



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Arborist Sign-Off Letter Post Construction

Introduction

Under the [Tree Protection and Management Bylaw No. 8045-2026](#), where the retention of Protected Trees is required as a condition of a Tree Permit or as a penalty, the Applicant must provide a security deposit or letter of credit, as per the [Fees and Charges Bylaw](#).

If the Owner fails to meet their obligations with respect to Retained Trees including required maintenance, the City may enter the property to complete the necessary work and may draw upon the security to recover all associated costs.

Where Retained Trees have been protected and maintained in accordance with the approved Tree Permit, the Bylaw, and applicable City requirements, the City may consider releasing the Retained Tree security upon receipt and acceptance of an Arborist Sign-Off Letter from the Project Arborist. The letter must confirm the condition of the Retained Trees following construction, identify whether any damage or non-compliance occurred, and provide any required impact assessment, mitigation measures, maintenance recommendations, or follow-up requirements.

Applicants should ensure the Arborist they hire is experienced in preparing Arborist Sign-Off letters that meet these Terms of Reference and applicable City requirements. Engaging a qualified and experienced Arborist, with professional liability insurance, may help avoid application delays, required revisions, and additional costs.

Submit Arborist Sign-Off letters to Trees@MapleRidge.ca.

Submission and acceptance of the Project Arborist's Sign-Off letter by the City is required prior to issuance of building occupancy.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

For the purposes of these Terms of Reference, the following definitions apply:

- **"Arborist"** means a person certified by the International Society of Arboriculture with a valid City business licence.
- **Condition of Tree:**
 - **Excellent** - No noticeable problems, branching is regular and even, normal sized leaved, normal color.
 - **Good** – Full grown with no tip dieback, minor bark wounds, thinner crown, slightly smaller leaf size or minor infestations.
 - **Fair** – One or more of the following: (a) minor tip or crown die back (less the 10%), (b) small yellowed or disfigured leaves, thinner crown, (c) significant limb wounds, (d) recent large branch removed that minimally affects shape, (e) large insect infestation, (f) any problem that should be repaired without long-term effect on the plant's health.
 - **Poor** – Any of the following: (a) crown dieback from 10-25%, (b) significantly smaller, yellowed, or disfigured leaves, (c) branch removal that affects the crown shape in a significant way, (d) wounding to the bark that will affect the tree's health.
 - **Very Poor** – Any problem that is so significant it grossly affects the shape or the health of the tree. Tree that has little hope of survival.
 - **Replace** – Some green may be seen, but the tree is not going to survive.
 - **Dead** – No noticeable signs of active growth, no live foliage, decomposition present.
- **"Damage"** means any action which causes, or reasonably likely to cause, a Protected Tree or any part of a Protected Tree to die or decline in health, including but not limited to Cutting, stripping bark, gouging, girdling, nailing, denting, ringing, poisoning, burning, Topping, root compaction, root cutting, excessive pruning of more than 1/4 of a tree canopy. "Damaging" shall have the same corresponding meaning.
- **"Retained Tree"** means a tree that has not been permitted for removal. "Tree to be retained" shall have the same corresponding meaning.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

- **"Standard Arboricultural Practices"** means the standards and guidelines established by the International Society of Arboriculture on pruning techniques, tree health assessments, and tree care practices.
- **"Tree Protection Barrier"** means a barrier constructed around a tree in accordance with Schedule B.
- **"Tree Protection Zone"** means the ground area enclosed by a Tree Protection Barrier installed in accordance with this bylaw. If a required barrier has not been installed, the Tree Protection Zone is deemed to be the area that would be enclosed by a barrier installed in accordance with this bylaw.

Purpose

The purpose of these Terms of Reference is to establish the minimum requirements for a Project Arborist's Sign-Off letter submitted to the City in support of the release of Retained Tree securities and the issuance of occupancy.

The letter must confirm whether Retained Trees remained undamaged during construction and whether applicable tree protection, retention, and maintenance requirements have been satisfied in accordance with the [Tree Protection and Management Bylaw No. 8045-2026](#), the approved Tree Management Plan, Tree Permit, and any related City requirements.

Where damage to a Retained Tree is identified, the letter must provide sufficient information for the City to determine whether the security may be released, retained, or otherwise administered in accordance with the Bylaw and permit requirements.

