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City of Stonecrest Guide for Tree Removal

1 The purpose and intent of the City of Stonecrest Tree Protection Ordinance (Article VI*) standards and guidelines is to facilitate the preservation and/or replacement of trees as a part of land development in the city. The citizens of the city and their many communities enjoy many benefits that can be directly attributed to our trees. The City of Stonecrest mayor and council finds that the preservation of existing trees is a public purpose that protects the public health, safety, general welfare and aesthetics of the City of Stonecrest and all its citizens.

It is also the intent to protect specimen and historical trees in a manner consistent with the City of Stonecrest Tree Protection Ordinance. Provide standards for the preservation of trees as part of the land development process. Prevent clear-cutting and mass grading of land that results in the loss of mature trees, and to ensure appropriate replanting when tree loss does occur. As well as protect trees during construction to enhance the quality of life in the City of Stonecrest.

The City of Stonecrest is aware that;

- ✓ Trees produce oxygen, which is essential to the well-being of all animal life, including humans.
- ✓ Trees help to reduce the amounts of airborne pollutants.
- ✓ Trees remove carbon dioxide, that is a major environmental concern due to its current high levels. Trees and their foliage intercept dust and particulate matter, thereby helping to purify our air and limiting health risks.
- ✓ Trees and their root systems reduce soil erosion and stormwater runoff. This decreases sedimentation problems and improves water quality.
- ✓ Trees provide food and shelter for desirable urban wildlife.
- ✓ Trees provide screening, which in turns aids in the reduction of noise and glare.
- ✓ Trees help moderate our air temperature to provide us with a comfortable environment.



- ✓ Trees provide scenic amenities to soften the harshness of city buildings and streets. They are aesthetically pleasing to all that view them.
- ✓ Trees may affect property values and can have a positive impact upon the economy of an area.
- ✓ Trees can enhance the natural functions of streams and related buffers.

As a part of the policy and procedures to regulate the tree canopy, The City of Stonecrest shall require that a **Notice of Tree Removal form** request be submitted for the removal of;

- Five (5) or fewer trees other than specimen size trees, on any single-family residential* property, within a calendar year.
- The removal of more than five (5) trees, other than specimen trees,
- Zoning conditions to a specific site plan providing that said zoning ordinance contains specific conditions for both tree preservation and tree replacement.
- Trees certified by the certified arborist or Director of Community Development that are diseased or infested.
- The removal of trees from horticultural properties, such as farms, nurseries or orchards. Not including tree harvesting.
- Tree removal that has become or threatens to become, a danger to human life or property.
- Agricultural zoned activities on land that require maintenance.
- Approved utility construction within permanent utility easements.
- Construction, expansion, and operation of (county) landfills.
- Building permits that do not require or authorize land disturbance.
- With the submission of a letter of intent with an application for a pre-application conference.
- With the submission of a tree survey and tree protection plan.
- All others as required and/or requested by the Community Development Department Director and the designated representative.

The written notice (*form attached*) shall contain a health/risk assessment conducted by a Certified Arborist. The **Notice of Tree Removal form** shall be submitted to the City of Stonecrest before any tree removal operations take place. Failure to do so shall be a violation.

A **Notice of Tree Removal form** is not required for any tree which has become, or threatens to become, a danger to human life or property as documented by a certified tree professional performing a tree risk assessment. Dead, diseased or hazardous trees may be removed at any time. *Section 14-517*. This assessment shall be conducted by a certified arborist.

A **Notice of Tree Removal form** is not required to remove any tree with a DBH less than 5”.

*The removal of up to five (5) healthy trees on a single-family residential property per calendar year is allowed without the submittal of a **Notice of Tree Removal** application, provided that these trees are not specimen trees.

The removal of more than five (5) trees or specimen tree(s), from an owner- occupied, single-family lot may be approved if the owner must remove trees in order to build a new structure, to build an addition to or to make improvements to an existing structure, or to improve the health of other trees in the landscape. It is noted that additional permits, e.g., construction/building, clearing and grubbing, or land-disturbance permit,



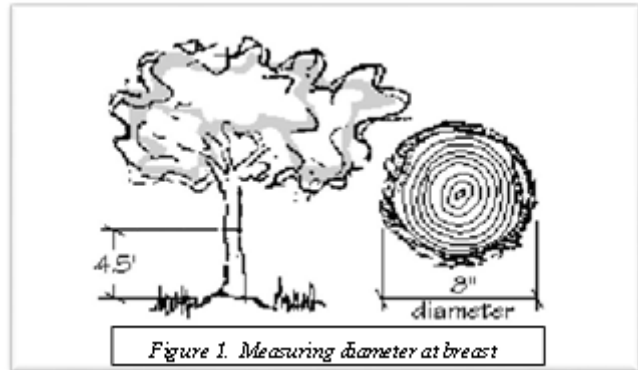
may be required.

