



County of Ventura Tree Protection Ordinance Submittal Requirements for Tree Permits & Authorizations in the Non-Coastal Zone

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division

800 S. Victoria Ave., Ventura, CA 93009 • (805)654-2488 • plan.counter@venturacounty.gov

<https://rma.venturacounty.gov/divisions/planning/tree-permits-and-the-tree-protection-ordinance/>

Oak, sycamore and other trees above a certain size in the non-coastal zone are subject to the requirements of the Ventura County Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO) of the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance (NCZO). Approval to remove or alter a protected tree will only be granted under the circumstances outlined in the TPO. If minor pruning can solve a compatibility problem, then tree removal will generally not be approved. *Protected trees may not be removed for aesthetic or view reasons.* Table 1 below lists the types and sizes of trees subject to the TPO, and Figure 1 below illustrates how to measure the size (girth) of a protected tree.

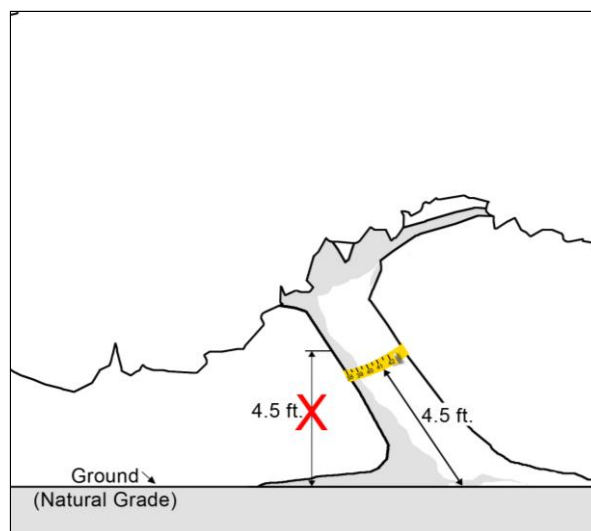
**Figure 1:
Measuring the Size of a Protected**

Table 1: Protected Trees

Species/Type	Girth (min.)	Zones
Oak (Quercus) (single-trunk)	9.50"	All
Oak (multiple-trunk)	6.25"	All
Sycamore (Platanus)	9.50"	All
Heritage (any species)	90" single-trunk 72" multiple-trunk	All
Historical* (any species)	Any	All
Natives: Alder, Ash, Bay, Cottonwood, Elderberry, Big Cone Douglas Fir, White Fir, Juniper, Maple, Pine, Walnut	9.50"	Scenic Resource Protection (SRP)**

*Historical Tree - Identified as of historical or cultural significance.

** See the [Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance](#) for the SRP Zone locations (generally around lakes).



Girth is the circumference of the trunk, generally measured at 4.5 feet above the ground. If the trunk is at an angle, the distance above the ground is measured along the trunk's centerline.

Other than minor pruning (as described in Table 2 below), the removal, alteration or encroachment into the tree protection zone (TPZ) of a protected tree requires the approval of the County of Ventura Planning Division. Depending on the type and extent of the effects on a protected tree(s), one of the following three approval forms is required:

1. **Authorization Letter:** This form of approval can be obtained for emergencies, pruning for the health of a tree, removal of a dead tree or minor clearing of trees for agricultural purposes.
2. **Ministerial Tree Permit:** A ministerial tree permit is required for the removal or alteration of a protected tree for various purposes including the avoidance of damage to existing structures and utility lines, agricultural clearing, and to allow reasonable use of property. The *Ministerial Tree Permit Application* provides more information on how to apply for the permit.
3. **Discretionary Tree Permit:** A discretionary permit is required for the removal or alteration of a heritage or historical tree, tree removal for timber production not regulated by the Forest Practices

Act, and the clearing of trees for reasonable use of property or agricultural purposes more extensive than allowed under a ministerial tree permit. If a tree removal or alteration requires a discretionary permit, the Planning Division's standard *Discretionary Permit Application* is used.

Table 2 below lists which of the County approvals outlined above are required for various tree alteration activities. This table also outlines the application submittal requirements for each of these approvals.

