



Public Lands

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Urban Forestry Division

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801-972-7818

Urban Forestry Tree Protection and Preservation Policy

A properly planned, managed, and maintained urban forest provides real and significant ecological, social, physical, and economic benefits including:

- A. Improved air quality through removal of carbon dioxide, dust, and other airborne pollutants, and through production of oxygen;
- B. Reduced energy consumption and increased livability by mitigating effects of the urban heat island and the built environment due to shade and absorbing heat from the sun;
- C. Absorbing storm runoff to reduce the amount of water entering the storm drain system and to protect water quality;
- D. Aesthetics;
- E. Habitat and food for animals and insects;
- F. Benefits to overall soil health;
- G. Reduce the impact of noise, light, and other similar impacts from adjacent land uses;
- H. Health and psychological benefits of being in a vegetated environment;

The public trees that make up the City's urban forest are inventoried assets and vital city infrastructure. Additionally, Salt Lake City code requires public trees to be preserved to the maximum extent possible.

Existing public trees adjacent to sites undergoing any excavation, grading, demolition, utility work or construction of a building, structure, or street are required by city code to be preserved and protected. Removal of public trees for development will only be allowed in rare cases where the Urban Forestry Division, at its discretion, determines that tree preservation is not possible or is incompatible with the property development.

Public trees will be required to have a tree protection plan in place prior to the start of any excavation, grading, demolition, utility work or construction of a building, structure, or street.

All trees will have a tree protection zone (TPZ) established prior to any work and maintained throughout all phases of development. The TPZ will be 1 foot radius from the base of the tree's trunk for each 1 inch of the tree's diameter measured at 4.5 feet above grade (referred to as DBH). In accordance with the Urban Forestry Plan Review Policy, all existing trees and the required TPZ shall be shown on all plans. The TPZ shall be clearly marked on the site plan, demolition plan, landscape plan, and grading and drainage plan.

Tree diameter	Tree Protection Zone Diameter
2 inches	4 feet
6 inches	12 feet
24 inches	48 feet
48 inches	96 feet

When trees are in a parkstrip, the TPZ will be the entire length of the parkstrip from curb to sidewalk.

The TPZ will be defined by 6' tall chain link fencing, which will be erected with free standing posts, NOT posts driven into the root system. Each linear span of fencing shall have the Urban Forestry Tree Protection Zone Sign laminated on 11" x 17" paper. The TPZ fencing and signage will remain until the project is complete or until Urban Forestry has provided written authorization allowing the removal of the fencing. There shall be no entry into the TPZ without written authorization from the Urban Forestry Division.

The TPZ shall not be subjected to paving, filling, excavation, or soil compaction. No materials shall be stored or disposed of in the TPZ and no protected tree shall be used to support any construction materials, debris, or fencing, scaffolding, or signs. Material washout and cleaning shall occur in such a way that it does not enter the TPZ.

The following provisions apply to authorized work in the tree protection zone:

- The TPZ extends 36" below ground. Only tunneling or boring will be allowed in the TPZ and must be at a depth of 36 inches minimum. The access pit must be located outside of the TPZ. If this is not feasible, written authorization must be obtained from Urban Forestry PRIOR to altering the TPZ.
- No equipment shall be allowed inside the tree protection zone. If special provision for excavation is approved by Urban Forestry, it shall be done by hand or a soil vacuum or air spade.
- Use tunneling or boring for irrigation and utilities. In the case of all hardscape and utility work, no roots larger than 3" in diameter will be cut. Smaller roots will be cut cleanly with a saw. Proper action shall be taken to protect and preserve the roots. Roots will not be ripped out with a back hoe.
- In situations where a root has been damaged, a clean cut shall be made on the root at the edge of the trench. Any exposed cut roots will be covered as quickly as

possible to prevent them from drying out and the tree should be watered immediately. If tree roots are to remain exposed for more than four to six hours, they must be covered with burlap and kept moist at all times.

- When encountering roots over 3" in diameter the Salt Lake City Urban Forestry Division will be consulted prior to cutting to find some other course of action. Any cutting of tree roots shall give due consideration to future welfare of the tree.

Please note the following:

- Any proposed pruning of public trees must be authorized by the Urban Forestry Division, via issuance of a tree work permit, in accordance with the Urban Forestry Tree Work Permit Policy. Tree work permits can be applied for [online](#).
- No pruning will be allowed that will compromise the aesthetics or structural integrity of a preserved tree in order to accommodate development.
- If any work is required within the TPZ, a site consultation is required with the Urban Forestry Division. A minimum of 48 hours notice must be given prior to request for onsite meetings.
- Large and extensive projects may necessitate the involvement and oversight of an independent consulting arborist.
- If trees are damaged or destroyed, as determined by the Urban Forestry Division, due to any construction activity, the property owner will be assessed the appraised value of the trees damaged. Utah State Code allows for 3 times the appraised value to be assessed.
- Salt Lake City Code requires the adjacent property owner to irrigate all public property trees. In accordance with the Urban Forestry Plan Review Policy, an irrigation schedule and method must be provided. All public and private property trees must be irrigated throughout demolition and construction at a minimum of 20 gallons twice weekly.

At project completion, contact Urban Forestry (801-972-7818) to schedule an inspection before the tree protection fencing can be removed.