

Lynnfield Tree Protection Bylaw

1. Purpose:

The intent of the Tree Protection Bylaw (Tree Bylaw) is to encourage the preservation and protection of trees by (a) designating specific areas of a lot where trees must be protected, and (b) requiring mitigation for trees removed via replanting or collection of fees to support the Town's tree planting and maintenance efforts.

Trees are recognized for their abilities to mitigate heat island effects; provide shade cover; reduce energy consumption; improve air quality; reduce noise pollution; reduce topsoil erosion and storm water runoff; provide wildlife habitat; sequester carbon; enhance the quality of life and the environment of the town; increase property values; and enhance the overall appearance of the community. The Town of Lynnfield "Town" deems that the preservation and protection of certain trees on private property, the requirement to replant trees to replace those removed, and the collection of financial contributions to support the Town's tree planting and maintenance efforts are public purposes that protect the public health, welfare, environment and aesthetics. No part of this bylaw shall discourage the removal of Hazardous Trees, an act which may be important to public health and safety.

2. Definitions:

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this Tree Protection Bylaw, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

- a. "Aggregate diameter": The combined diameter of a multiple trunk tree measured at breast height
- b. "Caliper": Diameter of a tree trunk in inches. For trees up to and including four (4) inches in diameter, the caliper is measured six (6) inches above the existing grade at the base of the tree. For trees larger than four (4) inches in diameter, the caliper is measured twelve (12) inches above the existing grade at the base of the tree
- c. "Certificate of Exemption": Formal permission granted to proceed with Expansion Work without need for a Tree Permit
- d. "Certified arborist": An arborist certified by the Massachusetts Arborists Association or International Society of Arboriculture, or any successor organization
- e. "Critical Root Zone (CRZ)": The minimum area beneath the canopy of a tree which must be left undisturbed in order to preserve a sufficient root mass to give a tree a reasonable chance of survival. The CRZ is represented by a concentric circle centering on the tree's trunk and extending outward towards the tree's dripline. The minimum radius of the CRZ shall be determined by multiplying the tree's diameter breast height in inches by eighteen (18) inches. For example: A tree with a DBH of twenty (20) inches shall have a CRZ with a minimum radius of 360 inches or 30 feet ($20'' \times 18'' = 360''$ or 30')

- f. "Diameter breast height (DBH)": The diameter of the trunk of a tree 4½ feet above the existing grade at the base of the tree
- g. "Expansion Work": Work performed on a vacant lot, including but not limited to clearing and grading, or on vacant areas within a developed lot, including but not limited to new construction and additions.
- h. "Expansion Work Permit": A permit or approval which is required in order to perform Expansion Work, including, but not limited to the following: a building permit; a demolition permit; curb cut and street opening permits; site plan approval; subdivision approval; or a special permit
- i. "Hazardous tree": A tree that is interfering with existing structures, utilities, streets, sidewalks or other existing improvements; or is dead, diseased, injured, in danger of falling, dangerously close to existing structures; or is causing disruption of public utility service, drainage or passage problems upon rights-of-way; or poses a threat to pedestrian or vehicular safety; and/or that is harming the health or condition of other trees on the same site.
- j. "Invasive Species": Any plant listed on the most recent version of the Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List as published by the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture
- k. "Overstory tree": A tree that will generally reach a mature height of greater than forty (40) feet
- l. "Protected tree": Any tree within a Tree Yard having a diameter of six inches (6") DBH or larger or having an aggregate diameter of twelve inches (12") DBH or larger
- m. "Remove (including removing and removal)": The cutting down of any Protected Tree and all other acts that directly or indirectly result in the death of a Protected Tree within 2 years, as determined by a Certified Arborist based on arboricultural practices recommended by the International Society of Arboriculture (I.S.A.) including, but not limited to, damaging, poisoning, excessive pruning or other direct or indirect actions
- n. "Town": Town of Lynnfield
- o. "Tree Permit": Formal permission granted to remove a Protected Tree
- p. "Tree Save Area": The area surrounding a Protected Tree to remain undisturbed so as to prevent damage to a tree.
- q. "Tree Yard": A defined area along the perimeter of a lot
- r. "Tree Warden": The Director of Public Works or his/her designee

