



COBI Tree Removal Regulations

Determining tree regulation applicability by zone

The City of Bainbridge Island has an extensive tree code with numerous overlapping regulations. These regulations may be complex and are spread out over several sections of code that can be difficult to navigate. The table below illustrates the overlapping applicability of these regulations for each zone of Bainbridge Island. This resource is intended to be used in conjunction with the Bainbridge Island Municipal Code (BIMC) and the Shoreline Master Program (SMP).

A green cell indicates that the regulation applies to the corresponding zone. To determine your property’s zone, open the [COBI Critical Areas GIS Map](#), search your address in the search bar on the top left of the screen, and scroll down to “Zoning” at the bottom of the pop-up.

BIMC	16.18	16.18	18.15.010.G	16.20/SMP	16.20.100	16.32	N/A
Regulations	3/6 Significant Trees Every 3 Years	Any Tree Over 8” DSH	Tree Units	Critical Areas and/or Shoreline	Aquafer Recharge Protection Area (ARPA)	Landmark Trees	KC Plat
R-0.4	Green	White	White	Green	Green	White	Green
R-1	Green	White	White	Green	Green	White	Green
R-2	Green	White	White	Green	Green	White	Green
R-2.9	Green	White	Green	Green	White	Green	Green
R-3.5	Green	White	Green	Green	White	Green	Green
R-4.3	Green	White	Green	Green	White	Green	Green
R-5	Green	White	Green	Green	White	Green	Green
R-6	White	White	White	Green	White	Green	Green
R-8	Green	White	Green	Green	White	Green	Green
R-14	Green	White	Green	Green	White	Green	Green
MUTC-CORE	White	Green	White	Green	White	Green	Green
FTD	White	Green	White	Green	White	Green	Green
MUTC-ERIK	White	Green	White	Green	White	Green	Green
MAD	White	Green	White	Green	White	Green	Green
GATE	White	Green	White	Green	White	Green	Green
HSR I	White	Green	White	Green	White	Green	Green
HSR II	White	Green	White	Green	White	Green	Green
B/I	Green	White	White	Green	White	Green	Green
WDI	Green	White	White	Green	White	Green	Green

*This table applies to developed residential properties only. Please consult with the City Arborist and BIMC for guidance on undeveloped and non-residential parcels.

A few guidelines to ensure code compliance:

1. Per BIMC 16.18.130. - “Significant tree” means: (1) a live evergreen tree 10 inches in diameter or greater, measured four and one-half feet above existing grade; or (2) a live deciduous tree 12 inches in diameter or greater, measured four and one-half feet above existing grade; or (3) in the Mixed Use Town Center and High School Road zoning districts, any live tree eight inches in diameter or greater, measured four and one-half feet above existing grade; or (4) any live trees located within a required critical area or critical area buffer as defined in Chapter [16.20](#) BIMC.
2. Calculating DSH: To calculate a tree’s diameter at standard height (DSH), start by measuring 4 feet 6 inches from the ground up the tree’s trunk. This is the “standard height.” At this height, measure the circumference of the tree’s trunk in inches. Divide this circumference by 3.14 to get the DSH.
3. Check the [COBI Critical Areas GIS Map](#) frequently as the buffers around wetlands and streams can change as the hydrology and quality of these areas shift. Additionally, department policies and city code may evolve over time.
4. On-site conditions and/or professional reports generally take precedence over what is depicted on COBI GIS maps. Critical areas could exist on the site and not be shown accurately on the map. If unsure about the presence of critical areas on the property, consult with a qualified professional before starting work.
5. If unsure about which regulations apply to your project, please feel free to reach out to the City Arborist to confirm permitting requirements.

Regulations Explained

3/6 Significant Trees Every 3 Years

Removal of significant trees may be allowed without a permit; however, this allowance doesn’t apply to significant trees required to meet any other overlapping tree retention provisions illustrated in the above chart (Tree Units, Critical Areas, ARPAs, Landmark, & PLAT).

In applicable cases on lots that are larger than one acre, a property owner may remove up to six significant trees in any 36-month period without a permit. On a lot one acre or less in size, a property owner may remove up to three significant trees in any 36-month period without a permit.

Before removing trees under this allowance, please reach out to the City Arborist to confirm that it applies to your project. If so, you may request a confirmation email that affirms your project’s compliance with BIMC. Proposed tree removal beyond this allowance requires a [TRVM permit](#). See [BIMC 16.18.040.B](#) for more details.

Any Tree Over 8" DSH

Removal of any tree measuring eight inches DSH or greater from an applicable zone requires a [TRVM permit](#). The applicant must demonstrate that the requested removal meets one of the following criteria:

1. The tree is dead, or determined to be hazardous, as certified by an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Tree Risk Assessment Qualified (TRAQ) arborist; or
2. The removal is necessary to allow reasonable use or enable permitted construction, and no alternative is feasible; or
3. The removal is necessary to maintain utilities, provide access, or fulfill the terms of an easement or covenant recorded prior to the adoption of the ordinance codified in this chapter.

See [BIMC 16.18.050.B](#) for more details.

Tree Units

Properties within the applicable zones often require a minimum number of "tree units" (TUs) to be retained on site. A [TRVM permit](#) is required if a proposed tree removal would bring the lot below the minimum required number of TUs to be retained. See [BIMC 18.15.010.G](#) and the Tree Unit Guide (coming soon) for more information on how to calculate your property's tree units.

Critical Areas / Shoreline

Properties in all zones have considerations for critical areas and shorelines when present. The known location of these areas can be found using the [COBI Critical Areas GIS Map](#) or by contacting City staff. The following layers should be applied:

- Wetlands
- Wetland Buffer
- Streams
- Stream Buffers
- Liquefaction Areas
- Erosion Hazard Areas
- USGS mapped landslides
- Steep Slope Analysis (slopes >40% shown in red)
- Shoreline designations

Note: Steep slopes have a vegetation setback of 25' included at the top of the slope. This isn't indicated on the map but should be considered.

Removal of significant trees from any of these areas requires either a [CAP-TRVM permit](#) or a [SCLR permit](#). Keep in mind that live trees of all sizes are considered significant trees when located within a required critical area or critical area buffer. See [BIMC 16.20.090](#) and the [Shoreline Master Program \(SMP\)](#) for more details.

ARPA

Properties zoned R-0.4, R-1, or R-2 may have an Aquifer Recharge Protection Area (ARPA) titled on the property following development or redevelopment activities that have occurred since enacted in 2018. A [CAP-TRVM permit](#) is required for removal of significant trees from within an ARPA. See [BIMC 16.20.100](#) for more details.

Landmark Trees

The landmark tree ordinance applies to all zones except R-0.4, R-1, and R-2. An [LMT permit](#) is required to remove any landmark tree and may require mitigation depending on the reason for removal. See [BIMC 16.32](#) for more details.

Kitsap County (KC) Plat

There may be additional regulations conditioned to properties that have a recorded plat such as required vegetation buffers, natural areas, and open spaces. Records of plats and other documents pertaining to management of a specific parcel can be located on the [Kitsap County Auditor's website](#) or by working with City Staff. It's also advised to check with your HOA on any neighborhood considerations that aren't reflected on the plat.

City Arborist:

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