



MINOR TREE REMOVAL PERMIT

SUBMITTAL PACKET

INTRODUCTION

Whether they are managed as public resources or privately owned, trees provide a host of benefits. In addition to beautifying neighborhoods and the city, trees provide habitat for wildlife, reduce air pollution, conserve water and energy, and reduce water pollution. City of Santa Barbara tree protection policies apply to both city street trees and certain privately-owned trees (SBMC Chapters [15.20](#) and [15.24](#)).

WHAT TYPES OF TREES ARE PROTECTED?

A permit is required to remove or significantly alter (prune) these types of trees:

- **Street Trees.** Any tree planted in a parkway strip, tree well, street right-of-way, or public areas including parks, playgrounds, or other areas maintained by the city.
- **Designated Historic & Specimen Trees.** Specific trees, designated by resolution of the City Council, of either notable historic interest or with high value due to type or age.
- **Setback Trees.** A setback tree is any tree with 50% or more of the tree trunk located within a front setback, as defined by the Zoning Ordinance.
- **Parking Lot Trees.** Any tree located in a parking lot is required to be maintained according to City Parking Area Landscape and Fence Standards.
- **Landscape Plan Trees.** Any tree shown on an approved landscape plan is required to be maintained per SBMC §22.11, Maintenance of Approved Landscape Plans.

MINOR TREE REMOVAL PERMIT

Applications to remove trees in a Historic or Landmark District, in parking lots, or on an approved landscape plan are processed by the Community Development Department, Planning Division.

A Minor Tree Removal Permit is required to remove one to three (1-3) protected trees. The request for removal will first be reviewed by staff to see if it qualifies for administrative design review (page 8 of this packet). If it does not qualify for staff-level approval, the tree removal request will be scheduled for a public hearing by one of the City's design review bodies.

PARKS & RECREATION TREE REMOVAL PERMIT

If a property owner desires to remove a street tree, Specimen or Historic tree in the right-of-way, or a setback tree, contact the City's Urban Forestry Program offices for information on a separate [Tree Removal Application](#) for permits issued by the Parks and Recreation Department.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

The Parks and Recreation Commission, or the Design Review Board/Commission (as applicable) will vote upon a tree removal application within 60 days after it is accepted for processing. A majority vote of the members present is required to approve a tree removal. After a decision is made by the Board or Commission, city staff will notify the applicant of the final decision. After the 10-day appeal period is over, the applicant will contact city staff to have the permit issued and to call for inspection.

CAN THE DECISION BE APPEALED?

Yes, any action of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Historic Landmarks Commission, the Architectural Board of Review, or the Single Family Design Board can be appealed to the City Council within 10 days of the Board or Commission's action. Appeals are filed with the City Clerk's office.

DO I HAVE TO REPLACE THE TREE?

Preservation and protection of existing significant trees is a primary goal of a site's landscape design. Property owners are encouraged to replace significant removed trees unless the location is unsuitable. According to the City's [Landscape Design Guidelines](#), trees 4" in diameter or greater at four feet six inches (4'-6") above grade in height should be replaced on site on a minimum 1:1 basis, unless an alternative replacement ratio is deemed necessary as part of environmental review. It is not always be feasible to replace a removed tree. Tree removals may still be approved without replacement as long as the considerations for removal in the Municipal Code (SBMC §[15.24.080](#)) can be made.

TREE REMOVAL WITHOUT A PERMIT

The removal of a protected tree is subject to enforcement and fines. The City Council established the following fine schedule associated with the removal of a protected tree without a permit.

Trunk Diameter:	4 inches to 12 inches	12 inches to 24 inches	Over 24 inches
Tree Removal Fine:	Up to \$1,000	Up to \$3,000	Up to \$5,000

WHAT TO SUBMIT

If the only scope of work is to remove or replace one to three (1-3) protected trees and no other development is proposed, applicants will submit the information in this Minor Tree Removal Permit packet to the Planning Division. If the tree removal is more than three trees, or occurring as part of the redevelopment of a property that requires other discretionary review, you do not need to complete this application; the removal will be included as part of a discretionary [Planning \(PLN\) Application](#).

HOW TO SUBMIT

All forms and applications, including all supporting plans and documents, are accepted online via our [Accela Citizen Access Portal \(ACA\)](#). More information: [Electronic Submittals](#).



DOES MY TREE OR LANDSCAPE REQUIRE A PERMIT?

Use this table to identify the decision-maker on tree or landscape projects.

