

# Critical Areas

## Frequently Asked Questions about Trees

**It is best to contact the City before you do any work in an area that may be a critical area.**

### **How do I know if there is a critical area on my property?**

- Look at your property – what do you see?  
Is there a steep slope, a wooded area, a stream or wetland or an area that floods, on or next to, your property?
- Refer to the map on the webpage at: [www.cityofmlt.com/1859/Critical-Areas](http://www.cityofmlt.com/1859/Critical-Areas)
- Contact city staff in the Community & Economic Development Dept., 425.744.6279.

### **What can I do in a critical area?**

- The best is to leave it alone.
- Critical areas are important to protect slopes from erosion or landslide, improve water quality for fish, clean the air and moderate seasonal temperature changes, provide habitat, food, and shelter for animals and plants, and make our environment more livable.

### **Do I need a permit to remove a tree from my property?**

- In general, single-family homeowners do not need a permit to remove a tree. The City does not currently require a separate tree removal permit.
- A clearing and grading permit may be needed if the ground is significantly disturbed by equipment, especially when multiple trees will be removed.
- When the tree(s) is located in a critical area, a preliminary review is likely needed to determine what the next steps are.
- If a contractor is used to do tree removal, they must have a city business license.

### **Can I remove a tree from a critical area?**

- Tree removal is possible but may require extra steps and tree replacement.
- Evaluations are on a case-by-case basis.
- In very sensitive situations, professionals may need to be consulted and make recommendations. Tree evaluation report.

### **What if the tree is dead? Does it matter that it is in a critical area?**

- Any tree, whether alive, dead, damaged or dying, that is considered an immediate danger or hazard to life or property can be removed without review and prior approval – regardless of location.
- When the tree is, or may be, located in a critical area, document the condition of the tree with, for example, pictures. Submit the documentation to the City.
- Young trees of an appropriate species may need to be planted to replace the removed trees' functions.