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Princeton Tree Protection Ordinance

• WHY TREE PROTECTION ZONES ARE NEEDED

- Many activities on or near trees can kill or damage them irreparably, including damage to the root system by machinery, storage of materials, soil compaction, change of natural grade above or below the root system or around the trunk, or paving over the root system with impervious materials.
- Trees can also die over time from damage to their bark that permits fungi, pests or other infestation; from excessive pruning or thinning; and from exposure of the tree trunk or root system to any toxic substance.
- Every tree with a DBH (diameter at breast height) of 8” or greater and every ornamental and coniferous tree 10’ tall or greater must be protected against damage, by creating a “Tree Protection Zone” (TPZ) that safeguards the tree’s “Critical Root Zone.”
- A tree’s critical root zone is the area of ground and subsurface surrounding and beneath a tree that contains the minimum volume of roots necessary for the tree’s survival, health and stability.
- These tree protection requirements are part of Princeton’s Trees and Shrubs Ordinance (Chapter 22 of the Princeton Township Code) and Princeton’s General Site Standards (Chapter 10A of the Princeton Borough Code). These Ordinances apply within the entire Princeton municipality.

• WHEN TREE PROTECTION ZONES ARE REQUIRED

- Construction, reconstruction, renovation, expansion, repair, maintenance or demolition of any building, structure, infrastructure or other improvement, including landscaping, triggers the TPZ requirements.
- TPZs are required for any tree with a DBH of 8” or greater and ornamental and coniferous trees 10’ tall or greater (called a “protected tree”), unless a tree removal permit has been granted for that tree.

- TPZs also are required for all protected trees standing on contiguous property or in the municipal right-of-way, when the tree's TPZ extends into the site where activities will happen but only for the portion of the TPZ that is on site. The owner(s) of the contiguous property may allow TPZ protections to be extended onto their property.

- **HOW TO SET UP TREE PROTECTION ZONES**

- Consult Princeton's municipal arborist, who serves as the enforcement officer for the applicable Princeton Ordinances and is also guided by American National Standards Institute provisions (ANSI 52.15).
- Typically, a TPZ is measured by the area on the surface of the ground starting from the outermost tips of the branches of the tree (called the "drip line") and measured plumb from the outermost tips of the branches to the ground. In the case of trees with multiple trunks, the drip line of each trunk is measured separately.
- In some cases, when the tree has a small, suppressed or asymmetric crown; or branches whose outer limits are indistinct or otherwise unclear; or an irregular rooting area that makes the drip line an inadequate basis for determining a TPZ, the TPZ perimeter will be set at 1 ½ feet from the center of the trunk for each inch of the tree's DBH.
- The extent of any TPZ may be increased to provide the protection reasonably necessary to ensure the tree's survival, health and stability, taking into consideration the significance, species, age, structure, stability, health and root zone of the tree, as well as soil conditions and proposed or ongoing construction activities.
- If a TPZ interferes with an existing structure or improvement, or an essential portion of a proposed construction site that cannot reasonably be relocated, the enforcement officer shall modify the TPZ to reconcile the conflict, provided that the modified TPZ continues to protect the tree's critical root zone.

- **HOW A TREE PROTECTION ZONE IS PROTECTED**

- Install and maintain a four-foot-tall wooden slat snow fence with five-strand metal wire installed with metal posts at intervals of six feet.
- Guard the area within the TPZ fence from the prohibited activities listed below.

