

Tree Retention Plans for Development



When preparing to submit your development permit, please use this checklist to ensure the application is complete to prevent delays. A Tree Retention Plan is required for any scope of work requiring approval through a development permit unless exempted by [Kirkland Zoning Code Chapter 95 – Tree Management and Required Landscaping](#).

Exemptions may apply for building additions and remodels of existing improvements in which the total square footage of the proposed improvements is less than 50 percent of the total square footage of the existing footprint on the subject property **and** where no development activity is proposed within the critical root zone of regulated trees.

The Holmes Point Overlay (HPO) area within the Finn Hill Neighborhood has unique development-related tree protection codes. Refer to [Kirkland Zoning Code Chapter 70](#) for more information.

Key Definitions

Regulated Tree: A tree that is at least six inches DBH that is not listed on the Prohibited Plant List.

Landmark Tree: A regulated tree with a minimum 26-inch DBH.

Grove: A group of three or more viable regulated trees with overlapping or touching crowns that are located on a proposed development site; one of which is located in a required yard.

Critical Root Zone (CRZ): The area encircling the trunk of a tree equal to one foot radius for every inch of DBH. Example: a 24-inch DBH tree has a 24-foot radius CRZ measured from the face of the trunk.

Inner Critical Root Zone: An area half the distance of the CRZ that, when impacted, may compromise the structural integrity of the tree. Example: a 24-inch DBH tree has a 12-foot radius inner critical root zone measured from the face of the trunk.

Tree Protection Zone (TPZ): A defined area within and including an outer boundary, as determined by a qualified professional arborist, in which certain activities are prohibited or restricted to prevent or minimize potential impacts from construction or development, applicable to individual trees or groups of tree trunks, roots and soil. TPZ is measured in feet from the face of the trunk and may be determined using critical root zone, dripline, exploratory root excavations or other methodologies. The TPZ is variable depending on species, age and health of the tree, soil conditions and proposed construction. TPZ denotes the location of tree protection fencing.

High Retention Value (HRV): The Planning Official's designation of a tree based on information provided by a qualified professional arborist that is one of the following:

- 1) Grove
- 2) Landmark tree
- 3) A viable tree with any portion of the trunk located in a required yard, land use buffer, and/or common open space

Diameter at Breast Height (DBH): The diameter or thickness of a tree trunk measured at 4.5 feet above average grade.

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Qualified Professional Arborist: An individual with relevant education and training in arboriculture or urban forestry, having two or more of the following credentials:

- International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist;
- Tree Risk Assessor Qualification (TRAQ) as established by the ISA (or equivalent);
- American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA) registered Consulting Arborist;
- Society of American Foresters (SAF) Certified Forester for Forest Management Plans;
- Board Certified Master Arborist as established by the ISA.

Use the [Find an Arborist Tool](#) to research qualified professional arborists.

Viable Tree: A regulated tree on proposed development sites that fits the viable criteria in Table 95.30.2 based on the tree condition ratings pursuant to KZC 95.30. A tree that is not viable is also a tree in an area where removal is unavoidable due to the anticipated development activity after having applied the provisions in this chapter.

Tree Inventory

- Tree Inventory Table with Existing Trees** (must be tagged using a number system consistent with the arborist report and site plan)
 - Trees ≥ 6 " Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) on site
 - Trees ≥ 6 " DBH that have Critical Root Zones (CRZs) extending onto the subject property
 - All trees in the public right-of-way, regardless of DBH
 - Document tree species, size (DBH), and viability per [KZC 95.30\(3\)\(c\)](#)
 - Recommended CRZ specified in feet from the face of each trunk
 - Identification of all High Retention Value Trees, including Landmark Trees and Groves

Site Plan (drawn to scale)