Expectations

Arborist Sign-Off Letters are expected to be complete, accurate, and prepared to a professional standard that enables the City to efficiently review whether required tree protection measures



TERMS OF REFERENCE

were implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved Tree Management Plan, Tree Permit, [Tree Protection and Management Bylaw No. 8045-2026](#), and applicable City tree management guidance.

The City relies on the professional expertise, observations, and opinions of the Project Arborist, together with the City's own urban forestry staff, when reviewing Arborist Sign-Off Letters, determining whether securities for Retained Trees may be released, and confirming whether occupancy requirements related to tree protection have been satisfied.

If tree protection requirements were not followed, or if Retained Trees were damaged during construction, the Project Arborist must clearly document the issue and provide an assessment of the potential impacts to tree health, structural stability, and long-term viability. The letter must also include recommended mitigation, remedial measures, monitoring, maintenance requirements, or other actions necessary to address the damage or non-compliance.

Where the same Arborist is responsible for both the Arborist Sign-Off Letter and the Replacement Tree Inspection Report, the documents may be submitted together as part of the same close-out submission, provided that each document clearly addresses its respective requirements.

Consultants are responsible for ensuring that all required information is included, site conditions are clearly documented, and conclusions and recommendations are supported by the Project Arborist's observations and professional opinion. The Arborist Sign-Off Letter requirements should be used as a **checklist** to confirm that the submission is complete before it is provided to the City.

The City may require revisions, additional information, or supporting documentation where a submission is incomplete, unclear, inconsistent with City requirements, or does not adequately address bylaw or permit requirements. Incomplete submissions may not be



TERMS OF REFERENCE

reviewed until the complete Arborist Sign-Off Letter and all required supporting materials have been received.

Where a submission remains incomplete, unclear, or inconsistent with bylaw requirements after repeated submissions, the City may decline to continue reviewing the report and require the applicant to submit a revised report prepared by another qualified Arborist. Generally, this may occur after the original submission and two subsequent opportunities to provide revisions.

Arborist Sign-Off Letter Requirements

The following sections must be submitted in one document.

Cover Page

- ☐ Name of arborist and consulting firm, address, email, and phone number
- ☐ ISA Certification #, TRAQ, RPF, other credentials.
- ☐ Maple Ridge Business License #
- ☐ Name and contact information for the applicant and owner
- ☐ Project address and project number, if applicable
- ☐ Letter date, which is to be updated with each revision and include previous version dates.

Introduction

- ☐ Purpose of the letter
- ☐ List the date, time, and weather conditions for all site visit(s) throughout construction, including at least one after construction is completed.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Content

An Arborist Sign-Off Letter shall include the following:

- ☐ **Construction Monitoring Summary**

The letter must summarize the findings, observations, and any work performed or supervised by the Project Arborist during each site visit completed throughout construction.

Where a Follow-Up Report was submitted within two business days of the work or inspection, as required, the Arborist Sign-Off Letter must reference that submission and provide a concise summary of the findings.

- ☐ **Confirmation of Construction Completion**

Prior to preparing the Arborist Sign-Off Letter, the Project Arborist must confirm that all construction activities that could affect Retained Trees have been completed, including but not limited to grading, servicing, building construction, driveway and walkway installation, fencing, hardscaping, and landscaping.

The letter must state whether all construction and landscaping works have been completed at the time of the post-construction site visit. Where works remain outstanding, the Project Arborist must identify the outstanding works and assess whether they may pose a risk to Retained Trees or require additional tree protection measures, monitoring, or follow-up inspections.

- ☐ **Post construction site visit**

The letter must include the results of a post-construction site visit completed by the Project Arborist. This section must include:



TERMS OF REFERENCE

- ☐ An inventory table identifying each Retained Tree and its current post-construction condition; see [format](#) section for example.
 - ☐ Recommendations for ongoing maintenance, monitoring, or remedial action, where applicable; and
 - ☐ Date and GPS stamped photographs documenting the condition of the Retained Trees and relevant site conditions.
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- ☐ **Tree Damage or Non-Compliance**

If damage to a Retained Tree is observed at any point during construction or at the post-construction inspection, the letter must include an impact assessment prepared by a qualified arborist. Where tree risk is identified or may have changed as a result of the damage, the assessment must be completed by a Tree Risk Assessment Qualified arborist — TRAQ.