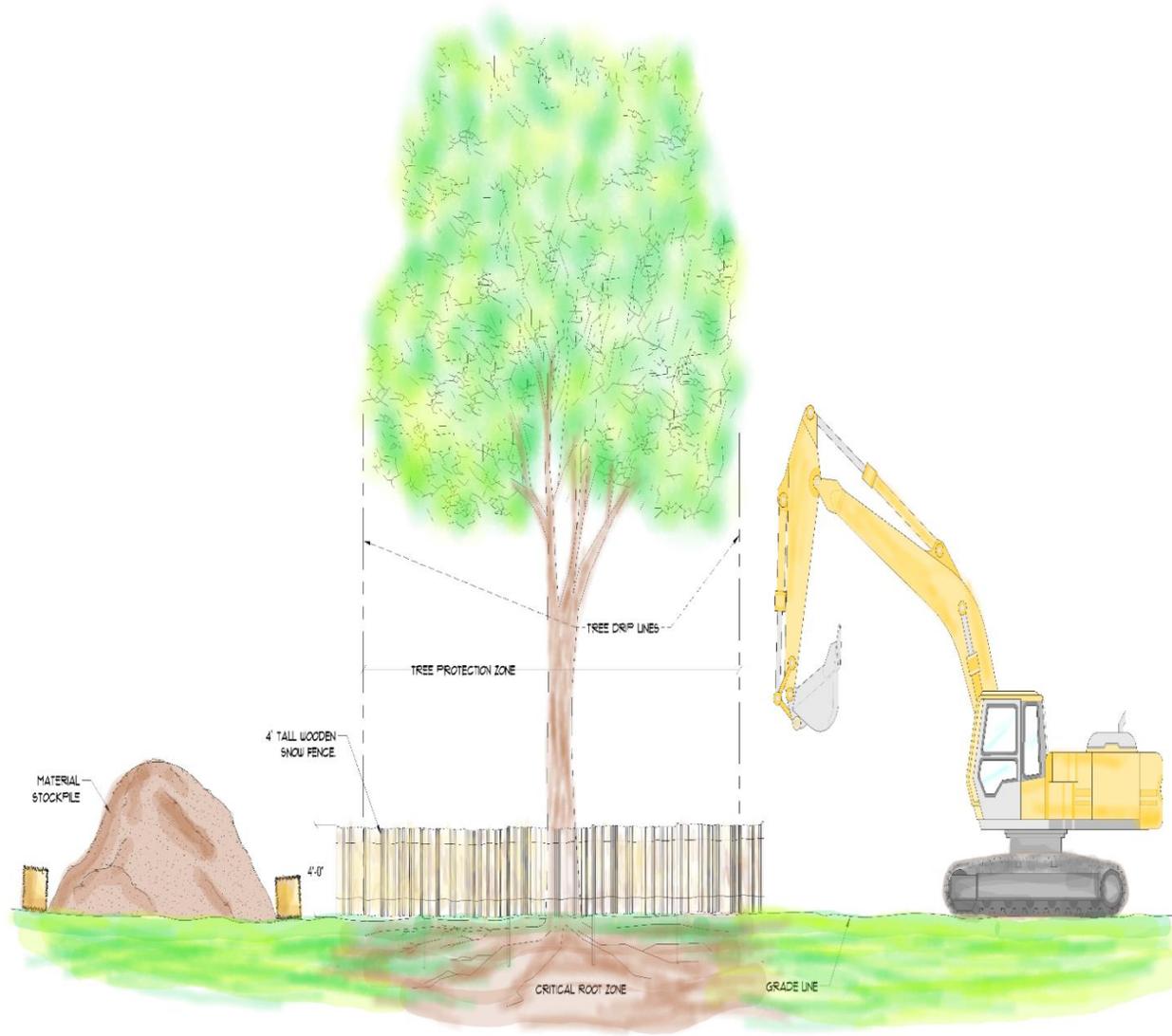
- **ACTIVITIES PROHIBITED IN TREE PROTECTION ZONES**

- Use, placement, mixing or spillage of stone, concrete or mortar.
- Placement of building material, impervious material, dumpster or roll-off container, construction or storage trailer or portable toilet.
- Placement of material or substance that impedes or prevents the free access of water, air or fertilizer to the roots.
- Soil disturbance, excavation or other construction-related activities, such as movement of vehicles or equipment.
- Application, spilling or migration of a substance toxic to the tree.
- Fill, or positive or negative changes in grade

- **REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR ACTIVITY WITHIN A TREE PROTECTION ZONE**

- Submit a written plan to the enforcement officer showing (a) the need for work within the TPZ and (b) how the critical root zone of the tree(s) will be protected.
- The municipal arborist can approve or disapprove the plan.
- No work may take place within a TPZ without the written approval of the enforcement officer.
- The municipal arborist may monitor and inspect all work authorized.
- If the critical root zone of the tree cannot be protected, a tree removal permit will be required.

Tree Protection Zone



Notes

- 4' tall wooden snow fence is required as per ordinance #2020-26
- At a minimum, the tree protection fence should extend to the dripline. The optimal distance is to the tree's critical root zone. Contact the Princeton Municipal Arborist if needed to set up a proper tree protection zone
- No grading, storage of material, or parking of vehicles is permitted in the TPZ
- Existing grade within the tree protection zone is to remain