Trees must be removed within sixty (60) days after submittal of the Notification of Tree Removal form accompanied by a tree survey with an approved tree replacement plan and land disturbance permit.

A significant tree is any existing, healthy, living tree eight (8") inches or more in diameter when measured four and one-half feet (4.5') above the ground. This measurement is referred to as diameter at breast height, **DBH**, of the tree.

Circumference of Trunk ÷ π = DBH

Ex.: 25" Circumference ÷ 3.14 = 8" DBH



Specimen Trees

A specimen tree is defined as a tree with a life expectancy of 15 years or more, with a healthy trunk with no extensive decay or hollow/cavity (less than 20%), and no major insect or pathological problem that meets the following size guidelines:

- Overstory large hardwoods trees, ex.: Oak, yellow poplar & pine – DBH is greater than or equal to 30 inches (which equates to a circumference of 94.2 inches). Large soft woods trees, ex: evergreens, pines DBH is equal to 30 inches.



- Understory (small) trees, ex: Dogwood, redbud – DBH is greater than or equal to 10 inches (which equates to a circumference of 31.4 inches).



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Guidelines and Procedures for Tree Removal

Compliance with City of Stonecrest Tree Ordinance

Sec. 14-518. - Procedures.

(a) Application Requirements

- (1) Pre-Application Conference: Applicant are encouraged to meet with Community Development Director discuss compliance with the City of Stonecrest Tree Ordinance prior to submitting any applications (Preliminary Plat, Development Application or Land Disturbance Application)
- (2) Tree Survey: Tree survey is required for Preliminary Plat, Land Disturbance Permit, Development Permit and Building Permit. All trees, 18 inches (DBH) and larger shall be identified. Specimen Trees shall be identified by size, species and location. Trees larger than two inches (DBH) may be identified and counted for unit credit on the tree protection plan.

(b) Tree Protection Plan: Tree Protection Plan shall be submitted as part of any Development Plan.

Sec. 14-520 Tree Preservation and Replacement Requirements

- (1) Either 120 inches (DBH) per acre or 25 percent of existing significant trees per acre of such significant trees, whichever is less, shall be preserved on the site. Trees located in stream buffers and state buffer zones, transitional buffer zones and designated floodplains shall not be counted in developments except sites zoned C-1, C-2, M or M-2.
- (2) There shall be at least two two-inch (DBH) over story trees in every front yard of properties zoned RE, RLG, R-100, R-85, and R-75. There shall be at least one two-inch (DBH) over story tree in every front yard of properties zoned RSM and R-60.
- (3) (i) All residential subdivisions shall have an average density of 15 density units per acre. Required trees may be located on individual lots or in subdivisions in which there is commonly-owned property may be located on such commonly-owned property.
(ii) All Nonresidential and multifamily developments, the quantity of total existing/replacement trees on-site must be sufficient so as to produce a total site density factor of no less than 30 density units per acre.
- (4) Procedures for calculating tree density shall be based on this section. (14-520 (4))
- (5) Nothing in these regulations shall be construed to allow the removal of any tree or vegetation in a required stream buffer, transitional buffer zone or state buffer zone except buffer improvements as authorized by the Director.
- (6) Existing trees between two caliper inches and 7.9 caliper inches may be used for credit on the tree replacement plan.
- (7) Tree preservation areas shall leave intact the naturally occurring groundcover and understory vegetation.
- (8) Specimen Trees
 - (a) Large hardwoods, i.e., oaks, hickories, yellow poplars, and similar species: 30 inches DBH.
 - (b) Large softwoods, e.g., pines, evergreens, and similar species: 30 inches DBH.
 - (c) Small trees, e.g., dogwoods, redbuds, sourwoods, and similar species: Ten inches DBH.
 - (d) Any specimen tree removed from a parcel shall be replaced by 1.5 times the equivalent inches (DBH) of replacement trees or existing trees in excess of the requirements of this section, tree preservation and replacement requirements, using species with potentials for comparable size and quality at maturity. Permits, unless exempted otherwise by the County Arborist, are required for the removal of a specimen tree or the removal of more than five (5) trees with a DBH of more than 5" on residential, single-family, properties.

