



# Tree Protection Code

Photo by John Skelton



**Seattle** Department of  
Construction & Inspections

Urban Forestry Commission  
Christy Carr August 2024



# Today's Overview

- Tree Protection Area vs. Basic Tree Protection Area – Requirements and Uses
- Revised Tip 242A
- Online Tree Map for Tree Notices and Tree Tracking



# Tree Protection Areas – Different Uses and Requirements

## There are two tree protection areas defined in the tree code:

**"Tree protection area, basic"** means the area surrounding a tree in which excavation and other construction-related activities must be avoided unless approved by the Director.

*This area is delineated using a radius* that is equal to one foot for every inch DSH of the tree.

**"Tree protection area"** means the area surrounding a tree defined by a specified distance, in which excavation and other construction-related activities must be avoided unless approved by the Director.

*The tree protection area is variable* depending on species, age and health of the tree, soil conditions, and proposed construction.

# Tree Protection Areas – Different Uses and Requirements

## The two tree protection areas are used for different things:

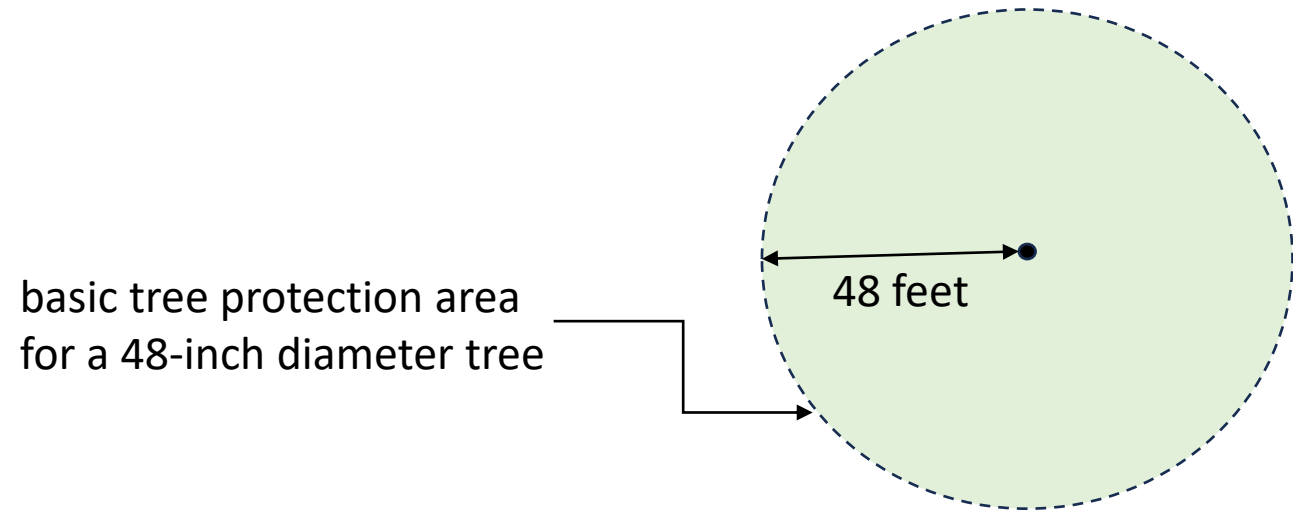
The **basic tree protection area** is used only in the analysis to determine whether a Tier 2 tree may be approved for removal as part of a development permit application.

The **tree protection area** is the physical space needed to protect a tree during construction. Tree protection fencing is required around the tree protection area on a construction site.

