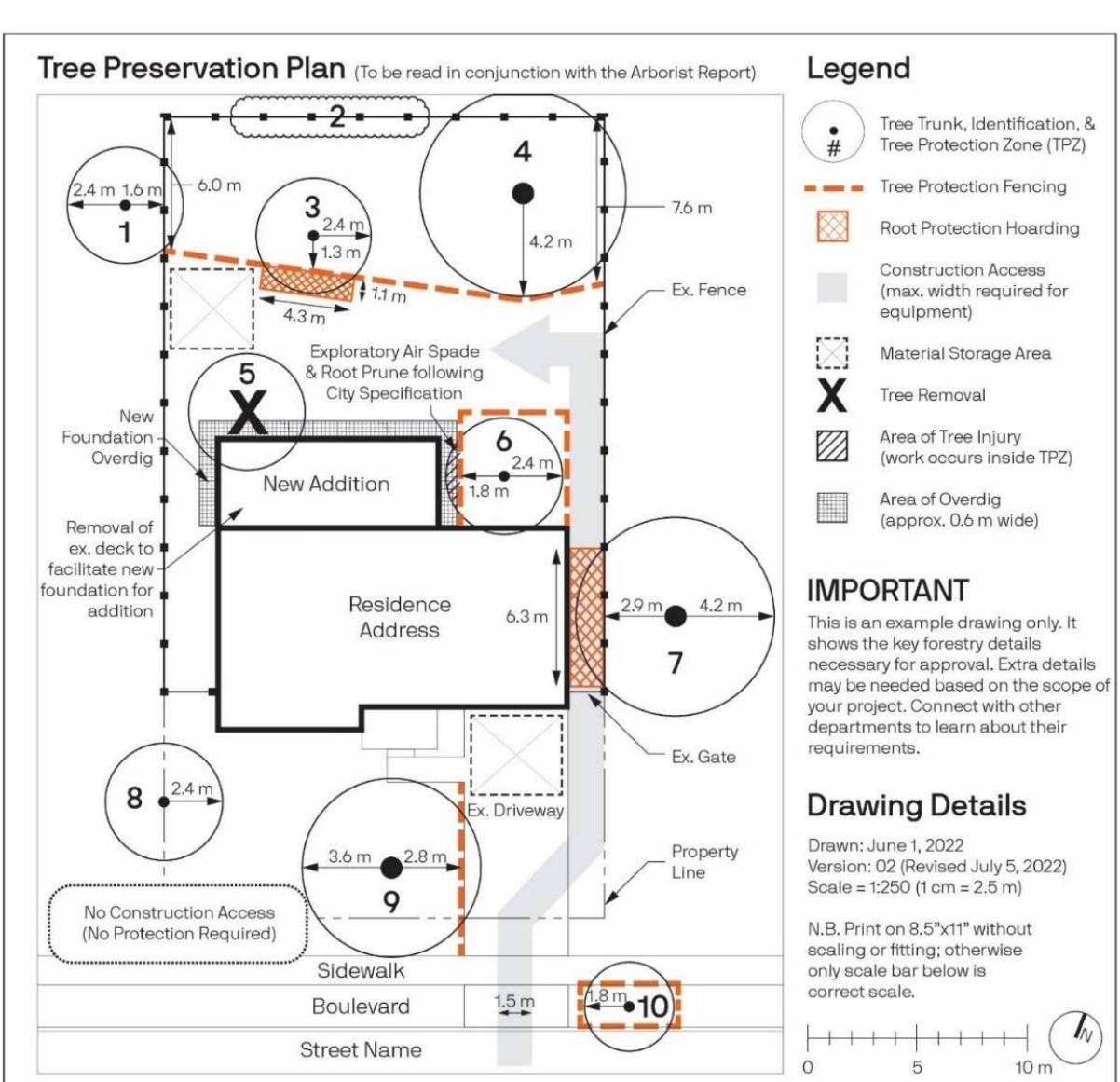
Do I need a tree protection plan?

YES – Where you have answered yes to any of the questions above, a tree protection plan is a requirement for Forestry staff to review. Complete the **Tree Protection Plan Checklist** to ensure your plan is acceptable. All tree protection plans must be accompanied by a tree inventory table. Refer to **Figure 1** for an example tree protection plan.

