



City of San Carlos Planning Division

Protected Tree Removal and Pruning Permit Application

Effective June 9, 2022, a revised Protected Tree Ordinance was adopted with significant updates. Applicants are highly recommended to review the new [Protected Tree Ordinance](#), the new [Protected Trees Administrative Guidelines](#) and the new [Preferred Tree List](#) before proceeding with this application. For more information and background visit: <https://www.cityofsancarlos.org/residents/permits/tree-removal>.

USE THIS APPLICATION TO:

- Apply for a Protected Tree Removal Permit
- Apply for a Protected Tree Pruning Permit
- Update or Correct Information to a Previously Submitted Tree Removal Permit Application

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION

STEP 1

Refer to the San Carlos protected tree thresholds table (see page 4) to determine if the tree in question is Protected. **You are required to obtain a permit before you may remove or prune 25% or more of a Protected Tree.** A permit is not required for removal of a non-protected tree. Please be aware that the San Carlos Municipal Code requires property owners to maintain a minimum number of trees on their property pursuant to San Carlos Municipal Code (SCMC) 18.18.070-C. After removing a Protected tree, a replacement tree is required to be planted pursuant to the SCMC 18.18.070-F(6) and the Administrative Guidelines. Please refer to the [Administrative Guidelines](#) or contact the Planning Division at planning@cityofsancarlos.org to learn about the tree replanting requirements that may apply to the project.

IMPORTANT: A permit is also required for pruning of a Protected tree. "Pruning" means the removal of one fourth (25%) or more of the crown or existing foliage of the tree or one-fourth (25%) or more of the root system.

STEP 2

Please refer to the [Administrative Guidelines](#) for detailed submission requirements. At minimum the following documents shall be required:

1. A completed *Protected Tree Removal & Pruning Permit Application* form
2. Statement of Reasons for Removal or Pruning. Please note an arborist report from the applicant is **not** required.
3. A complete Arborist Inspection Consent form
4. Site Plan – refer the Administrative Guidelines for more detail requirements
5. At least one colored photograph of each tree included with this application form

STEP 3

Online submission: Upload submission materials to the [Planning Upload Portal](#). After uploading, planning staff will email you a project number and fee payment instructions to pay online.

IMPORTANT: *Incomplete applications will not be accepted or processed. In addition to a \$300.00 city processing fee, the initial application fee for a tree removal permit is a \$500 deposit to be used towards an investigative report. If the cost to process the permit exceeds this deposit, the applicant or owner must cover the cost before the issuance of the permit. In some situations, the deposit amount may range anywhere between \$600-\$1500 or more. Additional public noticing fees may apply.*

STEP 4

For Protected trees proposed for removal consistent with criteria 18.18.070-F(2)(e) Development or 18.18.070-F(2)(f) Utility Interference, the City will send a notice to residents within 300' of the subject property where the tree is located. The notice is to notify neighbors that a Protected Tree Removal Application was submitted with the City. A 300' neighborhood notice is not required for Protected trees proposed for removal consistent with criteria 18.18.070-F(2)(a-d).

STEP 5

After your application is submitted, the City-arborist may conduct a site visit to inspect the tree(s) for Planning Department staff review. After review, staff may refer the application to another City department, committee, board, or commission for a report and recommendation prior to issuing a final decision. You should receive a written notification on your application status within 3-4 weeks after complete application submission.

PERMIT INFORMATION

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

If approved, your tree removal permit may be granted subject to conditions including but not limited to:

- Planting of replacement trees as described in your permit
- Implementation of special construction techniques
- Other tree protection measures

NOTICE OF ISSUANCE

Upon receipt of a tree removal permit, the property owner shall post a notice of issuance of their tree removal permit at the subject property for a period of fourteen (14) calendar days. The City will furnish the owner with a copy of the notice of issuance. *Please be aware of the posting requirement before scheduling a tree removal service.*

APPEALS

Decisions on a tree removal permit may be appealed to the Planning Commission by filing a written appeal with the Planning Division within ten days after the date of decision. Permits take effect after the ten-day posting period if no appeal is filed. The appeal shall identify the decision being appealed and

shall clearly and concisely state the reasons for the appeal. The appeal shall be accompanied by the required fee.