If you have questions about the requirements of the TPO, contact the Planning Division at (805) 654-2488 or email plan.counter@ventura.org. Additional information may be found on the Planning Division's website at <https://rma.venturacounty.gov/divisions/planning/tree-permits-and-the-tree-protection-ordinance/>.

Table 2: Submittal Requirements for Tree Permits & Authorizations

No Approval Required (Minor Pruning)	
To prune dead limbs or roots; to prune living limbs or roots, each less than 20% of the trunk's girth, and less than 20% of the tree's overall canopy or root system; to prune by public agencies for safety purposes; or Fire Dept. pruning (not removing) for fire brush clearance).	→ No submittal requirements, however, it is a violation of the ordinance to undertake these activities in a manner that does not adhere to International Society of Arboriculture standards (ISA) .
Authorization Letter (no fee)*	
<input type="checkbox"/> For emergencies . (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.5(a))	→ 1. Proof of emergency
<input type="checkbox"/> To prune individual limbs or roots > 20% of trunk's girth or > 20% of tree's overall canopy/roots (per growing season) for health of tree . (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.5(d))	→ 1. Arborist Verification for Major Pruning (Tree Form M2)
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove a dead tree . (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.5(l))	→ 1. Arborist Verification of Dead Tree (Tree Form M1) (Photos of tree may be submitted in lieu of Arborist Verification if they clearly show that the tree is dead.)
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove < 6 trees per year for agriculture ; no heritage or historical trees. (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.5(k))	→ 1. Approved Farm Plan for new or expanding operation
Ministerial Permit	
	→ General requirements for most ministerial tree permits: 1. Ministerial tree permit application (Tree Doc M) 2. Site Sketch (no construction involved) or Site Plan (if involves new/expanding development) 3. Application fee (check the fee schedule for latest fees) 4. Color photos of tree 5. Arborist Verification of Tree Protection Measures (Tree Form M5), if applicable
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove or alter a hazardous tree , or a tree whose roots or limbs interfere with existing structures or trees . (Sec. 8107-25.6(a))	→ 1. Above general requirements, plus: 2. Arborist Verification of Hazardous or Conflicting Tree (Tree Form M3), Contractor Verification, or photos
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove, alter or encroach into the TPZ of a tree that interferes with public utilities, public safety (i.e., at parks, traffic visibility, per Fire Dept.), or emergency vehicles . Includes fire brush clearance tree removal. (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.6(b),(c) & (f))	→ 1. Above general requirements, plus: 2. Arborist Verification of Tree Status (Tree Form M4)
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove, alter or encroach into the TPZ of a tree for improvements within flood control or other public utility/road right of way . (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.6(e))	→ 1. Above general requirements, plus: 2. Arborist Verification of Tree Status (Tree Form M4)

<input type="checkbox"/> To remove an Introduced Protected Tree on private property. (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.6(k))	→ 1. Above general requirements, plus: 2. Proof that tree was “introduced” (planted by a person)
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove, alter or encroach into the TPZ of a tree that interferes with existing private sewer line . (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.6(d))	→ 1. Above general requirements, plus: 2. Contractor Verification (plumber) 3. Arborist Verification of Conflicting Tree (Tree Form M3), may be required
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove, alter or encroach into the TPZ of a tree to allow for reasonable use of property . Applies to pruning for utilities on private property. No more than 5 trees (cumulatively) may be altered or encroached upon; only 3 may be oaks or sycamores; no historical or heritage trees. (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.6(i))	→ 1. Above general requirements, plus: 2. Arborist Verification of Tree Status (Tree Form M4)
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove 6 to 25 trees in 12 months for agriculture ; no historical trees. (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.6(g) & (h))	→ 1. Above general requirements, plus: 2. Approved Farm Plan for new or expanding operation

Discretionary Permits

General requirements for all discretionary Tree Permits:

1. \$750 application deposit (if not part of another discretionary permit request)
2. Arborist Report ([Tree Doc D-AR](#))