If you are not making an application to injure or destroy (remove) a tree, but still have regulated trees, staff recommend that you prepare a tree protection plan. This plan will help you ensure you maintain compliance with the City's Tree By-laws. More information can be found in our **Guide to Tree Protection**.

Tree Protection Plan Checklist	✓
Drawing is scaled in metric ****Referrals to other documents for scale are not accepted**	
Scale bar provided	
Drawing / details legible	
Property lines (including frontages) illustrated	
Existing buildings/structures and/or hard surfaces illustrated (e.g., existing patio, deck retaining wall, house etc.)	
Proposed buildings/structures and/or hard / soft surfaces illustrated (e.g., new patio, retaining wall, house, swales, landscape features etc.)	
Label and location of all regulated trees on the property and within 6m of the property including municipal trees illustrated	
Scaled trunk drawn for all regulated trees on the property and within 6m of the property including municipal trees	
Minimum tree protection zones (circles) drawn for all trees in accordance with the City's **Tree Protection and Preservation Specification SS12A.** Minimum tree protection zone shall be: • Drawn to scale • Centered • Radius measured out starting from edge of trunk on all sides not the centre of the tree	

Tree Protection Plan Checklist	✓
DBH measurement provided is accurate ****Refer to Guide to Tree Protection for details on measurements for single and multi-stemmed trees**	
Legend provided	
Legend defines the symbols, lines or colours etc. used on the plan **** Do not include other elements that are not applicable. Labels for all information included on the drawing to be provided**	
A tree inventory table that includes tree information such as tree sizes (diameter), species, ownership, and recommendation (provide separate tree inventory table as needed or include on site plan drawing).	
Tree hoarding (fencing) labelled and dimensioned on drawing ****Refer to the City's Tree Protection and Preservation Specification SS12A**	
Root protection (horizontal hoarding) labelled and dimensioned on drawing	
Mitigative work labelled on drawing for work around trees (e.g., exploratory air-spade and root pruning, etc.)	
Location of all associated construction activities, including but not limited to:	
• Construction access route (with width measurements)	
• Construction material storage area(s)	
• Excavation area including limits of over-dig	
• Trenching and/or boring locations (with depths and width measurements)	
• All proposed servicing and utilities on both public and private property	
• All existing services to be decommissioned	
• Fill placement from excavation, or material being brought to the lot	
• Grade and surface changes	
• Gas disconnection and reconnections	
****Detail as much as possible to assist with the review, e.g., areas to be accessed by foot, when and where hand tools will be utilized instead of machinery, no access areas, areas where material will be stored etc.**	



Tree Inventory Table (To be read in conjunction with the Arborist Report)

Tree #	Tree Species	Tree DBH (cm)	Tree TPZ (m)	Tree Health	Tree Structure	Tree Ownership	Recommendation (see Arb. Report)	Notes (see Arborist Report for more detail)
1	Tulip Tree	25	2.4	Good	Good	Neighbour	Protect	
2	White Cedar	< 20	NA	Good	Good	Boundary / Shared	No Action Required	9 stems in hedge; none regulated
3	Ironwood	20	2.4	Good	Good	Subject Property	Protect	
4	Sugar Maple	65	4.2	Good	Fair	Subject Property	Protect	
5	Ironwood	21	2.4	Good	Good	Subject Property	Remove	Significant injury to structural roots
6	Redbud	22	2.4	Good	Good	Subject Property	Injure & Protect	Root prune following City Spec.
7	Black Maple	60	4.2	Fair	Good	Neighbour	Protect	
8	Yellowwood	20	2.4	Poor	Fair	Boundary / Shared	No Action Required	
9	White Birch	51	3.6	Fair	Fair	Subject Property	Protect	3 stems: $\sqrt{29^2 + 29^2 + 30^2} = 51$ cm DBH
10	Serviceberry	10	1.8	Good	Good	City	Protect	

Figure 1: Example tree protection plan

Defined Forestry Terms:

Regulated Tree:

1. Any tree of any size on public property, or on the public property line (By-law No. 98-2025).
2. Any tree with a Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) of 20 cm or greater on private property (By-law No, 40-2022).
3. Any tree classified as endangered, threatened, or at risk as defined under the *Endangered Species Act*, 2007, c.6 or the *Species at Risk Act*, 2002, S.C. 2002, c.29.
4. Any heritage tree pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O., 1990, c.O.18.
5. Replacement trees installed as part of a condition on a previous tree permit.