EMERGENCIES

If an emergency develops regarding a protected tree removal which requires immediate response for the safety of life or property, action may be taken by obtaining oral permission of the Community Development Director. Emergency tree removals authorized by the Director are typically exempt from normal tree removal permit procedures; however, tree replacement shall occur if required as a condition of approval pursuant to SCMC Chapter 18.18. If oral permission is granted, you will still be required to obtain an after-the-fact permit from our department.

EXPIRATION

If no action on an approved tree removal permit is taken within a period of one year from the date of approval, the permit shall be considered void.

VIOLATION

Any person who removes or causes to be removed any protected tree **or prune 25% or more of a Protected tree** without a valid permit in violation of the San Carlos Protected Tree Ordinance is required to do the following:

1. Apply for and obtain an after-the-fact tree removal permit and pay a double application fee; and
2. Be responsible for tree replacement and paying the fees of a licensed arborist to determine the value of the tree; and
3. Pay a civil penalty to the City, with the funds placed in the City's tree planting fund, in the amount of \$5,000 or the appraised value of the tree, whichever is more



PROTECTED TREE THRESHOLDS

The table below shows the thresholds used by the City of San Carlos to determine whether a tree is Protected. In order to use this table, you will need to know both the species and diameter of the tree trunk measured at 54" inches above adjacent grade. Note that different species have different size thresholds.

Name	Scientific Name	Minimum Protected Diameter
Protected Trees		
1. Native and Non-Native species that are not listed below		11" or more greater
2. Buckeye	<i>Aesculus californica</i>	9" diameter or greater
3. Madrone	<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	
4. Coast Live Oak	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	
5. Valley Oak	<i>Quercus lobata</i>	
6. Blue Oak	<i>Quercus douglassii</i>	
7. Interior Live Oak	<i>Quercus wislizenii</i>	
8. Redwood	<i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>	15" diameter or greater
9. California Bay Laurel	<i>Umbellularia californica</i>	11" diameter or greater
Other Protected Trees		
Community of Trees		
City Council-designated Trees		
A required replacement tree		
Tree(s) part of approved development permit		
Tree(s) part of approved landscaping plan		
Unprotected trees regardless of size		
1. Bailey, Green or Black Acacia: <i>A. baileyana</i> , <i>A. decurrens</i> or <i>A. melanoxyton</i> ;		
2. Tree of Heaven: <i>Ailanthus altissima</i>		
3. Fruit trees of any kind;		
4. Monterey Pine: <i>Pinus radiata</i>		
5. Eucalyptus genera;		
6. Monocot trees including palms and palm relatives.		

[Protected Tree Ordinance](#)

[San Carlos Preferred Tree List](#)

[Protected Trees Administrative Guidelines](#)



TRE20 ____ - 00 ____

For staff use

1. PROTECTED TREE REMOVAL & PRUNING APPLICATION

PROPERTY INFORMATION			
Project address		Assessor's Parcel Number (APN)	
TREE 1			
Species	Dia.*	Location (e.g., front yard, side yard)	Request (select one): <input type="checkbox"/> REMOVAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRUNING
TREE 2			
Species	Dia.*	Location	Request (select one): <input type="checkbox"/> REMOVAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRUNING
TREE 3			
Species	Dia.*	Location	Request (select one): <input type="checkbox"/> REMOVAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRUNING
TREE 4			
Species:	Dia.*	Location:	Request (select one): <input type="checkbox"/> REMOVAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRUNING
TREE 5			
Species	Dia.*	Location	Request (select one): <input type="checkbox"/> REMOVAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRUNING

*Trunk diameter in inches measured at 54" above natural grade

CONTACT INFORMATION & AFFIDAVIT					
Property owner name			Applicant name		
Property owner mailing address			Applicant mailing address		
City	State	Zip	City	State	Zip
Property owner email address			Applicant email address		
Property owner phone number			Applicant phone number		

My signature below affirms that I hereby declare under penalty of perjury that the responses I have given herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Property Owner Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Applicant Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)



2. STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR REMOVAL OR PRUNING

INSTRUCTIONS: The San Carlos Municipal Code provides the following reasons for which a permit may be granted to remove or prune a Protected tree. In the table at the bottom of this page, select all reasons for removal or pruning for each tree and explain why you believe the trees meet the reasons for removal that you specify below. Also use the following page to indicate if your pruning or removal is a part of a planned construction or development project.

