



## Citizens Guide to the Tree Preservation Ordinance

On April 28, 2008, the City Council adopted a Tree Preservation Ordinance for the City of Arden Hills. The purpose of the ordinance is to enhance and protect the City's natural environment by better managing the removal of trees, creating mitigation standards for certain amounts of tree removal, and regulating the installation of replacement trees.

Frequently Asked Questions about the new ordinance:

*Can I still cut down trees?*

Yes. The ordinance does not prohibit the cutting of any trees in the City; however, some large trees that are removed must be replaced.

*Does ALL tree removal require replacement of new trees?*

No. While the ordinance applies to all private properties within the City, only those trees removed for the purposes of new construction, an addition, parking lot construction, or grading projects requiring a permit, would be impacted by the new ordinance.

*How do I know if the Tree Preservation Ordinance will impact my construction project?*

When property owners come in for a building permit that includes new building construction, an addition, or parking construction, they must submit a Tree Survey. This is a map that shows the location and diameter of all the trees on the lot, and which ones will be impacted by the proposed project. If more than 10% of the inches of "Significant Trees" on the site are impacted by the project, then some of those trees will have to be replaced elsewhere on the property.

*What is a "Significant Tree?"*

A significant tree is a healthy and structurally sound deciduous hard wood tree measuring greater than ten inches in diameter, deciduous soft wood tree measuring greater than 12 inches in diameter, or evergreen tree greater than 15 feet in height. (The diameter should be measured about 4.5 feet above the ground, and is referred to as the "Caliper Inches" of a tree). Groups of trees that are smaller but provide buffers along public streets or between differing land uses may also collectively be considered "significant".

*My project requires tree replacement, how many new trees do I have to plant?*

The amount of mitigation, or tree replacement, which is required for each project, is based on the number of caliper inches of significant trees being removed over and above ten percent. For every two caliper inches of removed trees, one caliper inch of new tree has to be replaced. For example, if you have 100 caliper inches of significant trees on your property, and your project requires the removal of 10 caliper inches, then there would be no replacement required. However, for every two inches removed over that amount, one caliper inch of replacement trees would be required.

*Why isn't the tree replacement rate one to one, instead of one to two?*

A smaller replacement ratio does require fewer trees to be planted than if the ratio was greater, but over time the new trees will grow to maturity and there will be many more trees on the property than before the removal took place. For example, if 40 inches of trees are required to be replaced, a one to one ratio would require that 20 two-inch trees are planted, far more trees than were likely on the site before.

*Can I plant any kind of trees that I want?*

Not necessarily. The City maintains a list of “unapproved” replacement trees, which cannot be used to fulfill the requirements of the Tree Preservation Ordinance. The unapproved trees are primarily trees listed by the DNR as invasive or particularly susceptible to disease. The City also has a list of approved trees that can be used to meet the mitigation requirements. Other comparable tree species not on the list can also be planted with City Administrator approval. In general, the type of trees being removed will dictate the type of trees being replaced.

*Couldn't I just cut down all the trees on my lot before coming in for a building or grading permit and not have to count them on my Tree Survey?*

No. The Tree Preservation Ordinance applies to all trees unnaturally removed within the past two years, prior to the application for the permit. Ramsey County maintains detailed aerial photography of the entire City and these are easily used to verify the locations of trees indicated (or not indicated) on a Tree Survey. Additionally, field inspections are routinely done to verify the accuracy of submitted surveys.

*What if there isn't enough room on my lot to plant all the required trees?*

The City has developed a program that will allow excess trees to be planted off-site, in public parks, along public right-of-ways, and even on other private property. If a suitable off-site location cannot be found, then the City may charge a fee in lieu of planting for the purpose of maintaining the current tree stock and planting new trees.