

Tree Regulations Update – Key Definitions

Trees

“Tree” means a self-supporting woody plant characterized by one main trunk or, for certain species, multiple trunks, typically reaching at least 12 to 15 feet in height at maturity, that is recognized as a tree in the nursery and arboricultural industries.

“Multi-stemmed tree” means a tree that has one stem at ground level but that splits into two or more stems above ground level. Trees whose stems diverge below ground level are considered separate trees.

“Significant tree” means a tree six inches or greater in diameter (DBH). For multi-stemmed trees, if any one stem is six inches or greater in diameter (DBH), the tree shall be considered a significant tree.

“Landmark tree” means a tree that is at least 28 inches in diameter (DBH). For multi-stemmed trees, if the three largest stems, when summed, are at least 28 inches in diameter (DBH), the tree shall be considered a landmark tree. For trees with two stems, if the stems, when summed, are at least 28 inches in diameter (DBH), the tree shall be considered a landmark tree.

“Viable (tree)” means a significant tree that a qualified tree professional has determined to be in good health with a low risk of failure, is relatively windfirm if isolated or exposed, is a species that is suitable for its location, and is therefore worthy of long-term retention.

“Exceptional tree” means a tree, which because of its species, age, size or condition, is of significant cultural, landscape, or nature conservation value, as determined by the City’s Qualified Tree Professional.

“Nuisance tree” means a tree that is causing obvious physical damage to structures, including but not limited to sidewalks, curbs, the surfaces of streets, parking lots, or driveways, or building foundations. The prescription to reduce the problem should include root or branch pruning, installation of root barriers, or other structures to eliminate or reduce potential for further damage. Tree removal should be considered as a last resort.

“Dead Tree” means a tree with no live crown and no functioning vascular tissue.

Risk

“Risk” in the context of trees, is the cross-referencing of the likelihood of a tree failure occurring and the severity of the associated consequences to a target.

“Target” or “Risk Target” means people, property, or activities that could be injured, damaged, or disrupted by a tree.

“Tree Risk Assessor” means a qualified tree professional who identifies subject tree(s) and site conditions, evaluates and classifies the likelihood of failure, estimates the consequences of tree(s) hitting a target, and determines options for treatment or mitigation. The City of Lake Forest Park requires that Tree Risk Assessors be ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified.

“Tree Risk Manager” means the person who holds duty of care responsibility, defines tree risk policies, establishes budget, determines priorities, decides the level of acceptable risk, and chooses among mitigation options. Tree risk manager is assumed to be the property owner except in cases of permit denial.

Development

“Major Development Activity” means an activity that requires federal, state, or local approval for the use or modification of land or its resource. These activities include subdivision or short subdivision of lots; construction or demolition of single family, multi-family or commercial buildings; and alterations, repairs, enlargements or additions of non-conforming structures for more than 50% of fair market value as defined in LFPMC 18.66.050.

“Minor Development Activity” means any activity that requires federal, state, or local approval for the use or modification of land or its resource, except those defined as “Major Development Activity.” These activities include, but are not limited to, additions, enlargements, or alterations to existing structures, construction of retaining walls, fences, driveways, and garages, clearing and grading activity, and right-of-way permits.