Tree Protection Zone:

The minimum distance from a **regulated tree** required to be protected to prevent injury to the tree, as per the City's **Tree Protection and Preservation Specification (SS12A)**.

Construction Activity:

An activity that includes but is not limited to excavation, building, trenching, demolition, boring, servicing, placement of fill, storage of soil, change of surface, storage of construction materials, changes to grade, storage of waste or equipment, and movement of vehicles and equipment for accessing the area where the work will be occurring.

GENERAL – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where do the two tree by-laws apply?

The Public Tree By-law 98-2025 is applicable City-wide including the rural planning area. The Private Tree By-law 40-2022 is only applicable to the urban planning area.

To locate which area you live in, please view Schedule B on the **Official Plan Online Map**. Once there, search for your address by clicking the looking-glass icon.

- The urban planning area is the area below the black dotted line (the boundary).
- The rural planning area is the green area above the black dotted line (the boundary).

For more information on the City's Tree By-laws, visit the Forest Protection and Tree Permits webpage: **burlington.ca/forestprotection**

What is a tree inventory table?

A tree inventory table (table of tree details) must be submitted with all tree protection plans. All the details for the tree(s) must be in one table. A row must be completed for every tree. Please see the example below for the minimum requirements to be included in each table. Ensure that it is clear which trees you are applying for a permit to injure or a permit to destroy/remove and those that will be fully protected. Reasons why a tree is to be injured and/or removed are also helpful.

Table 1: Example of a tree inventory table

Tree No. (as indicated on tree protection plan)	**Tree Species**	**Tree Protection Zone (m)**	**Diameter at Breast Height** (1.37m above grade)	**Tree Health (Good, Fair, Poor, Dead etc.)**	**Tree Structure (Good, Fair, Poor, Dead etc.)**	**Tree Ownership** (private, public, shared boundary, neighbours)	**Recommendation: Preserve, injure, or destroy (remove)**	**Notes / Mitigative Measures**
1	*Norway Maple*	*2.4*	*30cm*	*Fair*	*Fair*	*Private*	*Remove*	*Tree is in the footprint of the proposed pool*
2	*Norway Maple*	*3.0*	*50cm*	*Good*	*Fair*	*Neighbour (Address)*	*Injure*	*Encroachment of 10% of MTPZ required. Arborist on-site with air-spade to expose and cleanly prune roots in accordance with SS12A. See report for additional details.*

What is a qualified tree professional?

A qualified tree professional is one that has gained recognized certifications, qualifications and expertise in the care and management of trees. Recognized certifications and qualifications for qualified tree professionals include:

1. Registered Consulting Arborist (RCA) with the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA);
2. Board Certified Master Arborist or Arborist Municipal Specialist with the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA);
3. Registered Professional Forester (RPF) as defined in the *Professional Foresters Act, 2000*, S.O. 2000, c.18;
4. Certified Arborist with the International Society of Arboriculture; or,
5. Qualified Tree Risk Assessor with the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

What information needs to be in a Consent Letter for injury and/or removal of a neighbouring or boundary tree?

If your proposal involves the injury and/or removal of a neighbouring or boundary tree, you must provide a consent letter from that tree's owner(s). The consent letter must include:

- The name, address and contact details of all the owners and/or co-owners of the trees associated with the application, and the date consent was provided.
- The exact details of the trees to be injured and/or removed in accordance with the application and arborist report and tree protection plan prepared (e.g., tree identifier, species name, size, and location etc.).
- A clear statement acknowledging the proposal for the tree(s) to be injured and/or destroyed/removed and acceptance of the proposal. For example, **I/we understand and are agreeable /consent to the removal and/or injury of the tree as identified herein that adjoins property X and Y.**
- Additional information can be included in the letter, which would be considered civil in nature and between both parties outside of the City's oversight.

Please ensure the letter of consent has a clear statement for the type of permit and references the terms consenting to injury or consenting to the removal of the tree.

How should I document hedges and regulated trees within them?

Hedges are individual trees planted close together. You will need to consider hedges when planning your project. Below are three different scenarios (A, B, and C) which will assist you in preparing your tree protection plan. Refer to **Figure 2** for an example on how to illustrate hedges.