PROJECT TYPE	PARKS & RECREATION	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
REMOVE STREET TREE	Street Tree Advisory Committee + Parks & Recreation Commission	NO
NEW/PRUNE¹ STREET TREE	Staff-Level Approval	NO
REMOVE SETBACK TREE	<i>Outside Historic/Landmark District:</i> Street Tree Advisory Committee + Parks & Recreation Commission	<i>In Historic/Landmark District:</i> Historic Landmarks Commission
NEW/PRUNE¹ SETBACK TREE	NO	NO
REMOVE HISTORIC TREE OR SPECIMEN TREE	<i>In the Right-of-Way:</i> Street Tree Advisory Committee + Parks & Recreation Commission	<i>On Private Property:</i> Historic Landmarks Commission
REMOVE DEAD, DISEASED, HAZARDOUS TREE²	Staff-Level Approval	A permit for a replacement tree may be required within 30 days
TREE REMOVAL ORDERED BY FIRE DEPARTMENT	NO	NO
REMOVE PARKING LOT TREE	NO	Architectural Board of Review or Historic Landmarks Commission
REMOVE TREE SHOWN ON AN APPROVED PLAN	NO	Architectural Board of Review or Historic Landmarks Commission
SUBSTANTIAL ALTERATIONS TO AN APPROVED PLAN	NO	Architectural Board of Review or Historic Landmarks Commission or Single Family Design Board
MINOR ALTERATIONS TO AN APPROVED PLAN	NO	Staff-Level Approval
VEGETATION REMOVAL PERMIT³ REQUIRED	NO	Single Family Design Board

¹ It is unlawful to prune or significantly alter a protected tree in such a way that either: (1) its natural character is significantly altered; or (2) the height or spread of the tree crown is reduced by more than one-quarter within any 12-month period.

² Prior written notice of such condition must be provided to the Parks and Recreation Director at least 48 hours prior to removal of the tree. A permit for a replacement tree is required within 30 days if the removal is a parking lot tree or a tree on an approved plan.

³ A Hillside Vegetation Removal Permit is required for the removal of plants in the Hillside Design District, as defined in SBMC §22.10.040



SUBMITTAL INFORMATION

FEES

Fees are required for tree removal applications.



Fees

Payment via check, electronic check, or credit card is required before project review or processing. Once the application is submitted, City staff will follow up electronically with an invoice for the total fee amount. Fees may be paid online, mailed, faxed, or dropped off at 630 Garden Street for processing. If paying by mail or fax, a [Fee Payment Submittal Sheet](#) is required. For more information, click on [How to Pay Invoiced Fees](#).

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs are required for tree removal applications.



Site and Area Photographs

Submit current color photographs of the tree and site, including existing buildings, and adjacent buildings and sites. The purpose is to show neighborhood context and character. Photos must be clear and in focus with a minimum size of 4 x 6. Internet photos such as Google Maps are not acceptable because they may not show current conditions. Label each page and photo with a number, and include cardinal directions (north, east, south, west) to identify photo directions.

PLANS & SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Review the [Basic Site Plan Requirements](#) for the required contents of a basic site plan. See the [Landscape Plan Submittal Guide](#) if a project requires a new landscape plan.



Basic Site Plan

The required contents of plans will vary depending on the number and species of trees to be removed and if there is a creek or environmentally sensitive habitat in the vicinity. At a minimum, a **basic site plan** must be provided showing the location and identity of all trees to be removed, all new or replacement trees, and all trees to remain. Indicate species, diameter at 4-feet above grade, size, and dripline. Show an X through trunk of trees to be removed. Show building footprints, distance to property lines, and zoning front setbacks. A complete landscape plan may be required if the tree removal includes other changes to site landscaping.



Special Studies

Provide a copy of any other arborist reports, biologist reports, or similar studies that are required or were previously prepared based on project description. If the tree is diseased or damaged, provide a certificate attesting such condition by a member of the American Society of Consulting Arborists, or an arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture.

1 MINOR TREE REMOVAL APPLICATION

RECORD INFORMATION

Application Date:

PLN RECORD # (if known):

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Project Address:

Zone:

Assessor Parcel Number (APN):

Avg. Slope:

OWNER'S INFORMATION

Name:

Email:

Address:

Phone:

APPLICANT'S INFORMATION ☐ SAME AS ABOVE

Name:

Company:

Address:

ZIP:

Email:

Phone:

TREE INFORMATION

Location: ☐ Historic/Landmark District ☐ Historic Resource ☐ Parking Lot ☐ Tree on an Approved Plan

Number of trees to be removed:

Species:

Height:

Size/Diameter:

Will you replace removed tree(s)? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, how many new trees are proposed:

REASONS FOR REMOVAL

Describe the reasons why the tree(s) are proposed to be removed.

REPLACEMENT TREE

Describe what you will replace the tree(s) with if anything.

