



TO: Development Services Customers

SUBJECT: **INFORMATION BULLETIN 211**  
Residential Tree Submittal Requirements for the City of San Antonio and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (“ETJ”)

DATE: November 13, 2012/*Revised August 1, 2014*

CREATED BY: Plan Review and Land Development Divisions

---

**Purpose:**

As a customer service initiative, the Development Services Department (DSD) created this **revised** bulletin to update Information Bulletin (IB) 211 on residential tree application submittal requirements for the City of San Antonio Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). This bulletin has been updated to incorporate the department’s new format for Information Bulletins.

**Scope:**

On May 6, 2010, City Council amended Chapter 35 of the Unified Development Code relating to tree preservation and adequate canopy coverage ([Ordinance 2010-05-06-0376](#)). The goal of the ordinance is to increase the canopy coverage of the City and its ETJ. As such, the final tree canopy coverage for single-family residential construction is 38% of the lot. The final tree canopy requirement shall be accomplished after meeting two requirements (1) the tree preservation requirements of 35% of the lot and (2) the canopy shade value of the new two trees you are required to plant. The following link provides the canopy shade values of suggested trees for the San Antonio area: [Recommended Plant List](#). Please note you receive extra shade area/value credit for planting trees on the south or west side of the house.

The purpose of this information bulletin is to provide customers with guidance on how to perform the shade value calculations and to show you how to meet the final tree canopy requirement for new residential construction and additions over 2500 sq ft.

The first step to ensure you meet the requirements of the City’s tree ordinances is to complete the [Tree Affidavit/Permit Application](#). All Tree Affidavit/Applications must be the original, notarized document. (Please note staff will notarize your documents for a fee of \$6.)

The documents you will be required to submit are based upon the selections you make on the Tree Affidavit or Tree Permit Application as follows:

- **Master Tree Permit.** Use this option only if you have a Master Tree Permit. If the project is located in a Master Tree Permit Preservation Plan, you must provide:
  - Tree Permit Application
  - Correct AP number, which is the tree master plan number
  - Correct Plat number
  - If you have protected trees on the site, you must show the root protection zone on the site plan. Please note the ordinance allows you to build within 5’ on one side of a protected tree. You will be required to plant trees in accordance with the requirements of the tree master plan.

- A minimum of two trees is always required to be planted on residential lots.

Staff will verify that the property falls under the referenced master plan.

- **No Master Tree Permit** – If you do not have a Master Tree Permit refer to [IB 552](#): Tree Permits, Tree Preservation Plans and Affidavits.
- **Tree Affidavit Application:**
  - **Option 1 - Has no protected, significant, heritage or historic trees as defined in Article V, Section 35-523 or 36-6111 of the UDC (please see attachment 1 for definition of significant and heritage trees).** This selection means your lot has no trees and no tree canopy. If you select this option, you will need to submit a notarized Tree Affidavit Application and the following information:
    - **Tree Canopy Calculation.** In order to assist you with these calculations, the department recommends you use the Tree Stand Delineation Method Spreadsheet [Residential Tree Calculation spreadsheets](#) and insert the following information on the spreadsheet:
      - The size of the lot (Step 1 of the spreadsheet)
      - The percentage of current canopy coverage to be preserved on the lot should be **zero** (Step 2 of the spreadsheet)
      - For the shade value of the trees you are planting to meet the tree canopy requirement, the number and location of the two trees (Step 3 of the spreadsheet)
        - Add additional trees if needed to meet the tree canopy requirement of 38%.

Once you enter this information, the spreadsheet will perform all of the calculations to determine if you meet the City's tree canopy requirements (Step 4 of the spreadsheet). If you meet the requirements, simply print the spreadsheet and include it with your notarized Tree Affidavit/Permit. **You will also need to submit an aerial photograph of the site to verify there are no protected trees or tree canopy.**

**The fee for this option is \$35 permit fee and \$15 canopy fee.**

- **Option 2 - Has protected trees, but this work will in no way cause damage to or the destruction of said trees; I understand such is a direct violation of the provisions of Article V, Section 35-477B(b)(2) or 35-6106.** This selection means you have protected trees or areas of tree canopy that will not be impacted by the location of house or construction area. If you select this option, you will need to submit a notarized Tree Affidavit Application and the following information:
  - **Tree Preservation/Tree Canopy Calculation.** In order to assist you with these calculations, the department recommends you use the [Residential Tree Calculation spreadsheets](#). These spreadsheets provide two options to show you meet the City's requirements as follows:
    - **Tree Stand Delineation Method.** This method is the easiest to use. Using the "[Tree Stand Delineation Method](#)" [Spreadsheet](#), you will need to insert the following information on the spreadsheet:
      - The size of the lot – Step 1 of the spreadsheet
      - The percentage of current canopy coverage – Step 2 of the spreadsheet