Scenario A: If all trees in a hedge are under regulation size (less than 20 cm DBH), show the dripline (edge of the canopy) of the entire hedge so that it is clear the hedge is acknowledged but unregulated. Use a call-out on the tree protection plan to verify that no trees of regulation size are within the hedge.

Scenario B: If all trees in a hedge are regulated (20 cm DBH or greater), at a minimum the dripline of the entire hedge must be shown as well as the individual trunk and tree protection zone of each regulated tree. Ensure a measurement is provided to clearly identify the tree protection zone and fence location relative to the trunk.

Scenario C: If not all the trees in the hedge are regulated (20cm DBH or greater), at a minimum the dripline of the entire hedge must be shown as well as the individual trunk and tree protection zone of each regulated tree. Ensure that these trees are marked in the backyard with a ribbon or flagging tape. Ensure a measurement is provided to clearly identify the tree protection zone and fence location relative to the trunk.

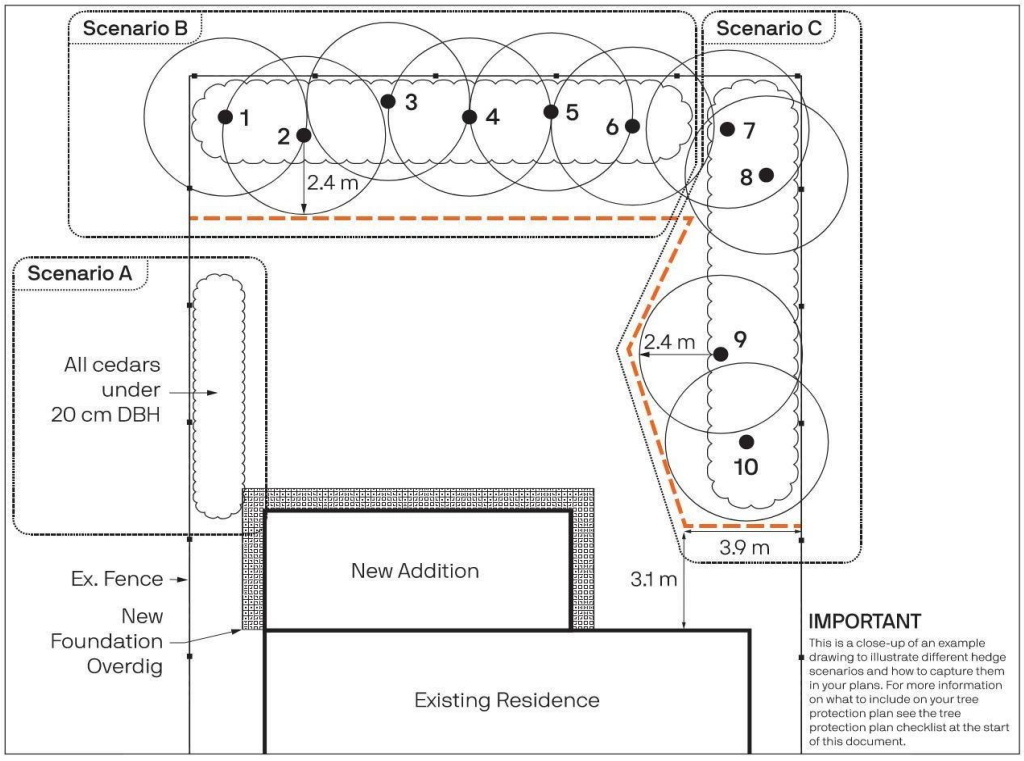


Figure 2: Snapshot image of how to show hedges on a tree protection plan

What if the work requires only foot traffic and will be done by hand (no machinery)?

Some construction projects may not cause an injury to a tree due to their scope. For example, installing a roof over an existing patio or deck, where only hand tools will be used. For projects where there will be a small amount of material required, and all work will be done by hand with no machines (e.g., skid-steer or boom lift), you can add a clear note to your site plan that says: "No machine access, all work to be done by hand". Ensure the area where the work is to be completed is marked out and shown in relation to the regulated trees. Refer to **Figure 3** for an example of a site plan / tree protection plan.

