

PERMISSION LETTER
TO REMOVE TREES ON PROPERTY LINE
(For the Village of Ridgewood's Tree Permit)

Date: ____/____/2026

Attention Engineering Division:

I, _____ who resides at
_____ hereby grant my neighbor
_____ who resides at
_____, Ridgewood, NJ 07450 permission to
remove the total amount of # _____ tree(s) that are on/near our property line as
indicated in their tree permit application that was obtained from the Village of
Ridgewood.

Thank You,

Signature

VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD
ORDINANCE NO. 4043

AN ORDINANCE TO RESCIND AND REPLACE IN ITS ENTIRETY, CHAPTER 260
OF THE CODE OF THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD, TREES AND SHRUBS, AND
PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED ORDINANCE NO. 3682, WHICH AMENDED CHAPTER 260
AND TO ESTABLISH A NEW TITLE FOR CHAPTER 260,
“TREE PROTECTION, REMOVAL, AND REPLACEMENT”

BE IT ORDAINED, by the Village Council of the Village of Ridgewood:

Section 1. Chapter 260, Trees and Shrubs, of the Code of the Village of Ridgewood is hereby rescinded in its entirety and replaced with the following Chapter 260, Tree Protection, Removal, and Replacement:

Chapter 260 TREE PROTECTION, REMOVAL, AND REPLACEMENT

§ 260-1.	Purpose.	§ 260-7.	Permit requirements for qualified tree removal.
§ 260-2.	Definitions.	§ 260-8.	Exemptions from permit requirements.
§ 260-3.	Responsibility of owner or tenant; notice.	§ 260-9.	Tree removal permit.
§ 260-4.	Cutting or removal of a tree.	§ 260-10.	Replacement tree requirements.
§ 260-5.	Other restrictions.	§ 260-11.	Enforcement.
§ 260-6.	Sidewalk construction and driveway enlargement.		

§ 260-1. Purpose.

- A. The Village Council of the Village of Ridgewood advocates the preservation, maintenance and proliferation of trees throughout the Village of Ridgewood to nurture the existing tree canopy, promote the continuous aesthetic benefit of shade trees in the Village and control of stormwater runoff, soil erosion, and groundwater recharge to the groundwater aquifer supplied potable water system. This Ordinance will further efforts to mitigate air pollution, water filtration, atmospheric and thermal warming and to ensure the public and permittees consider the importance of these undervalued assets. The Village also wishes to address the standards, process and control of tree removal on private lands, all of which can negatively affect the aesthetic and environmental resources of the Village, balancing these standards with the ability of a property owner to appropriately remove trees on their property.
- B. When trees must be removed, the intent of this chapter is to provide for the planting of replacement trees in place of those lost trees, not necessarily in kind or even on the same site, but throughout the Village to maintain the Village's tree stock for future generations to enjoy.

§ 260-2. Definitions.

Below are defined key terms to be used with this chapter.

CONIFEROUS TREE – A tree that produces cones and has leaves that do not fall off at the end of the growing season. Many coniferous trees are commonly referred to as “evergreens.” Examples of coniferous trees include: pine, spruce, cedar, cypress, fir, and juniper.

DBH (DIAMETER AT BREAST HEIGHT) — The diameter of a tree trunk, when measured at a height of 4.5 feet above the ground from the base of the tree, calculated as the circumference (or girth) of the tree divided by pi (3.1416). On sloping ground the “above ground” reference point is the average between the highest and lowest points of the ground at the base of the tree. If the DBH point falls on a swelling in the trunk, it is measured below the swelling point where the diameter is the smallest. In case of trees with multiple trunks, the DBH of the trunk with the greatest diameter shall be measured for permit purposes.

DECIDUOUS TREE – A tree that loses its leaves at the end of the growing season. Examples of deciduous trees include: oak, maple, birch, willow, poplar, and walnut.

DEVELOPMENT - Shall mean the expansion or construction of any structures on residential or nonresidential property that does not qualify as a home improvement under this subsection. The demolition of more than 50% of a dwelling and the construction of a new dwelling shall be considered a development.

