



Residential Tree Review Checklist

This checklist is intended to clarify the review process and reduce review time by ensuring compliance with the tree preservation standards. This is only a general list and is not intended to address all circumstances. This checklist includes standard comments made by City Arborist review staff that will help you submit compliant plans and help speed up the review process. These comments address code and rule requirements, while helping better protect the urban forest during development.

Questions? Contact cityarborist@austintexas.gov or your assigned reviewer as shown on your Austin Build + Connect account and within the review comment report.

Please verify the following before submitting your plans – all items must be complete:

Permits and Plans

- Check “Yes” to protected size trees on the PR application
 - This is how City Arborist staff is distributed on the residential plan review submittal.
 - A Tree Ordinance Review is required when Protected Trees (19” diameter or larger on single-family property) are impacted (see the [Environmental Criteria Manual Section 3.5.2](#) for impacts) on the property and/or on adjacent properties that have Critical Root Zones that extend into the subject property.
- There is a tree review fee required at the time of plan submittal.
 - If the City Arborist staff determines that a review is not required for your project, we will notify you during the review cycle and issue a refund.

General

- Provide a plot plan that depicts all Protected or Heritage Trees on site and/or on adjacent properties that have Critical Root Zones that extend onto the subject property.
- If impacting the Critical Root Zone of three (3) or more Protected or Heritage Trees, provide a separate Tree Preservation Plan sheet in the plan submittal.
- Show **trees to be preserved** as solid concentric circles.
- Show **trees to be removed** by either a dashed concentric circle or a call out stating the tree(s) to be removed.
 - Proposed removals will require proper justification and may require mitigation if approved for removal.
- Accurately identify the diameters and species of all Protected Trees (ex. Live Oak, Post Oak, Cedar Elm, American Elm, etc. - not just Oak or Elm).
 - A Tree Schedule/Legend is recommended for clarity on a site with multiple trees.

Critical Root Zone (CRZ)

- Represent to scale and label the ¼, ½, and full Critical Root Zones of all Protected and Heritage Trees on the plot plan.
 - If any Critical Root Zones overlap proposed foundation, represent to scale and label the ¼, ½, and full Critical Root Zones of all Protected and Heritage Trees on the foundation plan.
- Show or note the proposed access routes, material staging, dumpster and spoils placement, as applicable – these cannot be within the ½ CRZ of any Protected Trees.
- Show the area designated for portable toilet and concrete washout. Alternatively, identify and dimension the area where these activities cannot occur in the CRZ.
- Show existing and proposed underground and overhead utility routes and meter locations (water, waste water, gas, electric).
 - Clearly identify utilities to remain. Alternatively, identify and dimension the area where these activities cannot occur.
- Identify placement of pool equipment. Pool equipment and associated trenching must avoid the ½ CRZs of all Protected Trees, or else air excavation by a Certified Arborist may be required.

- Show the specific locations of tree protection on the plan per requirements of Environmental Criteria Manual section 3.5.2.
- Account for forms, bracing, positive drainage, working areas, etc. when setting the foundation proximity to the ½ CRZ.
- Proposed sidewalks & driveways:
 - Avoid the ½ CRZ of Protected Trees if at all possible. Alternative designs and construction techniques will have to be considered if these items cannot avoid the ½ CRZ of Protected Trees.
 - There is a low impact driveway detail in Environmental Criteria Manual Appendix V Figure 3-13 (or the like) that may be used. Note location of existing/previous sidewalks and driveways, if applicable in the CRZ.
- Calculations of full Critical Root Zone impacts per Protected Tree may be required (in square feet and percentage).
 - Environmental Criteria Manual section 3.5.2 requires a minimum of 50% of Critical Root Zone be preserved at natural grade with natural ground cover.

Tree Canopy

- Recommended: Provide a letter from a privately hired Certified Arborist which states the percentage of canopy they evaluate necessary for removal for the proposed structure, construction methods needed to build the structure, and/or a summary of the health of the tree.
 - **Letter is required during review** if there is proposed construction within the ½ CRZ of a Protected Tree and/or if there are obvious conflicts between the tree(s) and the proposed construction.

Requested Tree Removal

- If applying to remove a Protected or Heritage Tree, it is recommended to provide a plot plan depicting any/all trees less than protected size that are planned for preservation.
- If removal of a Protected Tree is proposed for condition related reasons, submit a letter from a privately hired Certified Arborist that provides their professional analysis on the health of the tree via an ISA Risk Assessment form.
- If removal of a Protected Tree is proposed for development purposes, the request will require proper justification and may require mitigation if approved for removal. Proposed removal of a healthy Heritage Tree will require an Administrative or Commission Variance process and related fees.