<input type="checkbox"/> To remove, alter or encroach into the TPZ of a heritage or historical tree . (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.7(a))	→ 1. Above general requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove, alter or encroach into the TPZ of 6+ trees or 4+ oaks or sycamores (cumulatively) to allow for reasonable use of property . (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.7(b) & (c))	→ 1. Above general requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove, alter or encroach into the TPZ of trees to further agriculture (beyond the Ministerial Tree Permit limits). (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.7(d))	→ 1. Above general requirements, plus: 2. Approved Farm Plan for new or expanding operation 3. Proof that the agriculture is consistent with accepted customs and standards
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove, alter or encroach into the TPZ of trees to further timber production , if not regulated by the CA Forest Practices Act. (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.7(e))	→ 1. Above general requirements, plus: 2. Approved Forest Resource Management (FRM) Plan 3. Proof that the timber harvesting activities are consistent with accepted customs and standards
<input type="checkbox"/> To remove, alter or encroach into the TPZ of trees to further the public good . (NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.7(f))	→ 1. Above general requirements.

TPZ = Tree Protection Zone (see Figure 2 below)

* Only those categories in NCZO, Sec. 8107-25.5 are listed that require documentation.

Explanation of Submittal Requirements

Provided below are detailed explanations of the requested forms, and the content requirements of the major informational items identified in Table 2. Alternate documentation may be accepted to address some circumstances if deemed adequate by the Planning Director.

▪ Arborists Verifications and Reports

An Arborist Verification or Report is required for most Authorizations and Tree Permits. Guidelines for the preparation of these documents are available online at <https://rma.venturacounty.gov/divisions/planning/tree-permits-and-the-tree-protection-ordinance/>. All required verifications and reports must be prepared by an arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) or a related professional, such as a landscape architect, with qualifying tree-related education, knowledge and experience, as determined by the Planning Director.

Arborist Verifications. An Arborist Verification is required for tree altering activity subject to a Ministerial Tree Permit or an Authorization Letter. Verifications provide simple confirmation from a tree professional, on a form provided by the Planning Division, of basic tree information or site conditions. There are five categories of Arborist Verification, which include:

1. Dead Tree ([Tree Form M1](#))
2. Major Pruning for Tree Health ([Tree Form M2](#))
3. Hazardous or Conflicting Tree ([Tree Form M3](#))
4. Tree Status ([Tree Form M4](#))
5. Tree Protection Measures ([Tree Form M5](#)). Verification that tree protection measures were in place throughout the time of construction may be requested by the Planning Division in documentation through writing or photographs.

Arborist Reports ([Tree Doc D-AR](#)). An Arborist Report is required for tree altering activity subject to a discretionary tree permit. Arborist Reports provide greater detail on the proposed tree alterations and any necessary tree protection measures for remaining protected trees.

- **Contractor Verifications**

Sewer Line. If tree removal or alteration is proposed because a tree interferes with an existing private sewer line, the necessity of the proposed action must be verified by a qualified plumbing contractor, sewer service provider, or other qualified professional, as determined by the Planning Director.

Other Existing Structures. If tree removal or alteration is proposed because a tree interferes with an existing structure (e.g., a sidewalk or house foundation), the necessity of the proposed action must be verified. Photo-documentation may be adequate verification. The Planning Division may require additional verification by a certified arborist or licensed building contractor that the alteration of the tree(s) is necessary to avoid structural damage. Any verification by a contractor/professional must be submitted on the company letterhead. This verification must include the contractor's license number and contact information, as well as the parcel address, description of tree and its location, and description of the nature of the interference or obstruction.

- **Color Photos**

One to four color photos per affected tree or stand are required. Photos should be taken from different vantage points, clearly illustrate the reason for the request, and help locate the tree relative to nearby landmarks or structures. Minimum print size is 4" x 6" photos. Digital files are requested.

- **Proof that a Tree was "Introduced"** (Planted by a Person)

Trees that qualify as protected but which were planted by a person, such as for landscaping, may be removed or altered. Documentation of the planting must be provided, and may be in the form of invoices, photos or other reasonable means. Trees planted as mitigation do not qualify as "introduced."

- **Proof of Emergency**

Evidence of an emergency situation is required either before or after-the-fact (within 30 days). Evidence can be in the form of photos taken of the tree before removal/alteration, testimony from emergency personnel, or other reasonable documentation. Phone calls or emails to the Planning Division in advance are encouraged. A hazardous tree situation is different from an emergency, as clarified below.