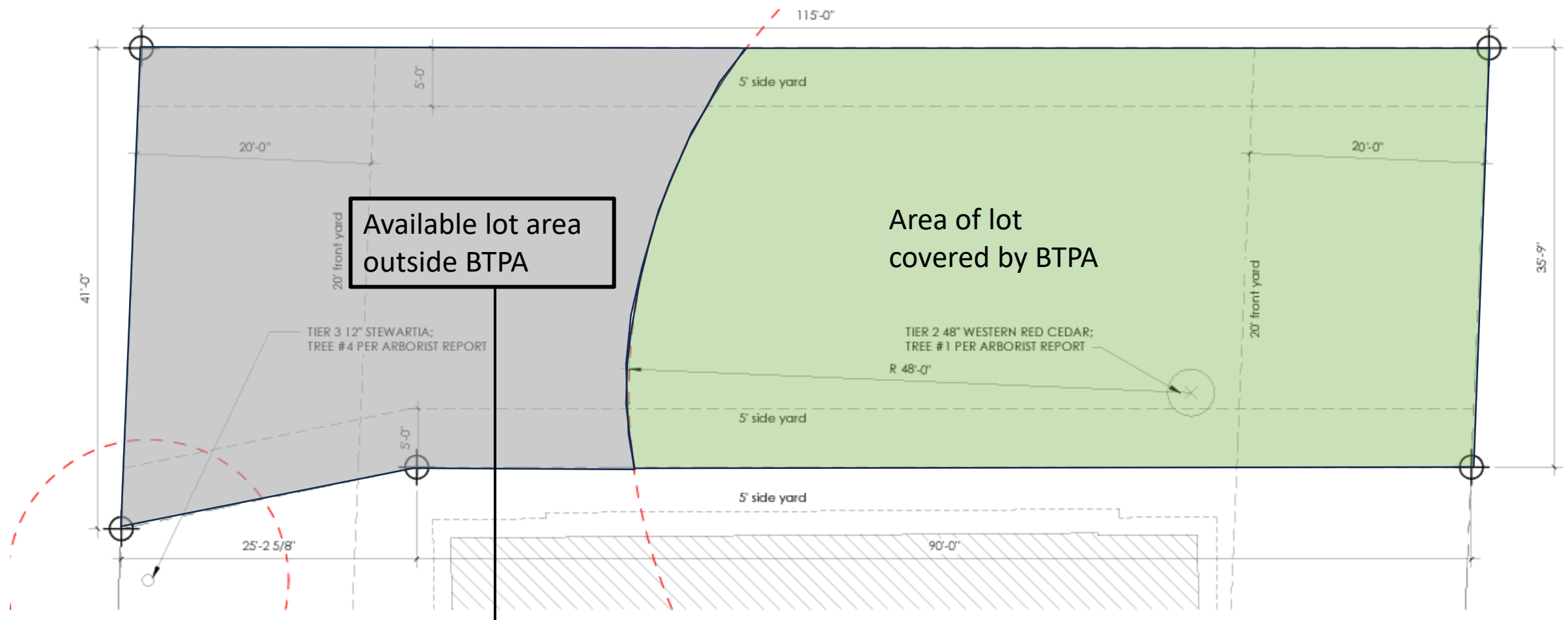
# Tree Protection Areas – Different Uses and Requirements

## Basic Tree Protection Area Requirements

- Determined using a radius that is equal to one foot for every inch DSH of the tree
- Does not consider species or condition of tree or anticipated construction impacts
- Cannot be modified when determining whether tree can be removed



# Basic Tree Protection Area (BTPA) – Neighborhood Residential Zones



## 1 Tree Analysis

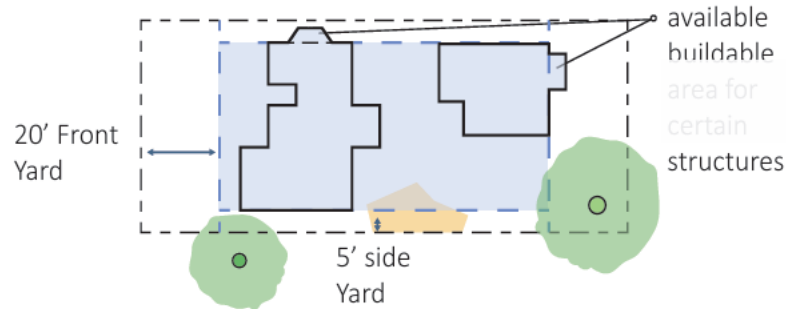
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

