

ORDINANCE NO. 169, 2025
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS
AMENDING ARTICLE 5, SECTION 10 OF THE LAND USE CODE OF THE CITY OF
FORT COLLINS FOR THE PURPOSE OF REQUIRING A COMMERCIAL TREE
REMOVAL PERMIT

A. In March of 2025, the Council adopted Rooted in Community, the Fort Collins Urban Forest Strategic Plan ("Plan"). This Plan identifies seven future growth strategies to support and maximize the community benefits that arise from fostering a healthy, urban tree canopy. The Plan also addresses the current state of the urban forest, emphasizes why trees are an important component of our community's infrastructure, and identifies key opportunities to continue improving the urban tree canopy.

B. The City's Land Use Code encourages the establishment and preservation of trees when properties are developed. On occasion, the owner of a developed property may decide to remove trees from their commercial property. This decision may occur for a variety of reasons. However, given the opportunity, City staff may be able to suggest alternatives to removing the trees.

C. The Plan encourages the establishment of a commercial tree removal permit ("Permit") program to assist City staff in communicating with commercial property owners seeking to remove existing trees. This Permit would require that commercial property owners seek a no-cost permit to remove a tree 15-inches in diameter or larger.

D. The Permit would create an opportunity for additional communication prior to tree removal in hopes that the City, commercial property owners, and licensed tree companies could partner to slow down or omit preemptive removal of well-established trees in the community. This Permit program will not require additional staffing or resources to support the policy change.

E. This Ordinance amends Division 5.10 of the City's Land Use Code regarding Landscaping and Tree Protection to require a commercial tree removal permit for the removal of any tree planted on commercial property fifteen inches in diameter or larger. Ordinance No. 170, 2025, amends Chapter 27, Article 32 of the City Code to correspond with this requirement.

F. These Code changes support previous and current Council Priorities and align with policy improvement opportunities identified through the Plan.

G. During a Work Session on August 26, 2025, Council provided input regarding this proposed update to the City's Land Use Code. On October 16, 2025, City staff sought a recommendation from the Planning & Zoning Commission to update the Land Use Code for the purpose of requiring a commercial tree removal permit.

H. The City Council has determined that it is in the best interest of the health, safety and welfare of the City and its residents that Article 5, Section 10 of the Land Use Code be updated, as set forth in this Ordinance.

In light of the foregoing recitals, which the Council hereby makes and adopts as determinations and findings, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS that Section 5.10.1 of the Land Use Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

5.10.1 LANDSCAPING AND TREE PROTECTION

. . .

(E) Landscape Materials, Maintenance and Replacement.

. . .

- (5) Replacement. Any landscape element that dies, or is otherwise removed, shall be promptly replaced based on the requirements of this Section. Pursuant to Section 27-32 of the Code of the City, a commercial tree removal permit is required for removal and replacement.

. . .

Introduced, considered favorably on first reading on October 21, 2025, and approved on second reading for final passage on November 3, 2025.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Effective Date: November 13, 2025
Approving Attorney: Stefanie Boster

Exhibit: None