



# CITY OF ELLENSBURG

Public Works & Utilities Department  
501 N. Anderson Street; Ellensburg, WA 98926  
Ph: (509) 962-7230

## Street Tree Removal Process

The following is a description of the process for removing a tree that is **in the public right of way** of the City of Ellensburg. Tree removals on public or private property in Critical Areas shall comply with City Code for Critical Areas.

City staff will look at the tree to determine if the tree is in the right of way. Contact Erin McGowan, at (509) 962-7237 or email [mcgowane@ci.ellensburg.wa.us](mailto:mcgowane@ci.ellensburg.wa.us)

If a removal requires the use of the City right of way, whether on the right of way or on private property, a **Public Works Permit** may be required, to ensure the safety of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on the right of way, and protect against damage to City streets or infrastructure. Contact utility providers if overhead wires are necessary to be moved to provide safe removal of the tree.

If the tree **is** in the right of way:

- Hazardous trees: If the City Arborist determines that the tree is an **immediate hazard** to pedestrians or vehicles, the City **may** remove the tree at no cost to the owner. Hazardous trees may include storm-damaged trees, trees exhibiting signs of extensive decay and/or dead or dying branches, major open splits in the trunk, etc.
- If the tree is not an immediate hazard, but the applicant desires it to be removed for aesthetic, building construction, a new driveway access to the site or other considerations, including trees exhibiting signs of moderate decay and/or dead or dying branches, permission to remove the tree requires the permission of the City Council. **Dead** trees do not need City Council permission for removal.

The owner of the property needs to write a letter to the City Arborist requesting permission to remove the tree, and fill out a no cost **Street Tree Permit** for the tree removal. Please include a telephone number and/or email in the letter. The tree removal contractor may need a Public Works Permit, as noted above.

The City Arborist will provide the City Council information and comments regarding the tree(s) and a **recommendation**. The Council makes the **decision** on removal, and any conditions associated with the removal. The Council meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of the month; the letter requesting removal must be received **at least 12 days** preceding the Council meeting.

Per City Code:

*A written application for removal of a street or park tree shall specify and demonstrate the following:*

- a) That said tree or trees for which removal is requested has an adverse economic impact upon the private property; or*
- b) Said tree or trees present a practical difficulty, other than such adverse economic impact, creating substantial hardship for the affected property owner; or*
- c) That the tree is unhealthy.*

**Removal of the tree stump** is also required, either by stump grinding or digging it out.

The owner will need to **plant a replacement tree** in the right of way within 12 months, to replace the tree that was removed. If there is insufficient space in the right of way, or the owner does not want a tree at the same property of the removal site, the owner may pay into the street tree replacement fund (\$400 for 1 tree, \$200 each thereafter). Replacement street tree size is a 1 ½" to 2" diameter tree.

A **cash bond** (\$400 for 1 tree, \$200 each thereafter) is required to assure compliance of the street tree replacement.

A second no-cost **Street Tree Permit** is required prior to replanting the street tree. The Street Tree permits can be combined if the replanting will occur within a month after the tree removal.

The Street Tree ordinances may be found online at <http://www.codepublishing.com/wa/ellensburg/> , in Title 4.