3. Applicability:

- a. The terms and provisions of this article shall apply to any Protected Tree located within a Tree Yard as defined in subsection 3(c) that is not owned by the Town, the Commonwealth, or any independent authority of the Commonwealth, with the following exceptions:
 - a. The terms and provisions of this article shall not apply to parcels with more than 50 percent of land permanently conserved as open space pursuant to Article 97 of the Articles of Amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or a perpetual restriction under G.L. Chapter 184 Section 31-33.
 - b. The terms and provisions of this article shall not apply to lots of less than 7,500 square feet.
- b. No person shall remove a Protected Tree on land subject to the provisions of this Tree Bylaw or commence legally permitted Expansion Work on any lot, without first obtaining a Tree Permit or

a Certificate of Exemption from the Planning Board or its Authorized Enforcement Agent. The location of the Tree Yard is defined by Table 1 below.

- c. In the case of a new subdivision, the Tree Yard shall be based on the new lot lines approved for the subdivision.

Table 1: Location of Tree Yard in Each Zoning District

Zoning District	Tree Yard (distance in feet from lot lines)		
	Front	Side	Rear
Residential A	30	15	20
Residential B	40	20	20
Residential C	40	25	40
Residential D	40	30	40
Elderly Housing	50	25	30
Limited Business	40	15	20
General Business	40	15	20
Commercial	40	15	20
Limited Industrial	100	100	40
Office Park	50	50	50

Notes: The Tree Yard is equal to the setbacks in the zoning district, except the rear Tree Yard is twice as large as the rear setback in Residential C and Residential D.

4. Activities Not Requiring a Tree Permit:

- a. Certificate of Exemption:
 - a. A Tree Permit is not required if a Certificate of Exemption has been granted by the Planning Board or its Authorized Enforcement Agent.
 - b. Granting of a Certificate of Exemption is at the discretion of the Planning Board and its Authorized Enforcement Agent based on whether the Expansion Work has the potential to harm a Protected Tree.
- b. Pruning: A Tree Permit is not required for the pruning of Protected Trees. However, excessive pruning may be considered Tree Removal.
- c. Emergencies: If any Protected Tree shall be determined to be in a hazardous condition so as to immediately endanger the public health, safety or welfare or cause an immediate disruption of public services and require immediate removal without delay, oral authorization may be given by the Tree Warden, Planning Board or its authorized enforcement agent to remove such tree, utilizing such professional criteria and technical assistance as he/she deems necessary.
- d. Waiver: The requirements of this article may be waived by the appropriate Town officials during the period of an emergency such as a tornado, windstorm, flood, or other act of God.

5. Authority:

This Tree Bylaw is adopted under authority granted by the Home Rule Amendment of the Massachusetts Constitution, the Home Rule statutes, and pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws.

6. Administration:

The Planning Board or its authorized enforcement agent shall administer, implement, and enforce this Tree Bylaw, and any rules and regulations adopted thereunder. Any powers granted to or duties imposed upon the Planning Board may be delegated its employees or agents.

7. Regulations:

The Planning Board may promulgate rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this Tree Bylaw. Failure by the Planning Board to promulgate such rules and regulations shall not have the effect of suspending or invalidating this Tree Bylaw. Such rules may prescribe the size, form, contents, style, and number of copies of plans and specifications, the procedure for the submission and approval of such plans, and the procedure for determining final compliance with these regulations. The adoption or amendment of rules and regulations shall be after a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed or amended rules and regulations. The public hearing shall be advertised once in a newspaper of general local circulation, at least 14 days prior to the date of the public hearing. The Planning Board is also authorized to amend Chapter 58 of the Non-Criminal Disposition Bylaw by adding the fine schedule as shown in section 13(a) below.

8. Appeal:

- a. Any person aggrieved by a decision of the Authorized Enforcement Agent may file an appeal with the Planning Board. Said appeal must be in writing and must be received by the Planning Board within ten (10) business days of issuance of the Authorized Enforcement Agent's decision. The Planning Board shall conduct a public hearing on the appeal and shall give the public notice thereof, at the expense of the applicant. Public notice shall include all persons owning land within 300 feet of any part of applicant's land at least 14 days before said hearing. The Planning Board shall rule within 20 days of the public hearing. No Protected Trees shall be removed while an appeal is pending.
- b. Appeals of final decisions of the Planning Board shall be to Superior Court and shall be limited to whether the decision was arbitrary or capricious.