HOME IMPROVEMENT - Shall mean any expansion or addition to an Existing Residence or for the construction of improvements such as, but not limited to, any garage, pond, patio, deck, driveway, sidewalk, or accessory building and landscaping on any residential lot(s) upon which there is an Existing Residence. For the purposes of this section, the construction of a tennis court or a swimming pool shall not be considered a “Home Improvement.”

INVASIVE SPECIES – An invasive species is one that is non-native to the local ecosystem and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. The following shall be considered invasive species in the Village of Ridgewood:

Common Name	Scientific Name
Black Locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>
Catalpa tree	<i>Catalpa bignonioides</i>
Empress tree	<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>
Japanese Cork Tree	<i>Phellodendron japonicum</i>
Norway Maple	<i>Acer platanoides</i>
Siberian Elm	<i>Ulmus pumila</i>
Tree of Heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>
White Mulberry	<i>Morus alba</i>
White Poplar	<i>Populus alba</i>
White Willow	<i>Salix alba</i>
Mimosa tree	<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>
European Black Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>

LICENSED TREE EXPERT — An individual who holds a New Jersey State Tree Expert license or is a Board Certified Arborist or Master Arborist under the International Society of Arboriculture.

QUALIFIED TREE — Any non-invasive species tree with a diameter measured at breast height (DBH) of eight inches or greater, on any lands within the Village of Ridgewood.

REPLACEMENT TREE — Any non-invasive species tree proposed to be considered as replacement for a qualified tree removed under a permit.

SHADE TREE — a qualified tree that can grow to a height where its primary role is producing shade to sidewalks and pedestrian walkways predominantly on the public right of way along public streets surrounding areas due to its spreading canopy and crown and may give shelter from sunlight or heat of the summer for residential yards and other properties.

§ 260-3. Responsibility of owner or tenant; notice.

- A. Pursuant to the authority contained in N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.26 et seq., and in conformance with the requirements of Chapter 190, Section 119 of the Code of the Village of Ridgewood, it is determined to be necessary and expedient for the preservation of the Village's tree stock while addressing issues of public safety, the owner or tenant of any land or premises within the Village, shall within 10 calendar days after the receipt of written notice from the Village sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known post office address of such owner or tenant, shall keep all brush, hedges and other plant life that is growing within 10 feet of any roadway and/or 25 feet of the intersection of two roadways measured from the R.O.W. line not curblin or pavement cut to a height of not more than 30 inches. Any such determination made pursuant to this section shall be the result of discretionary review and recommendation of the Village Engineering Department and Police Department.
- B. The aforesaid notice shall be sent either by the Director of Department of Building and Inspections or their authorized designee, or the Director of the Department of Public Works or their authorized designee, and shall direct the cutting of all such brush, hedges or other plant life and shall set forth the reasons therefor. The notice shall provide an opportunity to such owner or tenant of such notice to provide a written response to the identified directors in the notice within thirty (30) calendar days of the receipt of such notice, why the demands therein cannot be met.
- C. For locating trees that may be within the public right-of-way, all measurements for determining their location in relation to the limits of the public right-of-way shall be taken at DBH (diameter at breast height) of the tree by authorized representatives of the Engineering Division of the Department of Public Works. If it is determined that the tree base at ground level is greater than 50% within the public right-of-way, such tree shall be the responsibility of the Village.

§ 260-4. Cutting or removal of a tree.

- A. No person, property owner, hired firm, or other entity shall cause to be cut or removed any existing qualified tree, with a diameter at breast height (DBH) eight inches or greater, upon any private lands within the Village of Ridgewood, without a permit issued by the Village of Ridgewood in accordance with § 260-7. Exemptions to this requirement are set forth in § 260-8.
- B. No person, property owner, hired firm, or other entity, shall cause to be cut or removed any existing tree or trees or their root systems, upon any of the public lands of the Village of Ridgewood, unless authorized by subsequent sections of Chapter 260.

§ 260-5. Other restrictions.