- a. **Death**. The Protected tree is dead as designated by the City arborist.
- b. **Tree Risk Rating**. The condition of the Protected tree poses a high or extreme risk rating under the International Society of Arboriculture Best Management Practices: Tree Risk Assessment and/or administrative guidelines; and the risk cannot be reasonably abated to a low-risk rating with sound arboricultural treatments. The City arborist may consider 'danger to people and property in assessing the risk to make a decision.
- c. **Tree Health Rating**. The Protected tree is (A) dying or has a severe disease, pest infestation, intolerance to adverse site conditions, or other condition and/or pruning or other reasonable treatments based on current arboricultural standards will not restore the Protected tree to a fair, good or excellent health rating as defined in the Guide for Plant Appraisal, 10th Edition, or its successor manual or the administrative guidelines (B) likely to die within a year as designated by an ISA Certified Arborist and/or the City arborist.
- d. **Species**. The Protected tree is a member of a species that has been designated as invasive or low species desirability by the City arborist or his/her/their designee in the administrative guidelines.
- e. **Development**. The Protected tree interferes with existing or proposed development, repair, alteration or improvement of a site or the Protected tree is causing/contributing to structural damage to a habitable building (excluding amenities, such as walkways, patios, pools and fire pits); and there is no reasonable design alternative that would permit preservation of the Protected tree while achieving the applicant's reasonable development objectives or of the property. Necessary documentation and/or tree appraisals as established in the administrative guidelines shall be submitted to the City arborist demonstrating infeasibility of alternatives to the removal and/or pruning.
- f. **Utility Interference**. The removal and/or pruning is requested by a utility, public transportation agency, or other governmental agency due to a health or safety risk resulting from the Protected tree's interference with existing or planned public infrastructure and there is no reasonable design alternative that would permit preservation of the Protected tree. Necessary documentation as established in the administrative guidelines shall be submitted to the City arborist demonstrating infeasibility of alternatives to the removal and/or pruning.

TREE 1

Reason for removal.

- A B C D E F

Use the space below to explain reason(s) for removal.

TREE 2

Reason for removal:

- A B C D E F

Use the space below to explain reason(s) for removal.



3. ARBORIST INSPECTION CONSENT FORM

INSTRUCTIONS: After submitting your application, the City Arborist may inspect the tree(s) during a site visit. An arborist inspection is generally required for Protected tree removal and pruning permit requests. Use this page to indicate your level of consent to allow an unattended inspection by the City of San Carlos. An unattended inspection allows the arborist to visit your site without your presence. Your consent level should take into account various factors such as potential hazards (e.g. loose dogs) or access issues (e.g. locked gate) that require your presence during the inspection.

*If you have a pet in the backyard you need to be home during the inspection or ensure all pets are indoors.

I, The City of San Carlos: *(check one)*

may enter my property for the purpose of conducting an unattended inspection of the trees for which I have requested a tree removal and/or pruning permit

may not enter my property for the purpose of conducting an unattended inspection. I request that either my agent, as designated below, or I are present during the inspection.

OWNER'S AGENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Owner's agent name

