

Chapter 6

Soil & Vegetation Plans

Soil and Vegetation Plans (SVPs) are required to obtain a tree removal permit for any new land development or redevelopment with the potential to impact soils, understory native vegetation, or trees. Development includes, but is not limited to, subdivisions, new construction, remodels, significant landscaping projects, clearing and grading, and other land disturbances.



“Development” is the division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels; the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation, or enlargement of any structure; any mining, excavation, landfill, clearing or land disturbance; and any use or extension of the use of the land (OMC 16.60.020).

SVPs provide the Urban Forester with critical information about the project, including technical information, site analysis, site development and design drawings, and long-term maintenance plans. This information is needed for the Urban Forester to issue a determination on what soils, understory vegetation, and trees can be removed, where to site a Soil and Vegetation Protection Area (SVPA), and what replacement or mitigation requirements may be required for compliance with OMC 16.60 - Tree, Soil, and Native Vegetation Protection and Replacement.



“Soil and Vegetation Protection Areas (SVPAs)” are separate tracts of land, which may or may not be deeded as such, specifically set aside for the preservation of healthy soil and the preservation or planting of existing and/or native vegetation, including trees.

There are six levels of SVPs; the scale of the project and the size and quantity of trees proposed for removal, preservation, and planting determines which Level SVP is required. For example, homeowners requesting to remove trees, and whose property will subsequently drop below the required minimum tree density, may complete a Level I (1) SVP with little or no professional assistance. A new commercial development project with significant impacts to existing soils, native vegetation, and trees will be required to hire a qualified professional forester to produce a Level V (5) SVP.



A “qualified professional forester” is a professional with academic and field experience that makes them an expert in urban forestry...A professional forester must possess the ability to evaluate the health and hazard potential of existing trees in an urban environment, and the ability to prescribe appropriate measures necessary for the preservation of trees during land development and management of those trees thereafter (OMC 16.60.020).

6.1 General Plan Requirements

Required elements for each of the five SVPs are listed below. The Urban Forester may waive detailed plan requirements or the requirement for the assistance of a professional forester if the information submitted is sufficient to determine compliance with Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) Chapter 16.60. The Urban Forester may also require additional detailed information as deemed necessary to ensure compliance or attach conditions on the project approval to ensure the long-term health and survival of trees and understory vegetation pursuant to protection, planting, and maintenance standards established in this manual.

6.1.1 Tree, Soil, and Native Vegetation Report

The information and analysis in the Tree, Soil, and Native Vegetation Report (Report) is essential to the design of the Site Map, and must be prepared by a qualified professional forester (except a Level I SVP, for which the assistance of a professional forester may not be required). While the level of detail may vary depending on the size and complexity of a project site, a Report is generally comprised of the following elements:

Project Narrative and Existing Conditions. The project narrative outlines the scope and desired outcome for the proposed improvements. The Existing Conditions elements of the Report describe existing natural and developed site conditions. This may include, but is not limited to, existing property lines, impervious surfaces, buildings, soil types, trees, associated understory vegetation, invasive species, and trees on adjacent properties that may be adversely impacted by the proposed development.

Tree Density Calculations. Tree density calculations demonstrate the project parcel's minimum required tree density and how that figure will be met or exceeded through the preservation and protection of existing trees, planting of new trees, or a combination of both. See Chapter 4 for how to calculate tree density.

Protection Measures. Protection measures, such as protective fencing and limits on grading, help ensure that healthy soils, trees, and associated understory vegetation are preserved and protected throughout construction. The Report shall include locations, designs, and installation and removal timelines for all tree and SVPA protection measures. See Chapter 7 for tree, soil, and vegetation protection standards.

Replacement Planting and Soil and Vegetation Mitigation. For parcels where the required minimum tree density is not met through preserving existing trees, and/or there are not adequate healthy soils and native vegetation on site to designate an SVPA, the report needs to include details for replacement planting and mitigation. Requirements to be addressed include, but aren't limited to, the quality, size, and diversity of planting stock, site preparation and remediation, timeframes for installation, and any monitoring and/or maintenance measures to ensure long-term establishment and survival.

6.1.2 Site Map

All SVPs require a Site Map and/or certain required elements to be included on other related plan sets, such as a Construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (C-SWPPP). A Site Map may be prepared by a professional forester, but more likely a landscape architect or engineer in consultation with a

professional forester. The Site Map details the location of existing development, the location and condition of existing trees, soils, and vegetation, and what changes are proposed for the project site.

The Site Map and the Tree, Soil, and Native Vegetation Report need to be consistent; the Site Map, including the proposed site design, needs to reflect and respond to the information and analysis in the Tree, Soil, and Native Vegetation Report.

Each level of SVP includes specific Site Map requirements based on the extent and complexity of the proposed development or tree removal; see the checklists below for required elements, and when certain elements need to be included on other related plan sets.