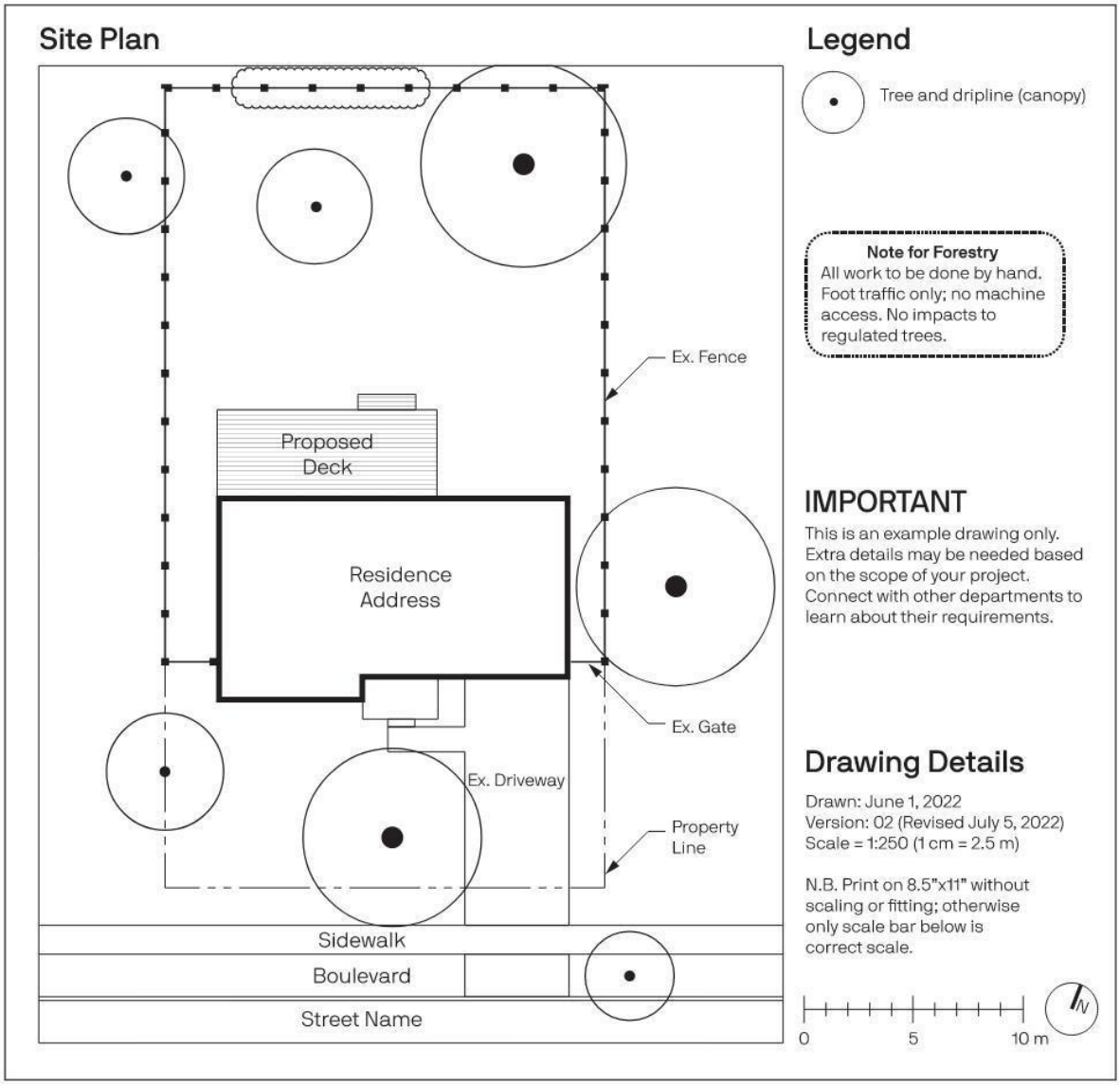


Figure 3: Example of a site plan and/or tree protection plan where all work is to be done by hand (foot traffic only) no machine access and no impacts to regulated trees

What if I have no trees on my lot?

If there are no trees on your lot, and no trees within 6 m on an adjacent lot, you may complete and submit a **Tree Declaration Form** with your application.

