



Public Lands

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Urban Forestry Division

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Urban Forestry Tree Removal Mitigation 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.

In accordance with Salt Lake City code and the Urban Forestry Tree Work Permit Policy, a condition of permits for tree removal may be to compensate the City for the value of the tree removed. The "tree removal mitigation fee" will be applied at the discretion of the Urban Forestry Division based on the Urban Forestry Tree Appraisal Policy. The mitigation fee will be calculated as either the diameter-inch method, a standard \$200 per inch of diameter for the tree removed, or the appraised value of the tree, based on International Society of Arboriculture Appraisal method.

Diameter-inch method (\$200 per inch removed)

- Public property trees, which are permitted to be removed, shall be replaced on a tree per inch basis

For example, removal of a 10" DBH tree from public property will require ten 2" caliper trees to be planted.

- Replacement trees must be planted back onto the parkstrip from where the original tree was removed.
- Replacement trees shall be between 2" and 3" in caliper at time of planting.
- If there is not adequate space to accommodate any or all of the required replacement trees on the parkstrip, the permittee shall pay to the City the value of the remaining replacement trees.

The value of outstanding replacement trees shall be determined by multiplying the \$400 cost for a 2" replacement tree (\$200 per inch x 2" tree) by the total number of outstanding trees.

- The City's "cost per inch" is determined by referencing the values assigned in the [Species Rating for Landscape Appraisal in Utah guide](#).

Currently, the 'cost per inch of required tree replacement' is \$200.00
Calculation: Wholesale tree cost (\$219 avg.) plus Installation cost (\$214 avg.) divided by the size of the largest commonly available transplantable tree (2.17 inch avg.)

For example: the value for removing a 10" DBH tree is \$2000 (\$200 x 10")

As the cost to purchase and plant trees fluctuates, so too shall the city's 'cost per inch'

- The Urban Forestry Division shall reserve the right to lessen the required tree replacement for any tree removed, based on tree condition, species, location, or the tree planting plan.
- All tree removals must be approved and permitted by Urban Forestry, in accordance with the Urban Forestry Tree Work Permit Policy.

Appraisal Method

Salt Lake City Urban Forestry may also calculate a tree's value through a formal appraisal, based on International Society of Arboriculture appraisal methods.

- If the Urban Forestry Division permits a public tree to be removed and chooses to apply the appraised value, the tree is still required to be replaced in the parkstrip where the tree was removed.
- Replacement trees shall be between 2" and 3" caliper at time of planting.
- Each replacement tree shall subtract \$400 (\$200 per inch x 2" tree) from the appraised value of the tree removed.
- The permittee shall pay to the city the remaining value of the tree removed, after subtracting the value of the replacement trees that the site space requires.
- Trees larger than 3" can be planted, but due to limited survivability and availability, only 3" count toward mitigation and replacement.