Owner's agent email address

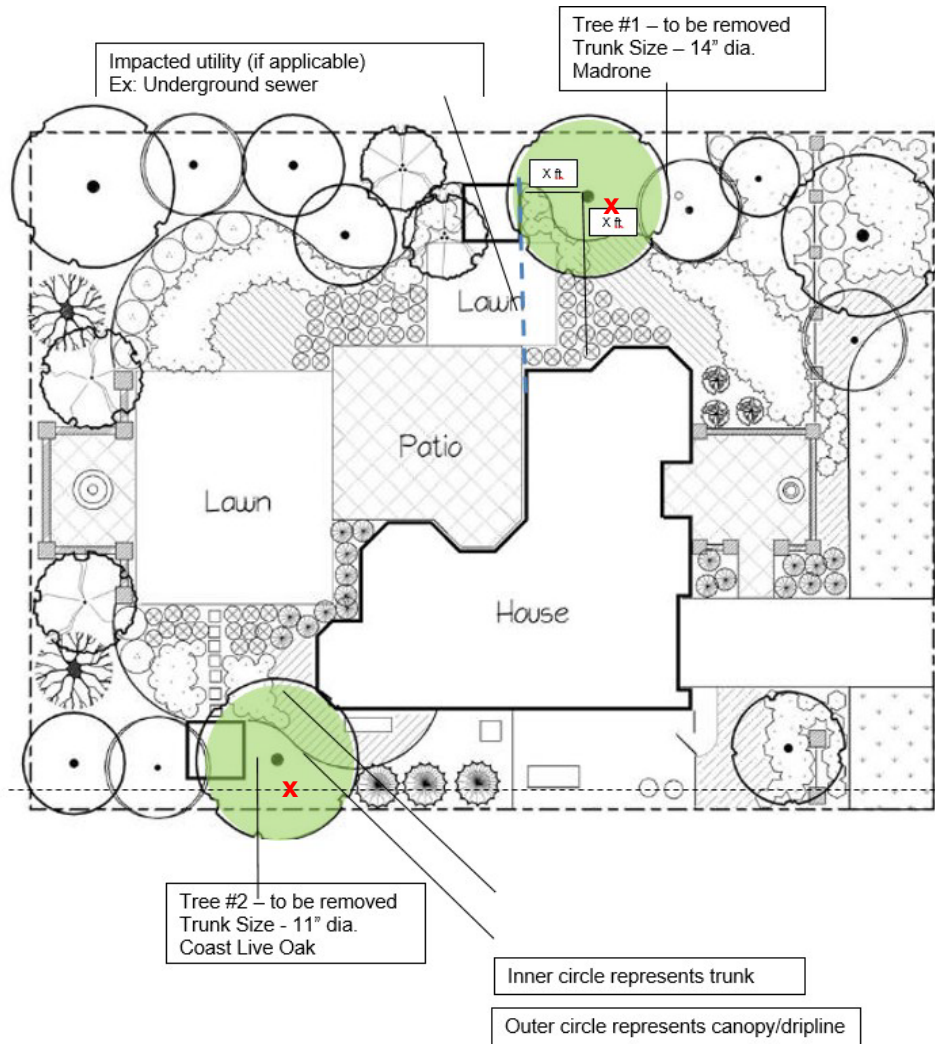
Owner's agent day phone number

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (OPTIONAL)



4. PROPOSED SITE PLAN

INSTRUCTIONS: Indicate a site plan that clearly shows location of **ALL** trees, including unprotected trees, on your property. Please cross mark Protected trees proposed for removal. A legible hand drawing is acceptable. The site plan must be sufficiently detailed and show dimensions, buildings, streets, sidewalks and utilities as applicable. Trees must be labeled with the number according to the order they are listed in your application. For guidance, refer to the example site plan included in this packet. You can print a sheet, draw your plan, and scan it or you may attach a separate sheet that contains your drawing.



Site Plan Example



5. Development-Related Applications (e and f)

INSTRUCTIONS: Where development is cited as the reason for removal the City Arborist will be reviewing the application. To ease the review time and lessen the chance the application is denied, it is best if the applicant submits necessary documentation to demonstrate infeasibility of alternative design that includes:

1. A written narrative of infeasibility and describing areas where structural damage is possible due to the tree(s).
2. Detail Site Plans:
 - a. Existing site plan showing existing development
 - b. Proposed site plan showing proposed development
 - c. Location of all protected trees, within 30'-0" of all construction activities irrespective of proposed to be removed or not shall be shown.
 - d. In an attachment to the plan, please provide detailed information on each protected tree including but not limited to tree species, tree trunk diameter measured at 54", condition, suitability for preservation, heritage or significant tree, proposed action to be taken, and an evaluation (preferably from an arborist) on if the tree(s) will tolerate proposed impacts. If the tree will tolerate impacts please have the arborist provide specific specifications for tree preservation before, during, and after construction.
3. At least two alternative site plan designs showing infeasibility with respect to the tree proposed for removal.
4. The City arborist will prepare an arborist report based on the submitted documents and site visit(s). The City arborist will render a final decision.