A Notification of Tree Removal is not required to remove any tree with a DBH less than 5" as well as dead, diseased or hazardous trees as assessed by a certified tree professional.

Trees must be removed within sixty (60) days after approval of the submitted Notification of Tree Removal application approved by the City of Stonecrest.



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**CITY OF STONECREST OF COMMERCIAL TREE
REMOVAL APPLICATION**

Address of Proposed Tree Removal:							
Name of Owner:							
Owner's Address:							
Owner's Phone Number and Email Address:							
Name of Applicant and Certification Number:							
Name of Tree Company:							
Applicant's Phone Number and Email Address:							
The Owner or Authorized Agent hereby applies for a Permit for the purpose of removing the following tree(s):							
Tree Species	Reason for Removal	DBH (inches)	Specimen? (Y/N)	Dead? (Y/N)	75' Buffer? (Y/N)	Boundary? (Y/N)	Target in Drop Zone? (Y/N)
Number of existing trees 2" DBH or greater remaining on property after removal:							
Property Lot/Size in Acres:				Type of Commercial Development:			
Signature of Certified Arborist:							
Signature of Authorized Staff:							

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TREE CONDITION EVALUATION GUIDELINE

A tree's condition is determined by assessing the tree's roots, trunk, limb/branch structure, twigs and foliage. The conditions are identified on each component of the tree. This is a guideline only.

ROOTS

- ✓ Root anchorage.
- ✓ Restricted root system relative to canopy.
- ✓ Mechanical injury.
- ✓ Girdling roots.
- ✓ Compaction or water-logged roots.
- ✓ Presence of insects or diseases.

TRUNK

- ✓ Sound bark and wood, no cavities.
- ✓ Upright trunk (well tapered).
- ✓ Included bark between co-dominant stems.
- ✓ Mechanical or fire injury.
- ✓ Cracks.
- ✓ Swollen or sunken area.
- ✓ Presence of insects and diseases.

LIMB AND BRANCH STRUCTURE

- ✓ Strong attachments, no included bark.
- ✓ Free of decay and cavities.
- ✓ Well proportioned, good form.
- ✓ Wound closure.
- ✓ Dead limbs/epicormic sprouting.
- ✓ Presence of decay, insects and diseases.

TWIGS

- ✓ Shoot vigor compared to past 3-year growth.



- ✓ Presence of weak or dead twigs.
- ✓ Presence of insects and diseases.

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The Recognition of Hazardous Trees

Pollards
Often indicated by a sudden change in stem diameter. Decay may be present but hidden by regrowth.

Break-out cavity
Decay may develop in wounds caused by branches breaking.

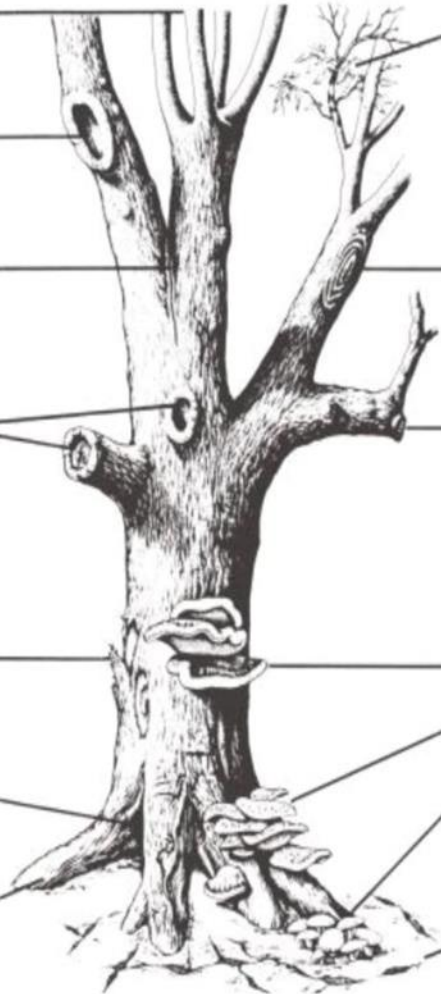
Weak fork
Tight V-shaped crotches may be structurally weak, sometimes giving rise to cracks; decay can develop in them.

Pruning wounds
The wound surface or a layer of paint (if present) may appear sound but the wood behind may be decayed.

Loose bark
Bark coming away from the stem may indicate the presence of rotten wood beneath.

Basal cavities in the wood
These are particularly dangerous if present between more than one pair of buttresses.