If this area is **SMALLER** than the allowed maximum lot coverage, the tree may be removed



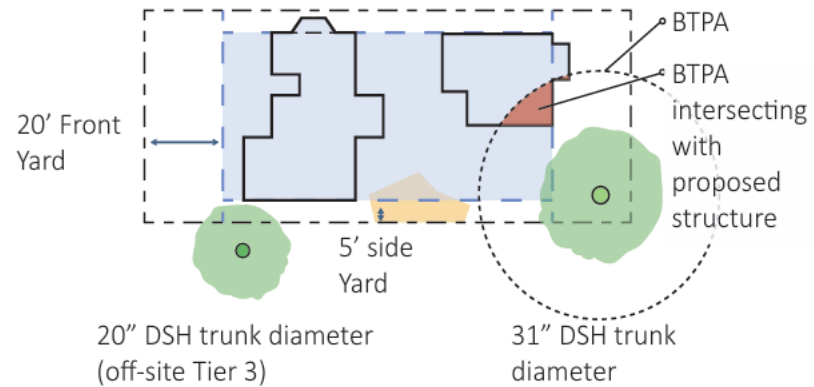
# Basic Tree Protection Area (BTPA) – Neighborhood Residential Zones

3. Combine the principal building area and all exceptions and allowances within required yards that contribute to your proposal's lot coverage. See Tip 220 for additional information for yard requirements and exceptions in Neighborhood Residential zones. This is your buildable area.