9. Tree Protection:

When a Tree Permit is granted, tree protection measures are prescribed as follows:

- a. Tree Save Area:
 - i. Each Protected Tree to be retained on property planned for an Expansion Work Permit shall be protected by the establishment of a Tree Save Area, which at a minimum must include the Critical Root Zone ("CRZ") of the Protected Tree(s).
 - ii. The Tree Save Area must be adequately marked prior to the commencement of Expansion Work and maintained in place until work is completed on the property.

- iii. An applicant may choose to encroach within the CRZ of a Protected Tree; however, such proposed action shall require the applicant to submit a maintenance plan for the tree, to be prepared, stamped, dated and signed by a Certified Arborist as part of the Tree Permit application. Under these instances, the Tree Save Area may be reduced to protect only those areas of the CRZ not proposed for encroachment.
- b. Maintenance of Protected Trees: Should such tree die within a twenty-four (24) month period from the date of Final Inspection or issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, if applicable, of the Expansion Work, the owner of the property shall be required to provide mitigation consistent with the requirements for the removal of a Protected Tree as contained herein within nine (9) months from the death of the original tree.

10. Mitigation Through Planting of Replacement Tree(s):

When Protected Tree removal is permitted, mitigation through planting of replacement trees is prescribed as follows:

- a. No mitigation measures are required for the permitted removal of hazardous trees.
- b. For each inch of DBH of the tree(s) removed, at least one inch of caliper of new tree(s) must be replaced in accordance with the following:
 - a. Each new tree must have a minimum caliper of two (2) inches.
 - b. If the Protected Tree to be removed is an Overstory Tree species, the replacement tree(s) to mitigate the removal shall be an Overstory Tree species.
 - c. Replanting shall occur no later than 18 months after Tree Removal.
 - d. A replacement tree shall be planted on the same lot from which the tree was removed or on land abutting the said lot with the express written approval of the owner of such abutting land.
 - e. A replacement tree must not be an invasive species.
- c. Maintenance of Replanted Trees: All new trees replanted to mitigate the removal of Protected Tree(s) shall be maintained in good health for a period of no less than twenty-four (24) months from the date of planting. Should such tree die within this twenty-four (24) month period, the owner of the property shall be responsible for original Protected Tree(s) removal.

11. Mitigation Through Contribution to Tree Replacement Fund:

When Protected Tree removal is permitted, mitigation may be effected through contribution to the Tree Replacement Fund, as prescribed as follows:

- a. There is hereby established a Tree Replacement Fund which shall be held in a separate identifiable account and administered in accordance with applicable provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, pursuant to M.G.L. 44, Section 53E1/2. Any payments into the Tree Replacement Fund required by this Tree Bylaw shall be deposited in the Tree Replacement Fund and shall be used in accordance with subsection (c) hereof.
- b. Payment in lieu of planting replacement tree(s): In lieu of planting a replacement tree as provided in Section 10 Mitigation Through Planting of Tree Replacement Tree(s), a

person who has been granted a Tree Permit may make a contribution to the Tree Replacement Fund in an amount equal to the cost to replace the tree, which shall be determined by the Tree Warden based on the Town's current cost to purchase and install trees.

- c. Maintenance of Tree Replacement Fund: All sums deposited into the Tree Replacement Fund shall be used solely for the purpose of buying, planting and maintaining trees in Lynnfield.