Emergency. An emergency is a situation that requires an immediate response for which there is no time to apply for and obtain a tree authorization or permit. An emergency is often determined or

verified by law enforcement, the fire department, or other government authority. No permit is required to remove or alter a tree for an emergency.

Hazardous Tree. The TPO makes a distinction between emergency situations and trees that pose a “significant threat” to people, structures or other trees. The term “hazardous tree” is used for these trees. A hazardous tree has structural defects that are likely to cause failure of all or part of the tree, and if the failure occurs the tree or limbs would likely strike a “target” (such as a building, a backyard or a vehicle). A tree that is causing damage to structures—such as buckling sidewalks—which could result in a hazardous situation, is not considered a hazardous tree (though removing such a tree is generally justified – and requires different documentation). Removing or altering a hazardous tree requires a Ministerial Tree Permit.

- **Farm Plan**

A request to remove trees as part of a new or expanding agricultural operation requires a farm plan which documents the legitimacy of the agricultural operation. Farm Plans will be circulated to the Agricultural Commissioner’s Office for review.

- **Forest Resource Management Plans**

If the removal of trees is proposed as part of a timber harvesting operation, a Forest Resource Management (FRM) Plan is required unless the operation is regulated under the California Forest Practices Act. The FRM must identify and limit harvesting to a sustainable yield of the property.

Site Sketch or Plan

The information on the site sketch or plan shall be reflected in the final approved construction plans including the location of the trees, the required buffer area, and the appropriate protection measures to be in place throughout the time of construction.

Site Sketch: For tree alteration or removal associated with existing development, and part of a Ministerial Tree Permit application request, a simple, legible site sketch is adequate. The site sketch must be drawn roughly to scale on 8.5" x 11" paper. The map should be at a scale of 1" = 30' or larger. (See Figure 3 below.)

Resources: Aerial imagery on Google Maps can be used for rough locations of buildings, trees, etc. The "What's My Zoning" tab at <https://rma.venturacounty.gov/divisions/planning/whats-my-zoning/> can be used to prepare a map of your parcel showing all property lines.

Site Plan: For tree alteration or removal associated with new construction or a discretionary permit request, include a scaled site plan. (See Figure 4 below.)

Indicate the location and dimension of all the following existing and proposed features:

- Property lines.** If the parcel is considerably large, provide a (separate or inset) context map showing all property lines and roads, so that the main site sketch is at a scale that adequately shows the trees and related structures/features.
- Address and Assessor Parcel Number (APN).** Provide the physical address and the APN of the property. (For APNs go to <https://assessor.venturacounty.gov/assessor-data/property-search/>.)
- Public and Private Streets and Easements.** Show the nearest streets, adjacent highways, access to the property and all public or private easements (include street names).
- Buildings and Structures.** Show all existing and proposed buildings and structures.
- Paved Areas.** Driveways and other paved areas within 15 feet of all protected tree trunks. Indicate if paving is pervious or impervious.
- Underground and Aboveground Utilities.** For projects that involve the installation of underground utilities, illustrate the extent of trenching to the point of connection and for projects that involve aboveground utilities, show the location of new wires and poles to the point of connection.
- Equipment Wash Areas.** The location of the equipment wash-off area, if applicable. The wash-off area, including the flow of chemicals, should not be within the TPZ.
- Grade Changes.** Any change in grade within the TPZ of each plotted tree must be indicated.
- Any other relevant features (such as fences) related to the requested permit.