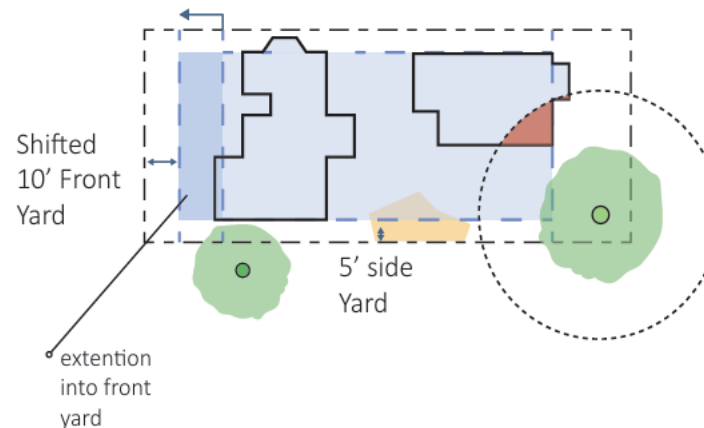


**Proposal: Single Family Dwelling + DADU**

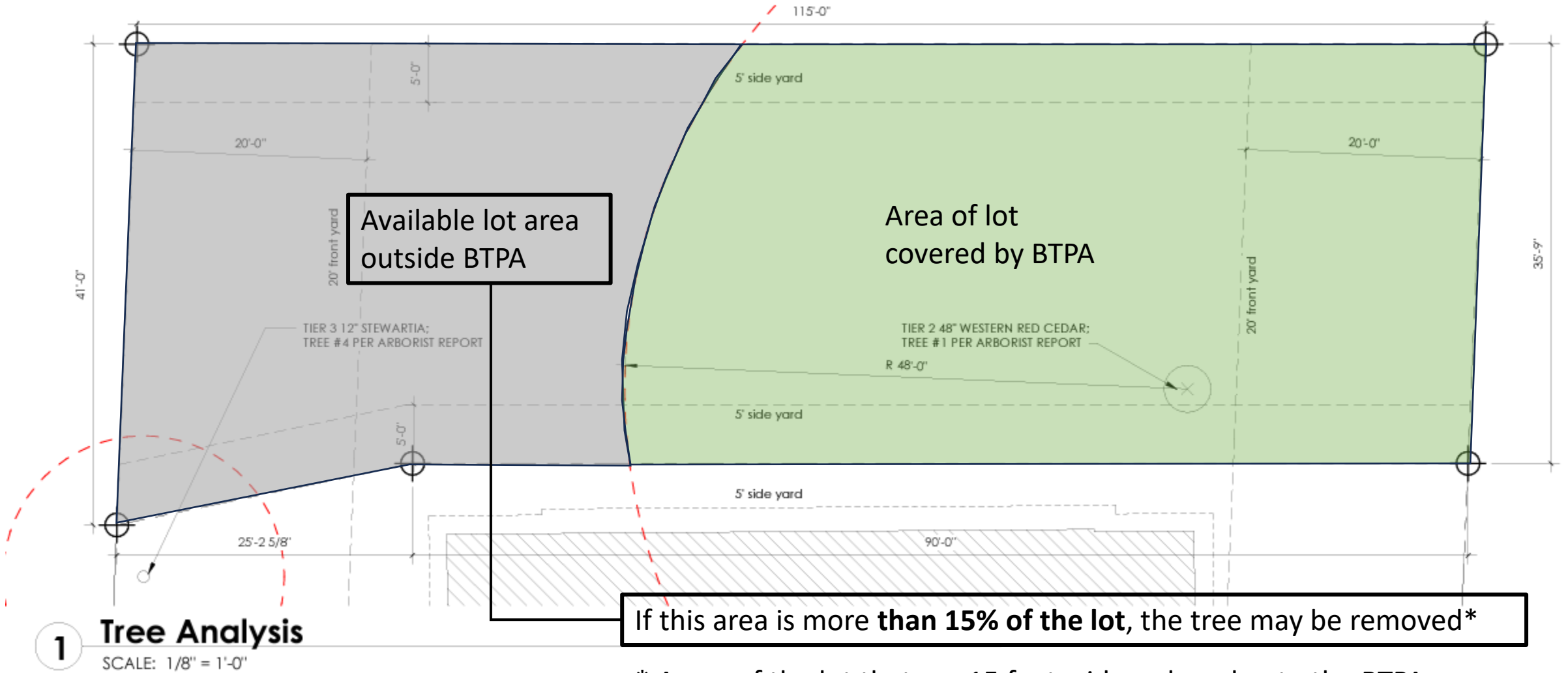
4. Draw the basic tree protection area (BTPA) for each on-site Tier 2 tree using a 1 foot radius for each 1 inch trunk diameter. Calculate the amount of the buildable area that falls within the basic tree protection area.



5. Subtract the basic tree protection area from your proposal's buildable area. If the resulting buildable area is more than the maximum lot coverage, the tree may not be approved for removal. If the resulting buildable area is less than the maximum lot coverage, you must extend into the required front and/or rear yards up to an area up to an area equal to the amount of the basic tree protection area in the buildable area. If that extension results in an area less than the maximum lot coverage, tree removal is allowed. Please note, the maximum yard projection is 50% of the required yard.



# Basic Tree Protection Area (BTPA) – Lowrise Zones



\* Areas of the lot that are 15 feet wide or less due to the BTPA are not included.



# Basic Tree Protection Area – Lowrise Zones

Calculate the area of the lot not covered by the basic tree protection area. If the area is less than 85% of the total lot area, on-site tree removal is allowed. In this example, the available development area is less than 85% of the lot so the tree is eligible for removal.