12. Enforcement:

- a. Notice of violation: Any person who violates any of the provisions of this Tree Bylaw shall be notified by the Planning Board of the specific violation by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery. The notice shall set forth the nature of the violation and the date by which the Protected Tree(s) is to be mitigated with the planting of replacement trees or payment to the Tree Replacement Fund, for purposes of computing the "per day" violation fine.
- b. Tree Permit Suspension or revocation:
 - i. A Tree Permit may be suspended or revoked at any time by the Planning Board or its authorized enforcement agent upon written notice to the Tree Permit holder that the Tree Permit holder has failed to comply with either this article or the conditions of the Tree Permit. The written notice shall be sent by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery and shall provide an opportunity for the Tree Permit holder to correct the noncompliance and apply for a renewal of the Tree Permit upon compliance, where practicable. The suspension or revocation of a Tree Permit in accordance with this subsection shall not affect the validity of an Expansion Work Permit. It shall, however, be cause for levying a fine or fines for violation of the Tree Permit, and the requirement for replacement of any removed or damaged trees.
- c. Stop work order:
 - i. Upon notice from the Planning Board that work on any Protected Tree, or lot on which a Protected Tree is located, is being performed contrary to the provisions of this Tree Bylaw, such work shall be immediately stopped. The stop work order shall be in writing and shall be given to the owner of the property involved, or to the owner's agent, or to the person doing the work; and shall state the conditions under which work will be permitted to resume.
 - ii. The Planning Board is also authorized to request the agency which has granted an Expansion Work Permit, to the extent permissible by law, that the owner cease any activity pursuant to the Expansion Work Permit that might affect such Protected Tree while a stop work order is pending.
 - iii. Any person who shall continue any work in or about the Protected Tree or lot on which a Protected Tree is located after having been served with a stop work order, except such work as that person is directed to perform to remove a violation or unsafe condition, shall be liable to a fine(s) per the table in section

- 13(a). Each day during which a violation exists shall constitute a separate offense.
- d. Injunctive relief:
- i. Whenever there exists reasonable cause to believe that a person is violating this Tree Bylaw or any standards adopted pursuant to this Tree Bylaw or any term, condition or provision of an approved Tree Permit, the Town may, either before or after the institution of any other action or proceeding authorized by this Tree Bylaw, institute a civil action in the name of the Town for a mandatory or prohibitory injunction and an order of abatement demanding the defendant to correct the unlawful condition upon or cease the unlawful use of the property.
 - ii. Upon determination of a court that an alleged violation is occurring, it shall enter such order or judgment as is necessary to abate the violation. The institution of an action for injunctive relief under this subsection shall not relieve any party to such proceedings from any civil penalty prescribed for violation of this Tree Bylaw.

13. Penalties:

- a. Removal without a permit: Each instance in which a Protected Tree is removed without a permit shall constitute a violation of this Tree Bylaw which shall be subject to a fine per the table below. This shall be in addition to the required payment for the replacement of the tree(s).

Fine Schedule	Fine Allowed
1 st offense	\$100
2 nd offense	\$200
3 rd offense & each subsequent offense	\$300

- b. Failure to replace trees or make payment: Each failure to replace a tree or make a payment into the Tree Replacement Fund shall constitute a separate violation of this Tree Bylaw which shall be subject to a fine per the table above. Each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.
- c. Failure to comply with a condition contained in a Tree Permit or stop work order: Each instance where there is a failure to comply with a condition contained in a Tree Permit or stop work order shall constitute a violation of this article which shall be subject to a fine in the amount per the table above. Each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense
- d. Town trees: Nothing herein shall be construed to require the Town to make a payment into the Tree Replacement Fund for any tree(s) which it removes.

14. Severability, Effect on Other Laws:

- a. Severability: The provisions of this Tree Bylaw are severable. If any section, provision, or portion of this Tree Bylaw is determined to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, then the remaining provisions of this Tree Bylaw shall continue to be valid.
- b. Conflict of laws: This Tree Bylaw shall not apply to any public shade tree as that term is defined by the General Laws, Chapter 87 or any amendments thereto. Nothing herein is intended to conflict with the General Laws, Chapter 87 and to the extent that any provision hereof conflicts with said Chapter 87, such provision shall not be valid. Nothing herein is intended to conflict with existing special permit procedures as provided in section 30-24 and to the extent that any provision hereof conflicts with said special permit procedures, such provision shall not be valid.
- c. Complying with the terms of this Tree Bylaw shall not relieve the owner of the subject property from complying with any other pertinent regulation, including but not limited to all state and local wetlands protection regulations.
- d. Nothing herein shall preclude the harvesting of timber or cordwood from properties under Chapter 61 which are being actively managed as working forest, if said cutting is part of an approved forest management plan for the property. No Tree Permits or mitigation fees shall be levied against forestry operations on such properties.