- A. It shall be unlawful for the owner or occupant of any lands within the limits of the Village to permit to exist or harbor tent caterpillars, gypsy moth, or any other insect detrimental to the health and wellbeing of a tree on such premises after being noticed of such by certified mail return receipt requested. Any firm retained to eradicate insects in or on trees shall be duly licensed for such tasks by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.
- B. It shall be expressly prohibited anywhere within the public rights-of-way and public properties of the Village of Ridgewood to affix a sign or any other device to a tree of any size by means of any type of fasteners, including but not limited to, nails, screws, or bolts.
- C. It shall be expressly prohibited in the Village of Ridgewood to fasten any rope, wire, or cable to a tree within the public right-of-way for any reason other than for staking stabilization purposes of the tree in accordance with standard arboriculture practices.
- D. No person shall hitch or fasten an animal to any tree or shrub within a public right-of-way or any guard or support provided for such tree or shrub or permit an animal to bite or otherwise injure any such tree or shrub.
- E. No person shall permit or cause to be permitted the discharge or release of any liquid, gas or solid compound containing injurious chemicals to come in contact with the stalk, leaves, bark or roots of any tree or shrub within the public right-of-way.
- F. During the execution of any work on trees on public lands in the Village of Ridgewood, other than for a tree's removal, no gaffs or spikes shall be permitted to be used to ascend a tree by a climber.
- G. It shall be expressly prohibited in the Village of Ridgewood for a property owner or resident to alter or prune any tree within the public right-of-way, or the conditions surrounding a tree in the public right-of-way in such a manner which may reduce its viability and life span.
- H. The planting in the Village of "running bamboo" known as "phyllostachys aureosulcata," or any bamboo of such genus shall be prohibited.
- I. Decorative lights shall not be strung or affixed in or on any tree within the public right-of-way or on public property. No electric cords or wiring shall be permitted to encircle the trunk of a tree within the public right-of-way. Exceptions to this shall be Village of Ridgewood sponsored and/or authorized projects, as well as Village Manager authorized decorative lighting requests from Central Business District locations for the duration of November 15 through January 15.

§ 260-6. Sidewalk construction and driveway enlargement.

- A. When a sidewalk is constructed or being reconstructed due to defects, within the public right-of-way, the party responsible for the work (i.e., the adjacent property owner), shall coordinate all work that may affect the root systems of trees within the public right-of-way with the Village's Arborist or their designee. Such responsible party shall be required to notify the Village Arborist prior to the commencement of any such work.

- B. No tree, tree root or roots shall be cut or removed for sidewalk construction, reconstruction or driveway enlargement within the public right-of-way, without first obtaining written authorization from the Village Arborist. The Village Arborist shall provide any requested documentation regarding same to the Engineering Division for the curb and sidewalk permit. Said authorization shall be appended to either the zoning review of the proposed work or a curb and sidewalk work or driveway enlargement permit issued by the Engineering Division.
- C. Any tree within the public right-of-way removed for a driveway enlargement or construction shall be considered a qualified tree and replaced in accordance with the provisions of § 260-10. If the property owner is responsible for the replacement of such tree, the Village should allow the tree to be planted on the private property where the driveway enlargement or construction is being performed. If the property owner or other responsible party cannot replace the tree or chooses not to do so, said person shall make the required contribution to the Tree Protection Trust Fund.
- D. The Village Arborist or their designee, in his/her sole discretion, in consult with the Village Engineering Office, shall have authority to determine in such instances covered in this section whether root grinding, a tree's removal, whether a "round out" or "bump out" is warranted for trees within the public right-of-way, with the goal to preserve trees as best as possible. Defective sidewalk slabs within five (5) feet of a tree shall be removed, and a new slab cast in accordance with the Village Arborist's directive.
- E. Any tree roots cut, damaged, or removed in the public right-of-way without the Village Arborist's or their designee's authorization, shall be deemed a violation of this chapter.

§ 260-7. Permit requirements for qualified tree removal.

- A. The property owner or other authorized person is required to apply for a "Tree Removal Permit" issued by the Division of Engineering of the Department of Public Works prior to the removal of any tree that meets the requirements of Chapter 260-3. The applicant shall not be required to pay the permit application fee if the tree meets the exemption criteria in § 260-8. Any qualified tree or tree within the Village Right of Way desired to be removed shall require a permit.
- B. All applications to the Village of Ridgewood Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Building Department, or Engineering Division that propose removal of any qualified trees, shall require a permit, unless said trees meet the exemption criteria in § 260-8.
- C. Any application for a qualified tree removal permit, whether in conjunction with a major or minor subdivision application, major or minor site plan application, or other private property improvement, shall be submitted to the Engineering Division of the Department of Public Works for review and subsequent action. The Engineering Division shall coordinate all applications with the appropriate land use board, if necessary. The Engineering Division will make a courtesy notification of any applications or permits issued to the Village's Shade Tree Commission, and the Village Arborist, as necessary.