- For the shade value of the trees you are planting to meet the tree canopy requirement, the number and location of the two trees – Step 3 of the spreadsheet

Once you enter this information, the spreadsheet will perform all of the calculations to determine if you met the City’s tree preservation/tree canopy requirements (Step 4). If you meet the requirements, simply print the spreadsheet and include it with your notarized Tree Affidavit Application. **You will also need to submit an aerial photograph of the site to verify canopy coverage and whether there are protected trees.**

- **Tree Inventory Method.** The alternative method is to do an inventory of all of the trees on the lot and insert that information on the “Tree Inventory Worksheet.” This worksheet is also provided in the [Residential Tree Calculation spreadsheets](#). This worksheet will indicate whether you meet the tree preservation requirements. If you meet the tree preservation requirements, the next step is to enter the following information on the “Tree Inventory Method” Spreadsheet:
  - The size of the lot – Step 1 of the spreadsheet
  - For the shade value of the trees you are planting to meet the tree canopy requirement, the number and location of the two trees – Step 4 of the spreadsheet

Once you enter all of the information, the spreadsheet will perform all of the calculations to determine whether you meet the City’s tree preservation/tree canopy requirements (Step 5). If you meet the requirements, simply print the spreadsheets and include them with the Tree Affidavit. Note, an aerial photograph is not required if you use the Tree Inventory Method.

- **The fee for this option is \$100 tree review fee, \$35 tree permit fee, and \$15 canopy fee.**

- **Tree Permit Application**

- **Option 1 - Is exempt from the Tree Preservation Ordinance.** If you select this option, you will need to submit: (a) Rights Determination Number, (b) Rights Validation Fee of \$35 and (c) aerial photograph of the site. Thereafter, staff will validate your rights. If your rights are not recognized, you will need to submit a new, notarized tree affidavit or tree permit application and comply with the current ordinance by choosing Option 1 or 2 on the appropriate applications.

- **Option 2 - Has protected, significant, heritage or historic trees that will be removed.** This option means protected trees or tree canopy will be removed. Please note you will need to preserve a minimum of 35% of protected trees and tree canopy coverage. All heritage trees must be preserved at 100%. If you select this option, you will need to submit:

- **Tree Preservation/Tree Canopy Calculation.** In order to assist you with these calculations, the department recommends you use the [Residential Tree Calculation spreadsheets](#). These spreadsheets provide two options to show you meet the City’s requirements as follows:

- **Tree Stand Delineation Method.** This method is the easiest to use. Using the “Tree Stand Delineation Method” Spreadsheet, you will need to insert the following information on the spreadsheet:
  - The size of the lot – Step 1 of the spreadsheet
  - The percentage of current canopy coverage to be preserved. – Step 2 of the spreadsheet. Tree Preservation needs to be at least 35%. If you are unable to meet the 35% preservation requirement, then additional action is required as follows:

Percent Preserved	Additional Requirements
20-35%	Submit a Tree Mitigation Plan. Mitigation options include: plant additional trees (min 1.5 inch caliper tree from <a href="#">Appendix E</a> ), preserve undersize/unprotected tree, and/or pay into tree mitigation funds. You can call Development Services at (210) 207-8297 to discuss your mitigation options for tree preservation
Under 20%	Need to apply for an <a href="#">administrative exception</a>

Heritage trees must be preserved at 100%. If you are removing heritage trees, you will need to submit a Tree Mitigation Plan.

- For the shade value of the trees you are planting to meet the tree canopy requirement, the number and location of the two trees – Step 3 of the spreadsheet

Once you enter this information, the spreadsheet will perform all of the calculations to determine if you met the City’s tree preservation/tree canopy requirements (Step 4). If you meet the requirements, simply print the spreadsheet and include it with your Tree Affidavit. **You will also need to submit an aerial photograph of the site to verify canopy coverage. If heritage trees on-site are to be removed, indicate the approximate location of the heritage trees on the aerial photograph.** Also submit a site plan.

- **Tree Inventory Method.** The alternative method is to do an inventory of all of the trees on the lot and insert that information on the “Tree Inventory Worksheet.” This worksheet is also provided in the [Residential Tree Calculation spreadsheets](#). This worksheet will indicate whether you meet the tree preservation requirements. If you meet the tree preservation requirements, the next step is to enter the following information on the “Tree Inventory Method” Spreadsheet:
  - The size of the lot – Step 1 of the spreadsheet
  - For the shade value of the trees you are planting to meet the tree canopy requirement, the number and location of the two trees – Step 4 of the spreadsheet

Once you enter all of the information, the spreadsheet will perform all of the calculations to determine whether you meet the City’s tree preservation/tree canopy requirements (Step 5). If you meet the requirements, simply print the spreadsheets and include them with the Tree Affidavit. Note, an aerial photograph is not required if you use the Tree Inventory Method. However, please submit a site plan with a tree survey showing location, species and size in diameter of each significant, heritage and mitigation tree in accordance with Section 35-B123, of the UDC. This section of the UDC specifically requires the following information:

