

Administrative Memorandum

TO: Dan Carmody, Justin Horn

FROM: Jeff Ryan, Director of Community Development & Planning

DATE: 4.10.2026

SUBJECT: Updated Street Tree List and Street Tree Removal Policy

This memorandum documents an administrative interpretation of the Mill Creek Municipal Code (MCMC) on when maintenance of street trees in the public right-of-way qualifies as a minor modification for the purposes of MCMC 17.34.020(C)(3).

Under MCMC 12.04, public right-of-way work requires a permit and City standards compliance. MCMC 12.06.060 requires abutting property owners to maintain landscaping per approved plans. While MCMC 17.34.020 requires Design Review Board (DRB) review of streetscape landscaping, it also delegates staff authority to administratively approve minor modifications to items which were previously approved by the DRB.

Administrative Interpretation of "Minor Modification". Maintenance of street trees qualifies as minor modification and does not require DRB review in the following circumstances:

1. **Same-Species Replacement:** Replacing a street tree with the same species in a similar location, maintaining similar spacing, size, and planting specifications per the approved plan.
2. **Approved Species Substitution:** Replacing with a species from the updated 2026 Street Tree List (published separately), while maintaining similar location, spacing, size, and specifications consistent with the approved plan. This supports one-for-one replacements without altering the original DRB-approved design intent.

Replacements Requiring Review. Replacements beyond the above scope require DRB review including:

- Installation of non-approved species
- Significant changes to spacing, quantity, or planting location
- Changes to canopy form or mature height.

Emergency Removals. For immediate hazards (e.g., sidewalk heaving or safety risks), removal may proceed via right-of-way permit. Replanting must follow the maintenance standards outlined above.

Street Tree List Update. Following substantive review of peer city policies and implementation practices, the City of Mill Creek has updated its Street Tree List, replacing the 2013 version. See the separately published [2026 Street Tree List](#) for acceptable species by planting area.

Effective Date. This administrative interpretation is effective immediately.

Applicants seeking species changes outside this interpretation may await forthcoming tree/landscaping code updates or apply for DRB approval.

Signed,



Jeff Ryan
Director of Community Development & Planning
City of Mill Creek

CC
Laurel Brock, Deputy City Manager
Mike Todd, Director of Public Works
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