



TO: Vienna Construction Industry
FROM: Scott Diffenderfer, Urban Arborist
DATE: June 14, 2022
SUBJECT: Tree Preservation and Canopy Coverage

There is some confusion with the canopy coverage calculation for infill projects. Essentially, only trees that are 100% on the site where work is occurring are permitted for use as canopy coverage credit. If a co-owned tree is to be considered for canopy credit, then the Urban Arborist needs to give approval for that. Offsite trees are not permitted for calculation.

Where shared property lines bisect dense forest stands and it is not practical or feasible to determine which property the canopy originates from, the extent of on-site canopy areas may be defined by the shared property line.

Several comments in IDT stated that this differs with the April 14 meeting and that there are no other jurisdictions that have such a requirement. There was no conversation that indicated prohibition of co-owned for canopy coverage at the 4/14/22 meeting. That was an opinion offered by the participants of the meeting. It is a policy of Vienna to exclude co-owned trees. This is and has been the policy and is the policy for Fairfax County...

FAIRFAX COUNTY 12-0310.2 - Tree canopy credit is given only to trees with main trunks located on the site being developed. However, trees with trunks that are bisected by the development site's outer property line may contribute canopy credits if it is reasonable to assume that these jointly owned trees will survive for a minimum of 10 years after plan approval. In these cases, jointly owned trees may only contribute canopy credit for that portion of their canopies that directly overhang the development site.

And like Fairfax County, I do (and have) meet with contractors when there is a co-owned tree that they want to preserve and utilize for canopy coverage credit. We receive many plans that do not use co-owned trees in the calculations but when we do receive plans using them, they will no longer be approved unless the Urban Arborist approves the use of the tree(s). If you want to use a co-owned tree for canopy coverage credit, please reach out to the TOV Urban Arborist prior to plan submission.

Another issue concerns final landscape work for lawn and/or sod installation. As per the Tree Protection Standards (section 4 - 10) in the *Tree Preservation and Planting Guide* (2/21 update) ...

4. No clearing or grading shall begin in areas where tree preservation measures have not been completed.
5. The use of heavy equipment is strictly prohibited within tree preservation areas, including for the purpose of removing unwanted trees, structures, pads, grading, sodding, etc. Any structure within the tree preservation area shall be removed by hand.
6. The sequence for tree preservation measures, if required, shall be in this order: root pruning, tree protection fencing, tree pruning and chemical treatment, aeration systems installed. These measures shall be directed in the field by the construction supervisor.
7. Tree protection fencing shall be maintained by the contractor through duration of construction. No alteration shall occur without prior approval by a Town representative.
8. For approval of the Certificate of Occupancy, preserved trees should be mulched in a way that covers the entire CRZ as defined by the Tree Preservation Plan.
9. Critical root zone shall be defined as 1.5' radius per 1" of DBH (diameter at breast height), which shall be measured at a height of 4.5' from highest point of ground at base of trunk.
10. For a tree to count for canopy coverage credits, no more than 30% of the respective tree's critical root zone shall be impacted by construction activities including but not limited to: trenching, grading, digging, cutting, filling, etc. If plans indicate the 30% limit will be exceeded, contact the TOV Urban Arborist for review if you wish to use this area for CRZ calculations.
11. Protection provided shall consist of fencing around the tree to the drip line, and enclosed areas shall be kept free of all soil, equipment, and construction material storage, which includes final grading and landscaping efforts

There have been instances when preserved TPZ's were graded with skid steers and similar equipment, landscape equipment and staging of landscape materials occurred in areas that were delineated as part of the tree protection zone. Once the fencing is removed, I've seen contractors go into these areas to do final landscape planting and grading.



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In tree protection zones, once the fencing is removed, install organic mulch (wood chips or shredded wood mulch is ok. Dyed or colored mulch, mulch from construction waste, inorganic materials, straw, grass, or other products are not permitted.

If these CRZ's are to be covered by turf (not recommended but if this is the desire of the owner it is permitted), please prepare the soil bed in the CRZ by hand, seeding these areas is preferable to sodding but is at the owner's discretion.

Thank you and please reach out to me if there are any questions.

Scott Diffenderfer, Town of Vienna Urban Arborist

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Diffenderfer". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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