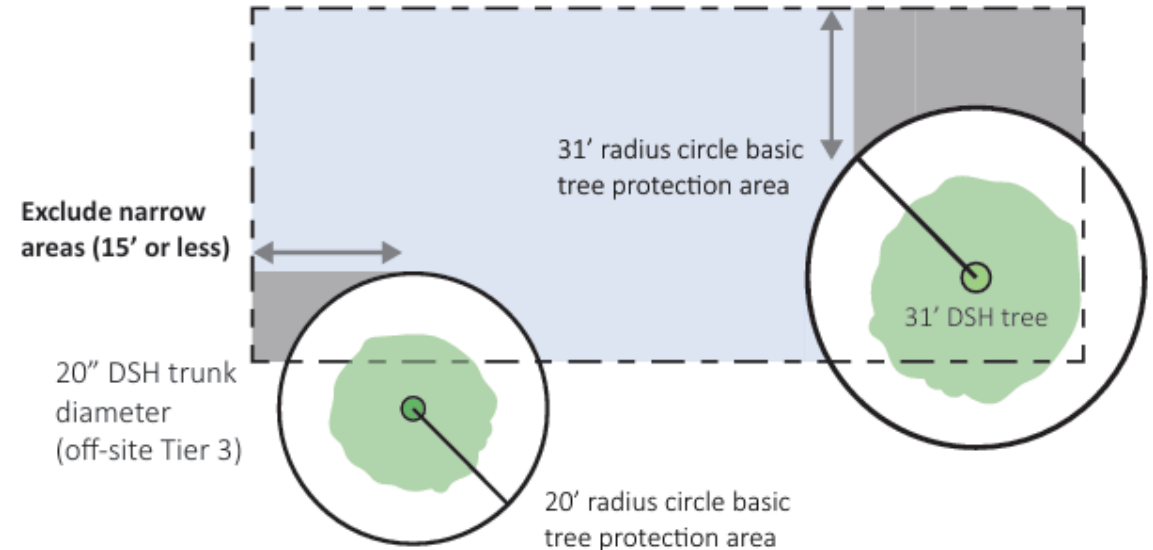
**Total lot area: 4,500 sq ft**

**85% allowable development area: 3,825 sq ft**

**Available development area = 2,800 sq ft**

■ Areas 15' wide or less

■ Development area

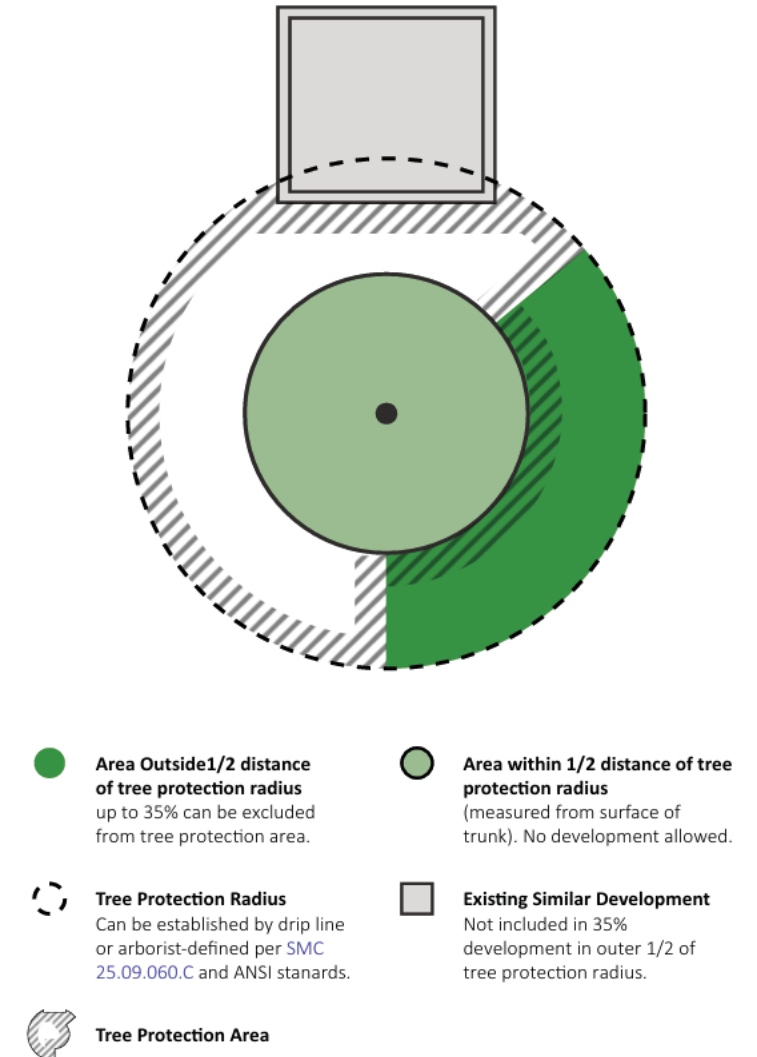


\* Basic tree protection area for off-site Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 trees included in calculation in Lowrise Zones

# Tree Protection Areas – Different Uses and Requirements

## Tree Protection Area Requirements

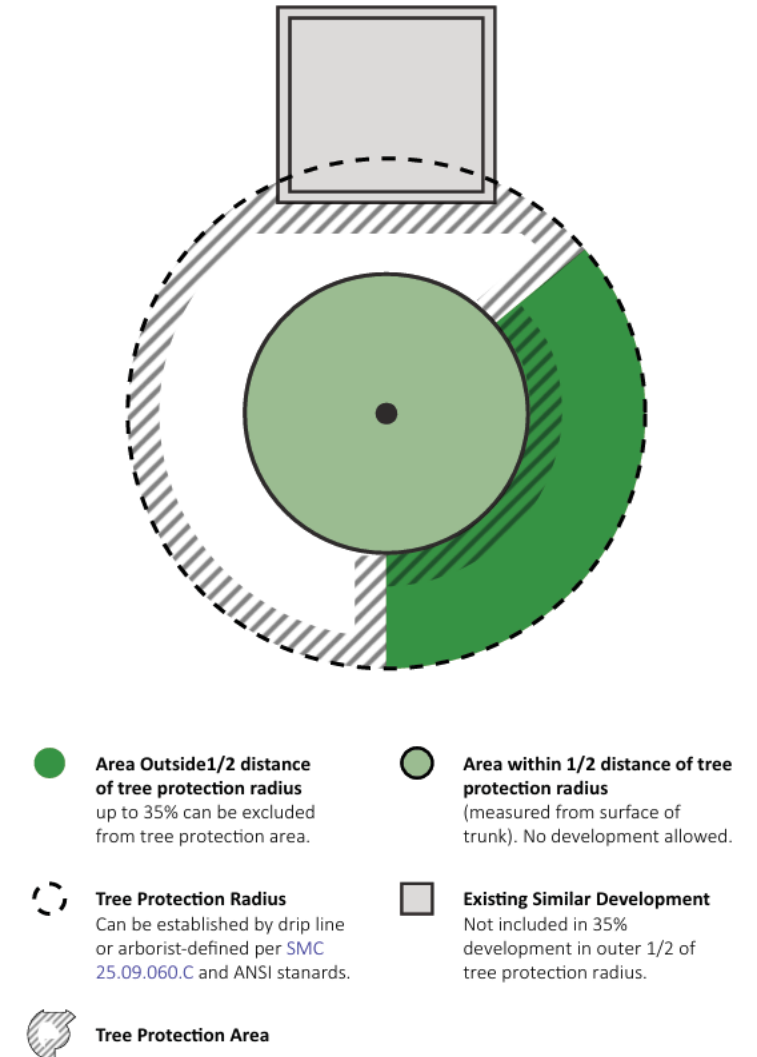
- Proposed by project arborist based on tree species, health, and anticipated construction impacts
- Starting point is “tree protection radius” – most often the dripline
- No new development allowed in inner half
- Development allowed in up to 35% of outer half
- Existing development may remain or be replaced if not detrimental to tree



# Tree Protection Areas – Different Uses and Requirements

## Tree Protection Area Requirements

- Final tree protection area confirmed and approved by SDCI reviewing arborist
- SDCI may request tree evaluation to support proposed tree protection area
- Area must be fenced per SDCI standard detail during construction
- Area may be relocated/reconfigured during construction if not detrimental to tree



# Outreach Materials

- **Tips** are designed to provide user-friendly information on the range of City permitting, land use and code compliance policies and procedures you may encounter while conducting business with the City. Tips are updated by staff as needed.
- **Director's Rules (DRs)** are binding rules about land use, construction, housing, and other codes the City administers. The rules are adopted according to the administration section in the Seattle Municipal Code, including at least a 14-day public comment period.



