

900.19 Tree Removal and Vegetation Maintenance and Alterations.

Subd. 1. Purpose. The City finds that it has been established that trees and other vegetation stabilize the soil and control water pollution by preventing soil erosion and flooding, reduce air pollution, temper noise, and provide a natural habitat for wildlife. Indiscriminate removal of trees and clearing of vegetation cause deprivation of these benefits and that it is in the interests of the City and its residents to prevent the indiscriminate removal of trees and clearing of vegetation.

Subd. 2. Activities Requiring a Permit. Except as provided in Subd. 3 in this Section, no person shall engage in any of the following activities **without first obtaining a Vegetation Alteration Permit:**

- (a) intensive vegetation clearing, i.e. the complete removal of trees, shrubs, or plants in a contiguous patch, strip, row, or block.
- (b) the removal of any tree having a diameter of more than six inches.
- (c) tree and vegetation removal necessary for the construction of structures and public utilities and the construction of roads and parking areas otherwise complying with the applicable provisions of the Code; provided that any trees removed as a result of such construction shall be replaced as provided in Subd. 6 of this Section.

Subd. 3. Exceptions. The requirements of Subd. 2 of this Section do not apply to the removal of the following trees and vegetation:

- (a) dead or diseased trees.
- (b) pruning within accepted tree management parameters.

Subd. 4. Permit. Prior to engaging in any activity that requires a permit under Subd. 2 of this Section, an application shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator for a permit, which shall remain valid for 8 months from the date of issuance, for such activity. The application shall describe the proposed activity and its purpose in detail (landscape drawing included when appropriate; lot lines and structures noted when appropriate) and a description of all replacement plants and materials. The Zoning Administrator will not grant a permit for such activity unless the following criteria are met:

- (a) the activity will not adversely affect the ecological systems or increase the potential for soil erosion.
- (b) the activity is in conformance with accepted tree management practices.
- (c) the activity will not adversely impact property values of surrounding properties or the aesthetics of the neighborhood in which such activity is proposed to occur.

Subd. 5. Fertilizers and Pesticides. Fertilizers and pesticides must be used in such a manner as to minimize run off into shore impact zones and public waters by use of earth, vegetation or both.

Subd. 6. Replacement of Trees. Any tree removed pursuant to clauses (b) and (c) of Subd. 2 of this Section or pursuant to a permit issued under Subd. 4 of this Section shall be replaced on the lot upon which removed if the Zoning Administrator determines that such replacement is necessary to meet the purpose set forth in Subd. 1. of this Section. Any replacement tree required by this Subd. 6 shall meet the following conditions:

- (a) Replacement trees shall be of a species similar to the trees to be replaced and shall be no less than the following sizes:
 - (1) Deciduous trees – no less than three caliper inches
 - (2) Coniferous trees – no less than 7 feet high
- (b) Replacement trees shall be planted no later than the first fall or spring following the removal of the tree to be replaced or by such later date agreed to by the Zoning Administrator if planting during such period would not be in conformance with accepted tree management practices.
- (c) Any replacement tree that is not alive or healthy one year after the date of planting shall be removed and a new healthy tree of the same size and species planted in its place. Planting shall occur no later than the first fall or spring following the expiration of such year.
- (d) The following trees are not subject to tree replacement requirements: Boxelder, Buckthorn, Cottonwood, Green Ash, Prickly Ash, Siberian Elm, and Willow.

Subd. 7. Shade Tree Disease Program. It is the intention of the City to conduct a program of shade tree disease control pursuant to authority granted by Minnesota Statutes, Section 18.023. This program is directed specifically at the control and elimination within the City of Dutch elm disease fungus, elm bark beetles, and of oak wilt fungus.

- (a) The City shall have the right to order or cause the removal of any trees that are dead or diseased on private property within the city, when such trees constitute a hazard to life and property, or harbor insects or disease which constitute a potential threat to other trees within the city.
- (b) Unless such trees pose immediate hazard to public safety, the owner of such trees will be ordered, in writing, to remove said trees, stating the reason for removal and the location of said tree or trees to be removed. Removal shall be done by said owners at the owner's expense within (30) days after the date of the order to remove or a time parameter placed by the Zoning Administrator in

consideration of the time of year or protection against spread of disease. In the event the owner fails to comply with such order to remove, or if public safety considerations require immediate removal, the City shall then proceed to remove said tree or trees, and to charge removal costs to the owner of the property as provided by law in the case of special assessments.

Subd. 8. Fines. Any builder, contractor or agent who may have assisted in the commission of any such violation, shall be guilty of a separate offense. All such violations which are of a continuing nature shall constitute a separate offense for each day of such continuance, and each tree removed shall constitute a separate offense. Any person violating any provision of this Section, upon conviction, will be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Subd. 9. Enforcement. The Zoning Administrator is hereby charged with the responsibility for the enforcement of this Section and may serve notice to any person in violation thereof or institute legal proceedings as may be required, and the City Attorney is hereby authorized to institute appropriate proceedings to that end.

Subd. 10. Appeals. A person aggrieved by the administration of this Section may have thirty (30) days to appeal by petitioning the Zoning Administrator in writing. The Zoning Administrator will consult the City Council at its next scheduled meeting.