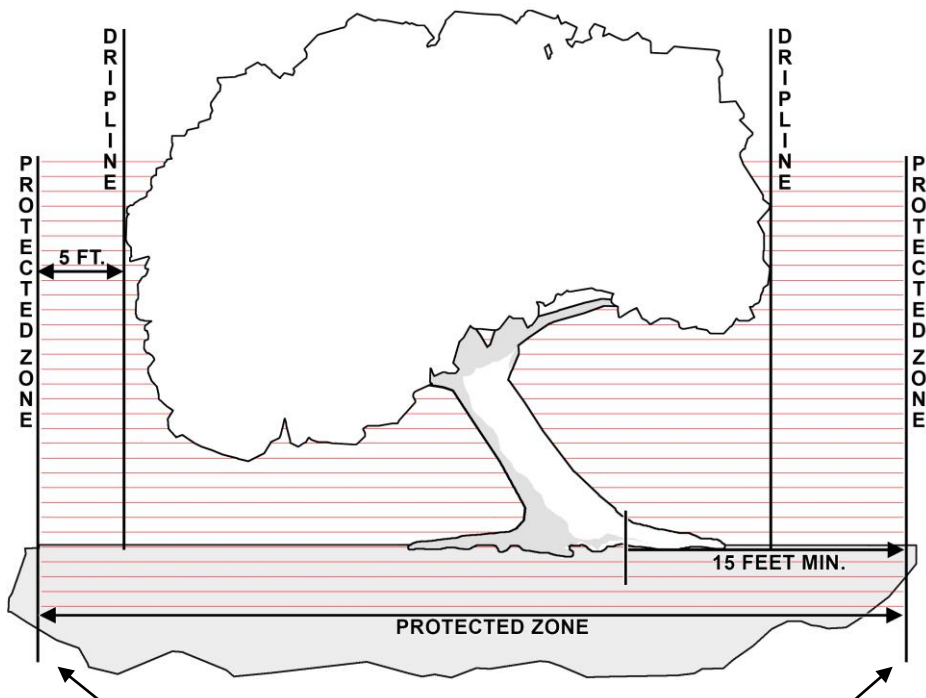
For trees that are part of the application request, provide the following:

- Type and girth of tree.
- Trunk location and approximate outline of tree's dripline.
- Mark trees proposed for removal with an "X".
- Number the trees if more than one.

Other protected trees, provide the following:

- Trunk location and outline of the TPZ of all protected trees, *including trees growing on adjacent parcels*, that have TPZs within 20 feet of: (1) the limits of the construction area of the proposed project or (2) other trees proposed for removal. The TPZ extends out from the trunk to 5 feet beyond the dripline, or a minimum of 15 feet from the trunk – whichever is greater.
- Location of any proposed replacement trees.