If there are trees on an adjacent lot whose minimum tree protection zones (MTPZs) extend onto your property, those trees must be considered as part of the project review. If the proposed work will not impact those trees or their protection zones, you may also proceed with a **Tree Declaration Form.**

To download the **Tree Declaration Form**, visit: **burlington.ca/forestprotection**

When can I remove my tree protection?

Tree protection must stay in place for the entire duration of the project. If you would like to remove your tree protection at any time during your project you must contact the Forestry staff identified on your tree permit to discuss the reason for the request and to identify what exterior work remains (if any). Forestry staff will conduct an inspection of your tree protection before it is removed.

ARBORIST REPORT REQUIREMENTS

What information needs to be in an arborist report?

IMPORTANT: All arborist reports must be completed by a qualified tree professional. Reports that are not prepared by qualified tree professionals will not be accepted. Arborist reports shall include but not be limited to the following elements:

- The address of the subject site
- The author, contact information, and relevant qualifications (e.g., ISA, RPF)
- The date(s) that the assessment was conducted; ensure assessments were completed within the last year (365 days)
- An overview of the proposed work and explain what arboricultural work is to be undertaken for each tree(s) (e.g., tree to be injured, tree to be destroyed (removed), tree to be preserved and protected)
- Where applicable, a description of the trees to be removed including the specific reason(s) (e.g., new sanitary service)
- Where applicable, a description of the trees to be injured where construction activities will be in the minimum tree protection zone
- Mitigation measures to be completed and when to avoid negative impacts to trees

when work is required in the minimum tree protection zone (e.g., exploratory air-spade and root prune)
- Tree inventory (table of tree details) (refer to the tree inventory section)
- A proposal for the replanting or replacing of trees that are to be removed
- Confirmation that the tree protection zones established and maintained around any trees on the property are in accordance with the City's relevant policies, procedures, and specifications (SS12A)
- Where applicable the minimum frequency of site inspections by a qualified tree professional during proposed works
- Recommendations for post-construction care and/or monitoring (as required) for regulated trees and proposed replacement trees
- Where applicable a consent letter for the removal and/or injury of boundary tree(s) (those located along the shared property line) to be attached to the report document
- Where applicable a consent letter for the removal and/or injury of a neighbour tree(s) to be attached to the report document
- Where applicable any additional relevant information (e.g., legal survey, TRAQ form, pre-construction exploratory review etc.) to be attached to the report document
- Photographs of the individual trees with clear labels matching the inventory table and tree protection plan

PROPERTIES WITHIN THE RURAL AREA

Is an arborist report and tree protection plan required when I live in the rural area?

If you live in the rural planning area and you require a public tree permit, an arborist report and tree protection plan is required to support your application. A public tree permit is required where you are proposing to remove a public tree, or where a construction activity will occur within the minimum tree protection zone of the public tree.

TREE REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Is a tree replacement plan required?

A tree replacement plan is required when you are removing a private tree and wish to plant trees for compensation. No tree replacement plan is required when you are removing a private tree and wish to pay cash-in-lieu of planting trees as compensation. A tree replacement plan is still required if a combination of planting trees and paying cash-in-lieu is desired.

There is no requirement to replant trees where a tree injury permit is issued, and no tree replacement plan is required in this instance.

Public tree removal is considered a last resort. Where you are proposing to remove a public tree, council approval is required prior to the issuance of a public tree permit. The replacement for public trees is collected as cash-in-lieu. We currently do not permit the planting on public property.

How many trees do I need to replant?

For private tree removal and private tree replacements, the number of replacement trees is based on the tree size removed. Refer to the table below:

Table 2: Private replacement tree compensation ratios

Trunk Diameter (DBH) of the Tree Removed	Compensation Ratio
20 – 35 cm	2:1
36 – 74 cm	3:1
Greater than or equal to 75 cm	4:1

If opting to replant, you must provide a tree replacement plan. The tree replacement plan must show the location where the trees will be planted, the species to be planted and the size of tree to be planted.

Replacement trees must be able to grow to a minimum of 4.5 m height at maturity

Replacement trees must be the following minimum sizes at the time of installation:

- 30 mm caliper if deciduous (broadleaf)
- 125 cm tall if coniferous (evergreen)

There will be a replacement tree security deposit per replacement tree. Once the trees have been replanted and verified by staff, the deposit will be refunded.