SCREENING QUESTIONS

1. Is the tree removal designated as a historic or specimen tree? ☐ YES ☐ NO
2. Is the tree removal a skyline tree (50 feet in height and width is less than its height)? ☐ YES ☐ NO
3. Is the tree removal a native tree (oak or sycamore, etc.)? ☐ YES ☐ NO
4. Are you removing the tree due to the potential size of the tree? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please describe any site constraints such as the size of the lot, topography, or any beneficial effects upon adjacent trees to be expected from the proposed removal:

5. Are you removing the tree due to poor condition or undesirable location? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please describe the condition of the tree and the potential for proper tree growth and development of the tree canopy:

6. Are there any outstanding violations or open enforcement on the property? ☐ YES ☐ NO
7. Did the current property owner or tenant plant the trees proposed to be removed? ☐ YES ☐ NO
8. Will other trees remain on the property after the requested removal? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please describe the number and size of other trees on the property, and the possibility of maintaining desirable tree density in the area through additional planting:

9. Is the removal associated with development or redevelopment of the property? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please describe the status of the development application and whether the project is scheduled for review by one of the City's Design Review bodies, Planning Commission, or Staff Hearing Officer.

2 ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN REVIEW

*Minor alterations to approved landscape plans may be approved by Staff without a public hearing (SBMC §22.11.050). Review this checklist and check **all** the boxes below when a project complies. Projects that are not eligible will be scheduled for a public hearing by the Design Review body.*

TREES AND LANDSCAPING

<i>If the project complies with all criteria, it may qualify for administrative approval.</i>		Comply	N/A
1.	Trees to be removed or replaced have a main trunk less than 12" in diameter at a point 4'-6" above the ground and are less than 20-feet in height.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	No more than two (2) trees are proposed to be removed or replaced.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	No front setback, historic, or specimen tree is proposed for removal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	No skyline or native tree is proposed for removal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	No tree or landscape removal occurs within 50 feet from the top of a coastal bluff, or 25 feet from the top of a creek bank, or on 30% slope or greater.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	An appropriate number and size of other trees will remain on the building site after the requested removal, or a sufficient number of adjacent trees on City property exist, to maintain desirable tree density in the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	If this is a Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) project, the removal of the tree is necessitated by plant health considerations and is following recommendations from a licensed landscape architect or certified arborist.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	The area of cumulative changes to an approved planting area is less than 1,000 square feet in the front yard and is less than 20% of the total landscaped area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	The amount of removal or destruction of vegetation on a site does not require a Hillside Vegetation Removal Permit per SBMC Chapter 22.10 .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	If replacement trees or landscape is proposed, the new tree or planting has similar characteristics to the existing tree or plants, such as: height (at present and maturity), canopy, general branching characteristics; nature of the foliage, flowering characteristics (frequency, color, etc.), drought tolerance, water conservation, and compatibility with surrounding biologically sensitive areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	If replacement trees or landscape is proposed, the proposed replacement tree or planting continues to achieve the original planting purpose, such as: privacy protection, preservation of solar access, shade provision, visual framing of a building, style consistency, visual interest, historic preservation, erosion control, and is an appropriate species near a biologically sensitive area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Native landscaping will not be removed. Replacement landscape will not introduce non-native species in an area where native species are predominating and will not introduce an invasive or noxious species.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 APPLICANT'S AFFIDAVIT

Under penalty of perjury the following declarations are made:

- a. The undersigned is the owner or authorized agent of the owner of this property.
- b. The information presented is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
- c. **Public Record.** I understand that any information provided becomes part of the public record and can be made available to the public for review and posted to the City website.
- d. **Owner/Agent Authorization.** If the Applicant is not the Property Owner, both the Property Owner and Applicant must sign this affidavit. By signing this affidavit, the Property Owner authorizes the Applicant listed in this application to act as the Property Owner's agent on all matters before the City of Santa Barbara Community Development Department pertaining to development on this property.

PROPERTY OWNER:

Owner's Signature

Date

Owner's Name (printed)

APPLICANT: ☐ SAME AS ABOVE

Applicant's Signature

Date

Applicant's Name (printed)

Title (Architect, etc.)

4 CITY'S DETERMINATION

If this sheet includes a **Planning Authorization stamp**, the Community Development Department of the City of Santa Barbara has made a determination on the requested removal of the trees as described in this application. The determination and any conditions are listed below.

☐ **Approved Tree Removal**

☐ **Denied Tree Removal**

CERTIFIED BY:

City authorization stamp goes here

NOTE: After the 10-day appeal period is over, the applicant must contact City staff to have the permit issued and complete the tree removal. **Issued permits are valid for 60 days.** Once the work is completed, contact the Community Development Department, Planning Division, for an inspection.