Figure 2: The Tree Protection Zone



The Protection Zone extends out from the trunk to 5' beyond the dripline

Or a minimum of 15' from the trunk – **whichever is greater.**

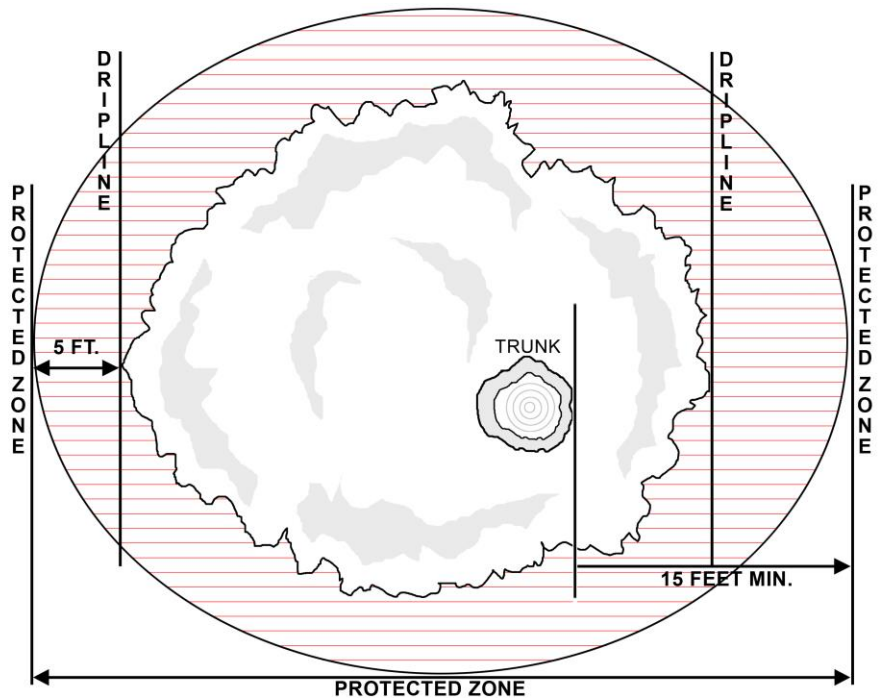
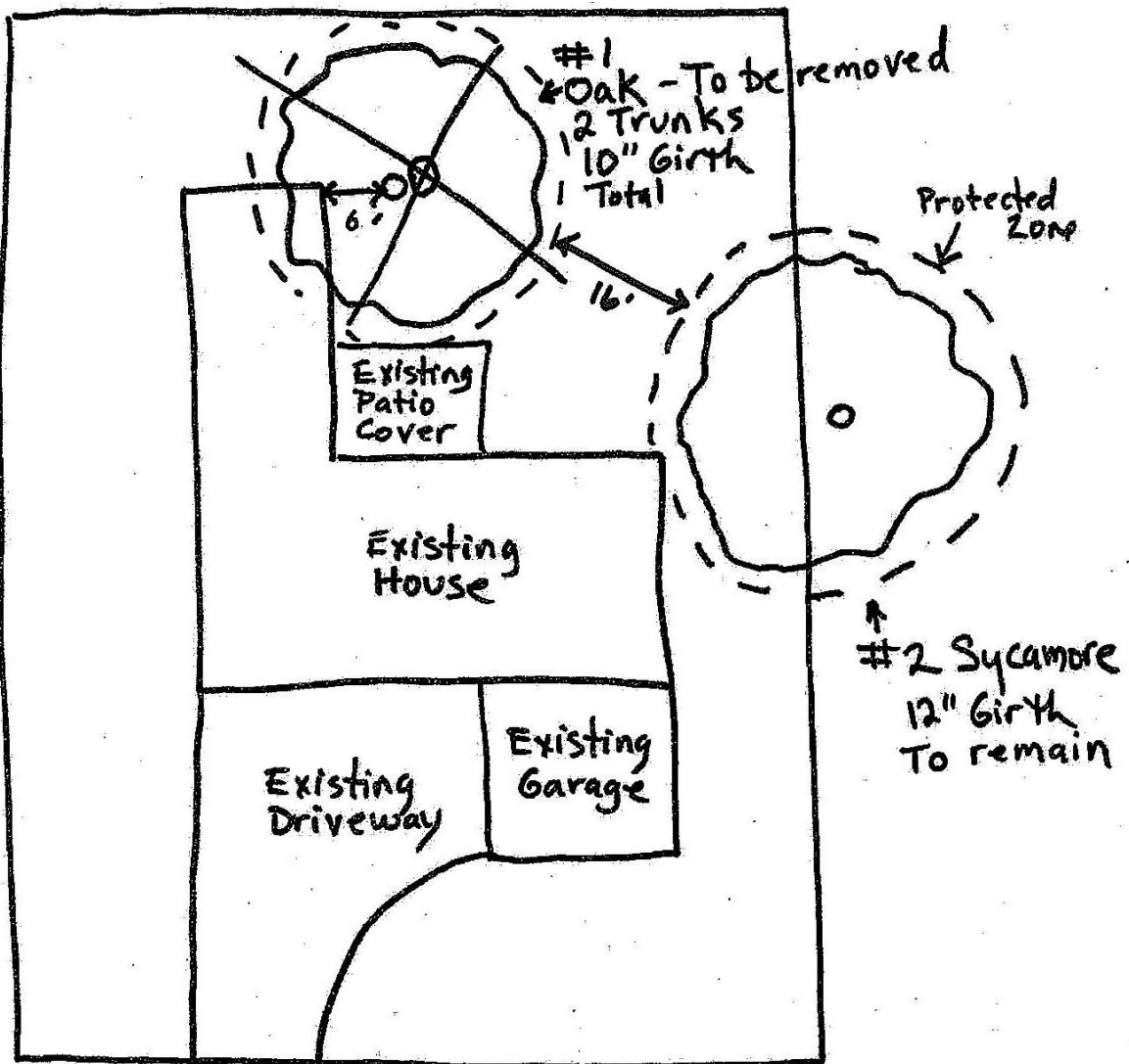


Figure 3: Sample Site Sketch
(no new construction)



Sycamore Drive

APN: 149-0-031-520
Address: 4971 Sycamore Drive

Figure 4: Sample Site Plan
(new construction)