Damaged roots
Site disturbance may sever or kill roots; poor soil conditions may lead to restricted rooting. Tree stability may be affected.



Leaves (or needles). Dead twigs and branches
Generally small, sparse or pale. Tree flushes late or drops its leaves early. These symptoms sometimes indicate root decay or death.

Perennial or target canker
Such cankers may result in weakness of branch or stem.

Abrupt bends
Resulting from past breakage or pruning. Decay may be present.

Fungal fruit bodies
Bracket fungi on the stem are positive indicators of internal decay. Fruit bodies on or near roots may indicate they are decayed, but the species of fungus should be identified as many harmless or beneficial kinds also grow in this area.

Soil cracks
Heaving of ground may occur when a tree with an unstable root system moves in a wind.

Courtesy of <http://arbor-talk.co.uk>



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CITY OF STONECREST
NOTICE OF
TREE REMOVAL

Address of Proposed Tree Removal:							
Name of Owner:							
Owner's Address:							
Owner's Phone Number and Email Address:							
Name of Applicant and Certification Number:							
Name of Tree Company:							
Applicant's Phone Number and Email Address:							
The Owner or Authorized Agent hereby applies for a Permit for the purpose of removing the following tree(s):							
Tree Species	Reason for Removal	DBH (inches)	Specimen? (Y/N)	Dead? (Y/N)	75' Buffer? (Y/N)	Boundary? (Y/N)	Target in Drop Zone? (Y/N)
Number of existing trees 2" DBH or greater remaining on property after removal:							
Property Lot/Size in Acres:				Year Home Built:			
Signature of County Arborist:							

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❖ **Reason(s) for removal(s):**

- **Addition to a Single-Family House:** (must include scaled site plan depicting location of proposed addition and tree(s) to be removed).
- **Pool:** (must include scaled site plan depicting location of pool/pool deck on property and tree(s) to be removed).
- **Retaining Wall or Fence installation.**
- **Septic Tank and/or Well:** (must include Public Health Department Permit and approved site plan).
- **Unhealthy or Damaged Tree(s):** Includes but is not limited to insect or fungal damage, lightning strike, inadequate area for healthy growth.
- **Other** (specify).

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I HEREBY CERTIFY that the site plan and tree survey is a true representation of all facts concerning the proposed tree removal activity. This application is made with my approval as Owner or Authorized Agent for the Owner, as evidenced by my signature below. FOR THE DURATION OF THE TREE REMOVAL ACTIVITIES, I ASSUME LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY AND ALL VIOLATIONS OF THE CITY OF STONECREST LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND PERMIT CONDITIONS ON THE PROPERTY DESCRIBED ABOVE.

Name of Owner or Authorized Agent (Please print)

Signature of Owner or Authorized Agent

Date



CITY OF STONECREST NOTICE OF TREE REMOVAL

SITE PLAN

- Include tree(s) to be removed and existing trees, existing structures, fence, gates, driveway and frontage street, sidewalks, stream and transition buffers. Note whether trees are located in a buffer or on a property line, i.e., boundary tree.
- Include above and below ground utilities including electrical, phone, cable, water, sewer and fire hydrants, street signs and intersection, streetlamps/lighting poles.
- Include proposed addition/improvements and tree(s) to be removed and tree(s) to remain.
- Submit photographs with this site plan. Photos must include an overall picture of the subject tree and its relationship with a building structure. Also, several close-up photos of the tree's hazardous conditions must be provided.

CITY OF STONECREST CERTIFIED ARBORIST AFFIDAVIT

I _____ am an ISA Certified Arborist. I understand the City of Stonecrest Ordinance regarding **Notice of Tree Removal, Replacement and Recompense, guidelines**. Based on this knowledge, I attest the trees identified on the accompanying **Notice of Tree Removal form** fulfill one or more of the criteria of the City's Ordinance.

I attest that the tree(s) on the attached application should be removed for the following reasons:

1. The tree is unhealthy or damaged for which there is no practical remedy to assist with its preservation (explain).
2. The tree is causing damage to public or private property for which there is no other remedy to resolve (explain).
3. The tree is interfering with the installation or function of solar energy equipment, line of sight at intersection, above or below ground utilities.
4. The tree is unsightly or is in undesirable condition as a result of a previous site disturbance or tree density issue (explain).

I assume responsibility for any and all violations of any codes or ordinances related to tree removal and permit conditions as identified for this property.

Name: _____ ISA or ASCA Certification Number: _____

Certified Arborist: _____ Date: _____