## [Resources - SDCI | seattle.gov](https://seattle.gov/sdci/resources)

## Forms & Publications

- 
- [Director's Rules](#)
  - [Forms](#)
  - [Publication Pricelist](#) 
  - [Renter's Handbook](#) 
  - [Tips](#)
- 



## Resources

**Still Need Help?**  
Ask Us  
Call us at (206) 684-8850



# Outreach Materials

## Updated Tip 242A – Tree Requirements Associated with Development



### Tree Requirements Associated with Development

*Updated July 8, 2024*

Trees are valuable because they enhance the City's health and beauty. Trees need protection through careful and thoughtful design as development and density increases in Seattle. To address trees during construction, and help maintain Seattle's urban canopy, Seattle Municipal Code [\(SMC\) 25.11](#) includes tree protection requirements.

The purpose of this Tip is to outline the tree protection requirements for sites undergoing development in Neighborhood Residential, Residential Small Lot, Lowrise, Midrise, Neighborhood Commercial, Commercial, and Seattle Mixed Use zones. It also details the information needed for Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) review of a development permit application when the tree protection requirements apply.

#### What are the Tree Tiers?

Seattle's tree protection regulations categorize trees into 4 different tier groups – Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, and Tier 4:

# Outreach Materials

## Tree Tracking Data Map

[Trees & Codes - SDCI | seattle.gov](#)

### Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections

Seattle Services Portal

[About Us](#) [Permits](#) [Codes](#) [Renting](#) [Inspections](#) [Resources](#)

 > [Home](#) > [Codes](#) > [Codes We Enforce \(A-Z\)](#) ▾

[አማርኛ](#) [عربي](#) [Khmer](#) [中文](#) [日本](#) [한국어](#) [ພາສາລາວ](#) [Oromiffa](#) [русский язык](#) [af Soomaali](#) [Español](#) [Tagalog](#) [ภาษาไทย](#) [ភាសាខ្មែរ](#) [Tiếng Việt](#)

**Trees & Codes**

**What Do You Want To Do?**







[Apply for a Permit](#)