§ 260-8. Exemptions from permit requirements.

The following tree conditions shall be exempt from the provisions of § 260-7. If a tree is deemed exempt, its removal shall not require a replacement tree or a permit. However, an application shall be made to determine if the tree is exempt prior to any action being taken unless an emergency situation exists.

- A. The removal of any tree or trees growing on or over the public right-of-way or public land with the consent of the Village's Arborist or their designee.
- B. Removal of any tree(s) that are dead, dying, or obviously diseased on private property, as determined by a licensed tree expert and verified by the Village Arborist or their designee.
- C. Trees that have suffered damage, trees whose growth has been significantly compromised, or are a danger or hazard to structures and human life on private property, as determined by a licensed tree expert and verified by the Village Arborist or their designee.
- D. Trees that have suffered damage, trees whose growth has been significantly compromised, or are a danger or hazard to structures and human life within the public right-of-way, as confirmed by the Village Arborist or their designee.
- E. Pruning or the removal of trees within the right-of-way recognized and accepted by public utility companies for the conveyance of their services for the purpose of maintenance of said utility wires, cables, or pipelines with their attendant appurtenances. This shall also include the trimming or removal of trees that obstruct municipal signage, traffic control devices, and that may compromise sight angles at intersections and roadways.
- F. Removal of an invasive species as defined herein, as determined by a licensed tree expert and verified by the Village Arborist or their designee.

§ 260-9. Tree removal permit.

- A. No person, property owner, owner's agent or hired contractor, tenant or other entity shall remove or otherwise cut down a qualified tree located on any privately owned property within the Village without having first procured a Tree Removal Permit pursuant to this Section. Included in this requirement are any qualified tree(s) to be removed pursuant to development applications within the jurisdiction of the Ridgewood Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment or requested as a result of a building permit, zoning certificate, or zoning permit application to be issued by the appropriate entity, unless the qualified tree meets the exemption criteria stated herein. All trees to be removed shall be identified on an approved permit.
- B. An application for a Tree Removal Permit shall be filed with the Village Engineering Division for the removal of any qualified tree(s) and for the determination of any applicable exemptions. Trees determined to be exempt shall not require a permit fee as described in Chapter 145, Section 260, Fees. A Tree Removal Permit shall be valid only for the location (property) for which the application is made. The permit shall not authorize trespass on any adjoining property.
- C. Applications for a Tree Removal Permit shall provide the following information:
 - (1) If using a licensed tree expert, for any determinations regarding trees, provide their name, address, title and license number.
 - (2) Lot and block or lots and blocks of the proposed qualified tree removal work. Street address of proposed work. Identity of the owner(s) of the land where the work is proposed.
 - (3) A marked-up survey of the property showing the location of the qualified tree to be removed.

If there is no available survey for a property owner to show the location of the qualified tree to be removed, the application may include an alternative document that must show the location of the tree to be removed. This may include, but is not limited to, photographs, google maps, certified drawings or other documents, which at the discretion of the person at the Division of Engineering reviewing the application, satisfactorily show the location of the tree to be removed.

- (4) The purpose or reason for the removal of the qualified tree(s).
 - (5) The number of qualified trees being removed. List by species and size (diameter at breast height).
 - (6) The measured diameter at breast height (DBH) as defined in this Ordinance for each tree removed.
 - (7) Proposed start date of the work. Proposed date of completion.
 - (8) A plan for either replacing or offsetting the trees proposed to be removed with the new tree's location on the property.
- D. If satisfied, the Village's Engineering Division shall issue a Tree Removal permit and shall forward a duplicate of the permit to the Village Building Department and the Village Arborist. All permits shall be visibly displayed on the subject property until project completion. All Village Departments and the public shall have access to the Tree database.

§ 260-10. Replacement tree requirements.