**The Tree Survey.** *The tree survey shall, at a minimum, provide the following:*

*A vicinity map, project name, street address (or plat #, parcel #, or legal description), date, scale, north arrow and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the person(s) preparing the plan;*

*A current aerial photograph (a minimum resolution of six-inch pixels) with an overlay of the development, an outline of the tree area(s) and the tree area(s) and understory that are to be preserved to meet the requirement standards;*

*The location of property lines, existing grades and proposed grades, location and width of existing and proposed streets and alleys, utility easements, driveways, parkways, and sidewalks on or adjacent to the project;*

*Approximate centerlines of existing watercourses and the location of the 100-year floodplain; approximate location of significant drainage features and any major topographical features;*

*The location and dimensions of all staging areas and/or designated parking areas for the parking and maintenance of all vehicles, trailers, construction equipment, and related items as well as stockpile areas for the storage of construction supplies and materials;*

*The location of all improvements and their proximity to significant or heritage trees; and*

*Location, size, and species of all heritage trees.*

Tree Preservation/Tree Canopy Calculation using the [Tree Inventory Method](#).

- Tree Mitigation Plan is required if tree preservation is below the minimum 35% preservation or if you are removing a heritage tree. Mitigation options include: plant additional trees (min 1.5 inch caliper tree from [Appendix E](#)), preserve undersize/unprotected tree, pay into tree mitigation funds. You can call Development Services at (210) 207-8297 to discuss your mitigation options for tree preservation.
- **The fee for this option is \$100 tree review fee, \$35 tree permit fee, and \$15 canopy fee.**

Please note, [IB 105 – Plumbing Permits Issued Prior to Residential Building Permits](#) allows certain plumbing work to be installed, completed, and inspected during the building permit processing review time frame. However, the plumbing work may begin only after the tree review and been completed and documented in the City Hansen Land Development Software system. The department performs quality control tree inspections to ensure work is not being performed without the required tree review or tree permit. Failure to obtain the proper tree review could result in a penalty fee (minimum fine of \$2000).

In addition, the number and location of trees that you are required to plant will be noted on the building permit for validation by the building inspector during the final inspection.

In the event you are unable to meet the tree preservation or tree canopy requirements, please contact the City Arborist at (210) 207-0278 to discuss a waiver.

### **Summary:**

This Information Bulletin is for informational purposes only.

**Prepared by:** Mark C Bird, City Arborist  
**Reviewed by:** Pablo Martinez, PE, Development Services Engineer  
**Authorized by:** John Jacks, Assistant Director, Land Development

## Attachment 1 – Tree Definitions

**Protected Tree Designations.** The significant or heritage tree designations establish a threshold trunk size, measured in diameter at breast height (DBH), for various tree species. A significant or heritage tree is defined by DBH as set forth below.

- **Significant Trees.** A significant tree means a tree of six (6) inches or greater DBH for all tree species except the following species are significant with at least one (1) trunk being equal or greater than the respective size (DBH):

- Ashe Juniper (*Juniperus ashei*) - ten (10) inch DBH
- Huisache (*Acacia farnesiana*) - ten (10) inch DBH
- Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) - ten (10) inch DBH
- Arizona Ash (*Fraxinus Velutina*) - ten (10) inch DBH
- Hackberry (*Celtis spp.*) - ten (10) inch DBH
- Texas persimmon (*Diospyros texana*) - five (5) inch DBH
- Texas redbud (var. *texensis*) - five (5) inch DBH
- Texas Mountain laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*) - five (5) inch DBH
- Condalia (*Condalia hookeri*) - five (5) inch DBH
- Possum haw (*Ilex decidua* - in floodplain only) - five (5) inch DBH
- Hawthorne (*crataegus texana*) - five (5) inch

- **Heritage Trees.** A heritage tree means a tree of twenty-four (24) inches or greater DBH for all tree species except the following species are heritage with at least one (1) trunk being twelve (12) inches or greater DBH (the value of the twelve (12) inches or greater trunk is the value given to these small tree species):

- Texas persimmon (*Diospyros texana*)
- Texas redbud (var. *texensis*)
- Texas Mountain laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*)
- Condalia (*Condalia hookeri*)
- Possum haw (*Ilex decidua* - in floodplain only)
- Hawthorne (*crataegus texana*).

- **Non-native Trees.** Non-native invasive tree species are not protected and will be omitted from the tree survey. Non-native invasive tree species means the following tree species:

- Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*)
- Chinaberry (*Melia azedarach*)
- Chinese Tallow (*Sapium sebiferum*)
- Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)
- Salt Cedar (*Tamerix* species)
- Japanese Ligustrum (*Ligustrum japonicum*)