

## Purpose

The purpose of this handout is to clarify the definition of “landmark tree” pursuant to Bellevue Land Use Code (LUC) Chapter 20.20.900, Tree Retention and Replacement for the purpose of determining thresholds for “rare, uncommon, unique or exceptional” trees on sites undergoing development, in order to establish appropriate tree protection measures.

## Background

Bellevue LUC Chapter 20.20.900, Tree Retention and Replacement, provides means for protecting trees in Bellevue. Under this chapter, landmark trees are given priority for retention. Landmark trees are defined in Bellevue LUC 20.50 as:

“Certain significant trees are considered landmark trees based on their size, species, condition, cultural/historic importance or age. The Director shall specify thresholds for trees to be considered for landmark status.”

This handout provides clarification for determining trees that should be considered for landmark status as well as the standards and procedures for marking this determination.

## Size Thresholds

Trees with a diameter at breast height (dbh), defined in this handout, that is equal to or greater than the threshold diameters listed in Table 1 are considered landmark unless they fail to meet the risk criteria discussed in the following section. For all species not listed in Table 1, the threshold diameter is 30” or 65% of the largest documented diameter for a tree of that species in Washington, whichever is less, as noted in Champion Trees of Washington State by Robert Van Pelt.

## Measurement of Tree Diameter

Diameter at breast height (dbh), which means the diameter of a tree trunk measured at 4.5 feet above average grade, is used in determining the diameter of existing trees.

Where a tree has a branch(es) or swelling that interferes with measurement at 4.5 feet above average grade or where a tree tapers below this point, the diameter is measured at the most narrow point below 4.5 feet. For trees located on a slope, the 4.5 feet is measured from the average of the highest and lowest ground points or, on very steep slopes where this is not possible, the lowest practical point on the uphill side. Where a tree splits into several trunks close to ground level, the dbh for the tree is the square root of the sum of the dbh for each individual stem squared (example with 3 stems:  $dbh = \sqrt{[(stem1)^2 + (stem2)^2 + (stem3)^2]}$ )

## Risk Assessment

Trees that meet the size threshold discussed above shall be considered landmark trees unless DSD finds that the tree or trees should be removed based on a risk assessment produced by a qualified professional. In making this determination, a qualified professional will consider crown size, structure, disease, past maintenance practice, potential damage to existing or future targets, risk mitigation options, and, when development is proposed, the likelihood of survival after construction.

To undertake tree risk assessment as part of a development application, a qualified professional shall have a minimum of 3 years’ experience in tree evaluation and shall have worked directly with the protection of trees during construction, as well as having one of the following credentials:

- Society of American Foresters (SAF) Certified Forester;
- International Society of Arborists (ISA) Certified Arborist with Tree Risk Assessor Qualification.

## Sources

Champion Trees of Washington State, 1996, by Robert Van Pelt.

**Table 1: Size Thresholds for Common and Naïve Bellevue Trees to be considered for landmark status.**

Species	Threshold Diameter
<b>Native Species</b>	
Oregon ASH – <i>Fraxinus latifolia</i>	24 in
CASCARA – <i>Rhamnus purshiana</i>	8 in
Western Red CEDAR – <i>Thuja plicata</i>	30 in
Pacific CRABAPPLE – <i>Malus fusca</i>	12 in
Pacific DOGWOOD – <i>Cornus nuttallii</i>	8 in
Douglas FIR – <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	30 in
Grand FIR – <i>Abies grandis</i>	24 in
Black HAWTHORN – <i>Crataegus douglasii</i>	8 in
Western HEMLOCK – <i>Tsuga heterophylla</i>	24 in
MADRONA – <i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	8 in
Bigleaf MAPLE – <i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	30 in
Dwarf or Rocky Mountain MAPLE – <i>Acer glabrum</i> var. <i>Douglasii</i>	8 in
Vine MAPLE – <i>Acer circinatum</i>	8 in
Oregon White or Garry OAK – <i>Quercus garryana</i>	8 in
Lodgepole PINE – <i>Pinus contorta</i>	8 in
Shore PINE – <i>Pinus contorta</i> 'contorta'	12 in
Western White PINE – <i>Pinus monticola</i>	24 in
Western SERVICEBERRY – <i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	8 in
Sitka SPRUCE – <i>Picea sitchensis</i>	8 in
Pacific YEW – <i>Taxus brevifolia</i>	8 in
<b>Non-native Species</b>	
Orchard (Common) APPLE – <i>Malus</i> sp.	20 in
Atlas CEDAR – <i>Cedrus atlantica</i>	30 in
Deodor CEDAR – <i>Cedrus deodara</i>	30 in
Incense CEDAR – <i>Calocedrus decurrens</i>	30 in
Flowering CHERRY – <i>Prunus</i> sp. ( <i>serrula</i> , <i>serrulata</i> , <i>sargentii</i> , <i>subhirtella</i> , <i>yedoensis</i> )	23 in
Lawson CYPRESS – <i>Chamaecyparis lawsoniana</i>	30 in
Kousa DOGWOOD – <i>Cornus kousa</i>	12 in
Eastern DOGWOOD – <i>Cornus florida</i>	12 in
American ELM – <i>Ulmus Americana</i>	30 in
English ELM – <i>Ulmus procera</i>	30 in
GINGKO – <i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	24 in
Common HAWTHORN – <i>Crataegus laevigata</i>	16 in
Washington HAWTHORN – <i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i>	9 in
European HORNBEAM – <i>Carpinus betulus</i>	16 in
Common HORSE CHESTNUT – <i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	30 in
Red HORSE CHESTNUT – <i>Aesculus x carnea</i>	30 in
KATSURA – <i>Cercidiphyllum japonicum</i>	30 in
Littleleaf LINDEN – <i>Tilia cordata</i>	30 in
Honey LOCUST – <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	20 in
Southern MAGNOLIA – <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	16 in
Paperbark MAPLE – <i>Acer griseum</i>	12 in
Japanese MAPLE – <i>Acer palmatum</i>	12 in
Norway MAPLE – <i>Acer platanoides</i>	30 in
Red MAPLE – <i>Acer rubrum</i>	25 in
Sugar MAPLE – <i>Acer saccharum</i>	30 in
Sycamore MAPLE – <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	24 in
MONKEY PUZZLE TREE – <i>Araucaria araucana</i>	22 in
Pin OAK – <i>Quercus palustris</i>	30 in
Red OAK – <i>Quercus rubra</i>	30 in

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Ponderosa PINE – <i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	30 in
Scot's PINE – <i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	24 in
London PLANE – <i>Platanus acerifolia</i>	30 in
Flowering PLUM – <i>Prunus cerasifera</i>	21 in
Coastal REDWOOD – <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>	30 in
Giant SEQUOIA – <i>Sequoiadendron giganteum</i>	30 in
Japanese SNOWBELL – <i>Styrax japonica</i>	12 in
American SWEETGUM – <i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	27 in
TULIP TREE – <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	30 in

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This document is intended to provide guidance in applying certain Land Use Code regulations and is for informational use only. It cannot be used as a substitute for the Land Use Code or for other city codes, such as the Construction Codes. Additional information is available from Development Services at Bellevue City Hall or on the city website at [www.bellevuewa.gov](http://www.bellevuewa.gov).

For land use regulations that may apply to your project, contact the Land Use Information Desk in Development Services. Phone: 425-452-4188. E-mail: [landusereview@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:landusereview@bellevuewa.gov). Assistance for the hearing impaired: dial 711.

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