- A. When a tree removal permit is filed for removal of a qualified tree, the applicant shall provide the DBH of the tree to be removed. The number of replacement trees shall be determined as follows:
- (1) For a project that meets the definition of a development but does not meet the definition of a home improvement:
 - (a) DBH up to 13 inches – One (1) replacement tree
 - (b) DBH from 13 inches to 23 inches – Two (2) replacement trees
 - (c) DBH from 23 inches to 33 inches – Three (3) replacement trees
 - (d) DBH greater than 33 inches – Four (4) replacement trees
 - (2) For a project that meets the definition of a home improvement, one (1) replacement tree shall be provided for each qualified tree to be removed.
- B. In the event the applicant does not or cannot provide suitable land for a replacement tree(s), the applicant shall be required to remit an amount for each qualified tree removed to the Village's Replacement Tree Escrow Fund. The value for a replacement tree is set forth in § 145-6, Fees.
- C. Any and all escrowed funds shall be used to purchase and plant replacement trees within the public rights-of-way throughout the Village, public parks, Green Acres listed open space areas, stream bank restoration/protection projects, all to help maintain the Village's tree stock.
- D. Any replacement tree proposed shall have a DBH of a minimum 1.75 inches or greater. Where

multiple replacement trees are owed, a replacement tree with a DBH at planting of greater than 1.75 inches can compensate for multiple trees, with the calculation to be determined by dividing the DBH of the replacement tree by 1.75 inches. For example, a tree with a DBH of at least 3.5 inches counts as a replacement for two trees, a tree with a DBH of at least 5.25 inches counts as a replacement for three trees, etc.

- E. When deciduous trees are removed, the replacement trees shall be a deciduous species and when coniferous trees are removed, the replacement trees shall be a coniferous species. In the event there is uncertainty about the appropriate replacement tree, the Village arborist shall make the determination of the appropriate species.
- F. If a person, property owner, the owner's agent or hired contractor, tenant or other entity removes any qualified tree without a permit, said person or entity shall be subject to enforcement as outlined in Section 260-11 and required to plant a replacement tree(s) in accordance with this chapter.
- G. If a person, property owner, the owner's agent or hired contractor, tenant or other entity damages any qualified tree during the course of work on the property or otherwise to the extent that the health of such qualified tree has been compromised in the opinion of a licensed tree expert, said person or entity shall be required to plant a replacement tree in accordance with this chapter.

§ 260-11. Enforcement.

The Director of Public Works or their designee; the Director of Parks and Recreation or their designee, the designated Village Arborist; or any other Village employee who may be designated by the Village Manager, shall have the authority to enforce this chapter. Enforcement shall mean the following:

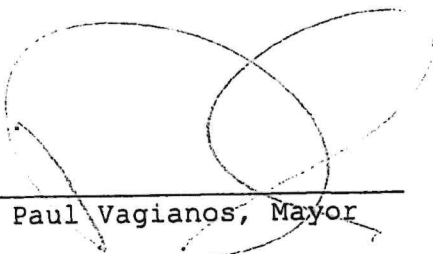
- A. Issuance of a municipal summons for the violation of any sections of this chapter.
- B. In addition to any other applicable provision stated above, in the event a qualified tree is removed without a permit, the Village's Director of Public Works shall notify the registered property owner in writing that a replacement tree(s) for each qualified tree removed must be planted in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. Upon failure to plant replacement trees within a period of six months, seasonally dependent on weather and proper planting seasons, the Village's designee may issue an additional summons payable at the violations window for first and second offenses.
- C. Upon conviction or other determination of guilt for a violation of this section, the fine for each offense shall not be less than \$500. The Court, in its discretion, may adjudicate a penalty which may order the appropriate replacement tree be planted with all costs to be borne by the property owner or other party responsible for the tree removal.

Section 2: This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon passage and publication as required by law.

VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD
ORDINANCE NO. 4043

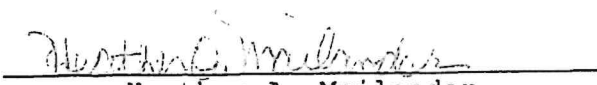
FOR AFFIRMANCE: Councilmembers: Mortimer, Perron, Weitz, Winograd,
and Mayor Vagianos

NAYS: NONE
ABSENT: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE
RECUSE: NONE
Introduction Date: March 12, 2025
Adoption Date: April 9, 2025
Effective Date: April 29, 2025



Paul Vagianos, Mayor

ATTEST:



Heather A. Mailander
Village Clerk