- Proposed Improvements & Modifications to Existing Infrastructure** (including building footprint(s), proposed access, driveway(s), utilities (including stormwater detention), right-of-way improvements, required yards & landscaping, retaining walls, fences, and buffers)
- Tree Retention Plan with Proposed Tree Actions** (indicate tree # on site plans)
 - Surveyed location of regulated trees on-site
 - Approximate location of regulated trees on adjacent properties
 - Trees labeled corresponding with tree inventory
 - Trees to be preserved clearly noted
 - Trees to be removed, marked with an 'X' or ghosted out
 - High Retention Value trees, including Landmark & Grove trees, denoted with unique identifier
 - Example: Note 'H', 'L' or 'G' before Tree # (e.g., H-21, L-45, G-22)

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Tree Protection

- Critical Root Zones (CRZs) drawn to scale around all trees impacted by development (including neighboring trees)
- Tree Protection Zones (TPZs) labeled in feet from the face of each trunk to tree fencing for trees retained (including neighboring trees) drawn in a linear fashion that represents chain-link fencing
- Disturbances associated with over-excavation of foundations, retaining walls, or similar improvements called out on plans
- Specific tree protection standards during construction, as described in [KZC 95.32](#) or recommended by a qualified professional arborist, shown on demolition, grading, and building plans

Supplemental Trees

- Total Tree Density Credits (TDCs) to be preserved and/or planted (see [KZC 95.34](#))
- Locations of trees to be planted (include size, species)

Arborist Report

Review the [Guide to Arborist Reports](#) for more information.

Condition & Viability Ratings (for not viable trees per [KZC 95.30\(3\)\(c\)](#), provide a description of defects or concerns)

Tree Protection Measures

- Proposed action (retain/remove)
- Description of the method(s) used to determine TPZs
- Special instructions for work within the CRZ of retained trees (i.e., protection from soil compaction, hand-digging, tunneling or boring, root pruning, mitigating grade changes, arborist monitoring, watering, mulching and aftercare)
- Discussion of timing and installation of tree protection fencing, including anticipated changes to fencing, removal of trees within the tree fencing, or other activity in the CRZ (e.g., material delivery, equipment access, landscaping)
- Impacts to retained trees from tree removals, including those on adjacent properties

High Retention Value (HRV) Trees

- [High Retention Value Tree Checklist](#). If HRV trees are proposed to be removed or impacted, the HRV Tree Checklist is **required** and must be uploaded to [MyBuildingPermit.com](#) along with the associated application file.

Supplemental Trees (proposed location and species of replacement trees to be planted)

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Recommended Permit Sequence

Step 1 - Review the [Tree Retention Plan Checklist](#) items listed above for required documents.

Step 2 - Assess existing trees

1. Applicant obtains a preliminary Tree Inventory Table (prepared by a Qualified Professional) to assess the condition of existing regulated trees and presence of High Retention Value Trees on-site.

Step 3 - Conceptual design

1. Applicant prepares conceptual design, including house layout, access, and utilities that will prioritize tree retention.
2. Provide conceptual plans to the applicant's arborist to comment on retention feasibility.
3. For High Retention Value (HRV) trees, explore development standards in KZC 95.30(4) or (5) (whichever is applicable) to support retention.
4. [Pre-submittal conference](#) - Meeting to review conceptual design (both the project arborist & City arborist are encouraged to attend) and discuss proposed removal of High Retention Value (HRV) trees. At this time, the City will discuss whether the plans meet KZC 95 standards and whether additional site plan alterations, arboriculture practices, and/or variations to development standards in KZC 95.30 should be considered prior to permit submittal.

Step 4 - Application submittal

1. Prior to submittal, applicant to provide final plans to their project arborist to prepare an Arborist Report with specific tree protection recommendations during construction. See the [Guide to Arborist Reports](#) for more information.
2. Prepare and submit the [High Retention Value Tree Checklist](#). This checklist is required if HRV trees exist on the project site and will be impacted or removed. This checklist must be submitted to [MyBuildingPermit.com](#) along with your other application materials.