Replacement trees must be maintained for a minimum of two years and will be considered a regulated tree under the private tree by-law moving forward.

For public trees, once approved, the number of replacement trees for public tree removal is determined using the aggregate caliper method based on 50mm caliper trees. The replacement is collected as cash-in-lieu.

Refer to **burlington.ca/forestprotection** for the most up to date tree permit fees and securities.

Can I plant trees on another property?

Replacement trees can be planted anywhere on your private property or on another private lot within the City's urban planning area as approved by staff. If planting on an alternate lot, that lot will need to be identified on the tree replacement plan. The permit holder will be responsible for paying the tree replacement security deposit, and ensuring the trees are planted. The permit holder will be responsible for notifying staff once the trees are installed to get their deposit refunded. Deposits will only be refunded to the payee of the deposit. A letter of consent from the alternate property owner must accompany the tree replacement plan agreeing to the replacement trees and reference the number of trees, species, sizes, and location and acknowledging that that these trees are now regulated under the private tree by-law.

If I do not want to replant, what is my option?

If there is no room for the replacement trees on your private lot or you opt to not replant, there will be a cash-in-lieu fee ('Private Tree Replacement (Cash-in-Lieu') per required replacement tree. This money will be used toward the planting of trees elsewhere within the City. Refer to **burlington.ca/forestprotection** for the most up to date tree permit fees and securities.

What species of trees should I plant?

The mature height and spread of trees or hedges should be considered when planning and choosing trees and where to replant them on your property along with the other trees you may already have. A list of some suggested replacement trees and size requirements are provided on the City's webpage: **burlington.ca/forestprotection**

How to determine public tree compensation?

Public tree compensation is to be assessed using the **Trunk Formula Technique (TFT)**, specifically the **Reproduction Cost Method**, in accordance with the **Council of Tree & Landscape Appraisers'** *Guide for Plant Appraisal***, 10th Edition.** This nationally recognized methodology determines a tree's value based on trunk size and applicable depreciation factors, including condition, functional limitations (such as overhead utilities), and external influences (such as pests or site constraints). The calculated value is then evaluated using a unit cost representing the purchase price of the same species from a nursery.

Unit costs are to be derived from the **Regional Plant Appraisal Committee (RPAC) Supplemental Guide (2021)** to the 10th Edition. When a specific species is not listed, the corresponding genus will be used. If neither the species nor genus appears in the supplemental guide, City staff will be consulted to determine an appropriate unit cost. To obtain a copy of the RPAC supplement, please visit the International Society of Arboriculture Ontario Chapter webpage for more information and to download a copy.

FORESTRY SECURITIES

Will a public tree security deposit be required?

Public tree securities are necessary to ensure the proper installation and management of tree protection measures, to ensure work has been completed in accordance with the approvals, and to ensure repair of any damage to or replacement of a City-owned tree. The security requirement is based on the size of the tree and is to be deposited prior to the issuance of any tree permit. If you had a site security deposit with Engineering Services, that refund must have been issued prior to the refund of your public tree security deposit request to ensure all outstanding matters at the frontage and site are complete and no further work is to take place. For the list of tree securities, please refer to the City's webpage: **burlington.ca/forestprotection**

Will a tree replacement security deposit be required?

For those trees to be destroyed (removed) on private property, and where you have opted to replant trees, the City will collect a tree replacement security. To determine how many replacement trees are required please refer to the previous section 'How many trees do I need to replant?' Once you install your tree replacements notify the Forest Protection Officer identified on the tree permit by email with photographs. The City Forestry Department may choose to inspect the site to confirm. The permit file will be closed, and the replacement tree security will be released once staff confirm that the replacement trees have been planted as required. In the event the replacement trees are not planted as required, the replacement tree security will be permanently forfeited, and will be deposited into the tree planting initiative reserve fund.

What are the accepted methods of payment for securities?

Security deposits can be paid through E-transfer or EFT/Wire Payments. Please note that refunds of security deposits are provided back to the original payee.

What is the process for release of securities?

Contact Forestry staff identified on your tree permit to carry out a final inspection of the public trees once construction is complete, and/or once your private tree replacements have been installed (as applicable). For any issues, please contact **city@burlington.ca** or 905-335-7777 for assistance.