# Outreach Materials

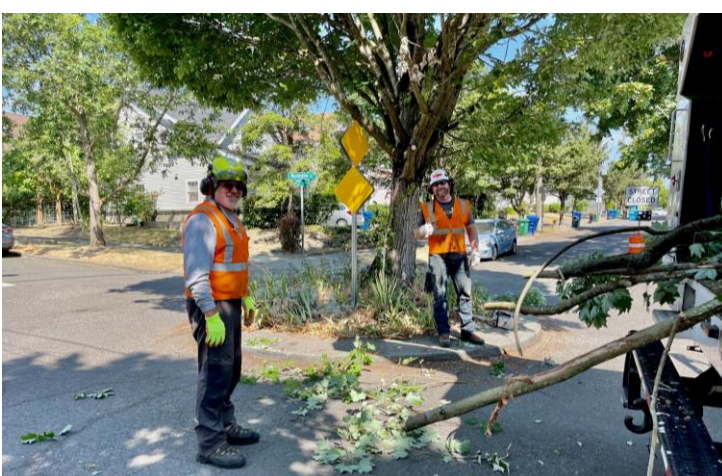
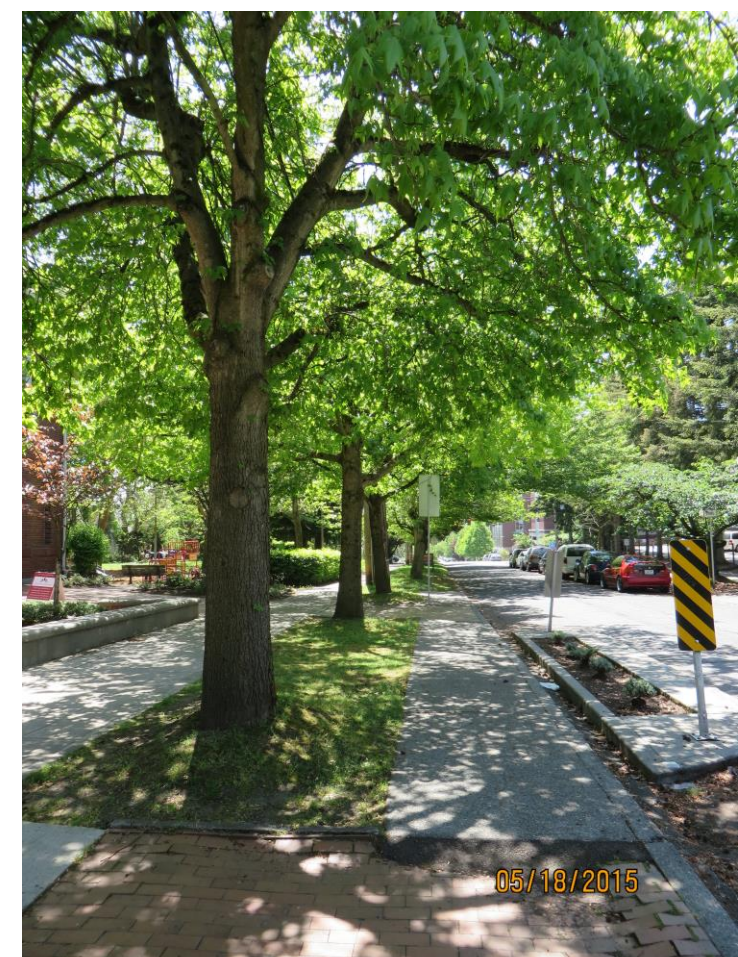
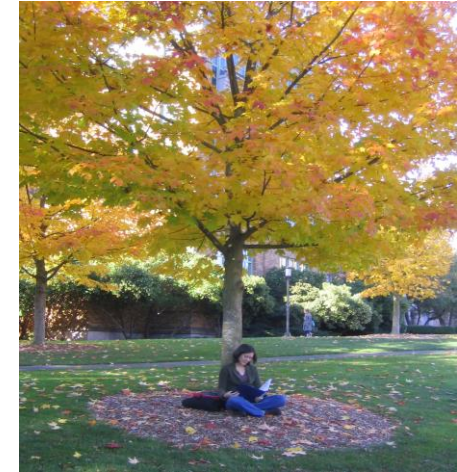
## New Tree Tracking Data Map!

[Trees & Codes - SDCI | seattle.gov](#)

Other helpful resources include:

- The [Tree Service Provider Directory](#) lists the approved SDCI Tree Service Providers.
- [How To Apply for the Tree Service Provider Registry](#)  describes the application requirements and steps.
- [How To Revise an Existing Tree Service Provider Registration](#)  describes how to revise an existing registration.
- [How To Renew an Existing Tree Service Provider Registration](#)  describes how to renew an existing registration.
- See [Tree Service Provider Registry Requirements](#)  for more information.
- [Seattle Services Portal Public Notices](#) allows you to search for posted tree public notices by date range, address, or notice number.
- [Tree Public Notice Map](#)  is an interactive map that displays Tree Public Notices required for reportable work or tree removal on private property.
- [Tree Tracking Data Map](#)  is an interactive map that displays tree information from SDCI records that required SDCI staff approval of tree removal, tree protection, or tree planting.





Questions

05/18/2015