

CITY OF RENTON
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIVISION
INTERPRETATION/POLICY DECISION

MUNICIPAL

CODE SECTION: RMC Section 4-4-130H4 and 7
Performance Standards for Land Development/Building Permits – Tree Preservation; Tree/Ground Cover Retention.

REFERENCE: NA

AUTHORITY: RMC 4-4-130H2

SUBJECT: Tree retention and replacement for new development

**BACKGROUND /
JUSTIFICATION:**

The regulations concerning tree and groundcover protection and retention, RMC 4-4-130H4 and 7b, require that trees on lots being developed be maintained to the maximum extent feasible. They allow the City to require the replacement of trees, or similar measures, that would implement the intent of the regulations. In light of proposed amendments to the Tree Cutting and Land Clearing regulations, this ability to place additional requirements on projects is being invoked as an interim measure toward more stringently meeting the purpose of the regulations.

DECISION:

The following tree retention and replacement requirements apply to projects that are subject to land use approval or environmental review:

1. Tree inventory. In addition to the requirements of the conceptual landscape plan, also identify clearly on the plan all trees on the site with a diameter of 6 inches or more as measured at chest height, 4.5 feet above the ground. Indicate the diameter and type of each tree. Mark clearly which trees will be retained and which trees will be removed.

2. Tree retention. 25% of all “protected trees” on the site must be retained. Protected trees are trees with a diameter of 8 inches or more as measured at 4.5 feet above the ground, or trees that possess unique or unusual features as determined by the Reviewing Official. Trees not to be considered protected include: All Populus species including cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*), quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), Lombardy poplar (*Populus nigra 'Italica'*), etc.; All Alnus species which include Red alder (*Alnus oregona*), Black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), White alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), etc.; Salix species which include Weeping willow (*Salix babylonica*), etc; All Platanus species which include London plane tree (*Platanus acerifolia*), American sycamore, buttonwood (*Plananus occidentalis*), etc.. On sites with critical areas, the tree retention measures should be addressed only for areas not already protected with a Native Growth Protection Easement.

3. Tree protection. Protected trees that are retained must be protected from damage throughout all phases of site development, including site preparation, construction of improvements, and building construction. It is the responsibility of the owner to instate measures to assure that the health and viability of the trees

is sustained. Such measures might include, but are not limited to, installing fencing and signage around protected trees.

4. Tree replacement. When the required 25% of protected trees cannot be retained, then the protected trees that are removed must be replaced with new trees at a ratio of 1 to 1. The new trees must be 2 inches or more in caliper. The diameter and species of each retained protected tree and required new tree must be shown on the detailed landscape plan and submitted at the time of application for building permits. The new trees must be planted before a certificate of occupancy is issued or a final inspection of the building conducted.

**DIVISION HEAD
APPROVAL:**

Neil Watts

DATE:

March 9, 2006

**APPEAL
PROCESS:**

To appeal this determination, a written appeal--accompanied by the required \$75.00 filing fee--must be filed with the City's Hearing Examiner (1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98055, 425-430-6515) no more than 14 days from the date of this decision. Your submittal should explain the basis for the appeal. Section 4-8-110 of the Renton Municipal code provides further information on the appeal process.