The impact assessment must include:

- ☐ A description of the damage, including the specific Tree ID or tag number;
- ☐ The date and time the damage occurred, if known;
- ☐ The date the damage was observed;
- ☐ Date and GPS stamped photographs of the damage;
- ☐ A tree risk assessment, where applicable;
- ☐ An assessment of potential impacts to tree health, structural stability, and long-term viability; and
- ☐ Recommended mitigation, remedial measures, maintenance, monitoring, or other actions required to address the damage or non-compliance.
 - i. If remedial measures have been completed, please state so and provide details and photos of the work.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Summary

The Arborist Sign-Off Letter must include a clear summary of the Project Arborist's findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

At a minimum, the summary must address the following:

- ☐ **Compliance with Tree Retention Requirements**

Confirm whether the retention and protection of Retained Trees was completed in accordance with the approved Tree Management Plan, Tree Permit, [Tree Protection and Management Bylaw No. 8045-2026](#), and applicable City requirements.

- ☐ **Remediation Measures**

Identify whether any remediation, mitigation, maintenance, or corrective measures were required. Where measures were required, confirm whether they have been completed or identify any outstanding actions.

- ☐ **Recommendations for Ongoing Care**

Provide brief instructions for the recommended ongoing care, maintenance, and monitoring of Retained Trees, including any specific requirements necessary to support tree health, structural stability, and long-term viability.

Photographs

The Arborist Sign-Off Letter must include clear, date and GPS stamped photographs sufficient to document the condition of Retained Trees and relevant site conditions before, during, and after construction, as applicable.

At a minimum, photographs must include:



TERMS OF REFERENCE

☐ Site Overview Photographs

Date and GPS stamped photographs showing the tree resources and general site conditions before and after construction. Overview photographs should include representative views of the property, such as the front yard, rear yard, side yards, or other areas containing Retained Trees.

☐ Tree-Specific Photographs

Date and GPS stamped photographs of Retained Trees, to document their post-construction condition or support the Project Arborist's findings.

☐ Damage Photographs

Date and GPS stamped photographs of any tree damage, impacts, encroachments, or tree protection non-compliance identified during construction or at the post-construction inspection.

☐ Photo Labelling

Photographs must be clearly labelled or cross-referenced with the applicable Tree ID or tag number and must include enough context to allow the City to understand the location and subject of each photograph.

Tree Plans

See format section for example.

If a tree protection and retention plan was submitted prior to construction, please include it here for reference. Alternatively, you can include:

☐ A tree retention plan that includes:

- a. Only retained trees, CRZs to scale and barrier locations



TERMS OF REFERENCE

- b. A summary table which lists only tag numbers, DBH and CRZ sizes for easy reference during barrier installation and inspection

- ☐ All plans

- a. Must include a scale, legend, and North arrow on the drawings
- b. Tree plans are to be clear and legible; remove irrelevant information and use dark, distinctive colours.

Arborist Certification and Sign off

This section must include a signed certification by the Arborist confirming that the Arborist Sign-Off letter has been prepared in accordance with these Terms of Reference, [Tree Protection and Management Bylaw No. 8045-2026](#), current Standard arboricultural practices, and applicable City tree management guidance.

The certification must be based on the Arborist's site inspection, professional observations, assessment, and opinion. It must confirm that the information provided in the report is accurate to the best of the Arborist's knowledge and that the recommendations are appropriate for the proposed tree removal, retention, protection, and replacement.

The certification must include:

- ☐ Arborist's full name
- ☐ Arborist's certification number and credentials
- ☐ Arborist's signature
- ☐ Date of certification
- ☐ If the report author is not a Certified Arborist, the report must also include the full name, credentials, certification number, and signature of the Certified Arborist who supervised the work and reviewed the report. The report author's full name, credentials, and signature must also be provided.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Format

Arborist Sign-Off Letters must be digital and produced by a Registered Professional Forester or Certified Arborist. Submit Report to Trees@MapleRidge.ca.

Report layout

- ☐ All submissions must include all the items listed in the [Arborist Sign-Off Letter Requirements](#)
- ☐ Each page shall include a header with the name of the firm or consulting arborist and contact information
- ☐ Each page shall include a footer with the project address/project number, client name and contact information
- ☐ Each page shall include the page number
- ☐ Other relevant information

Tree inventory and management

This table should mirror the inventory in the approved Tree Management Plan and add conditions post construction and recommendations for ongoing care. Use the specific language descriptors for condition of the trees defined in the introduction.

Tree ID or tag	Location (on/offsite, City)	Species	DBH	Height (m)	Age Class	LCR%	CRZ radius (m)	Health condition pre construction	Health condition post construction	Recommendations

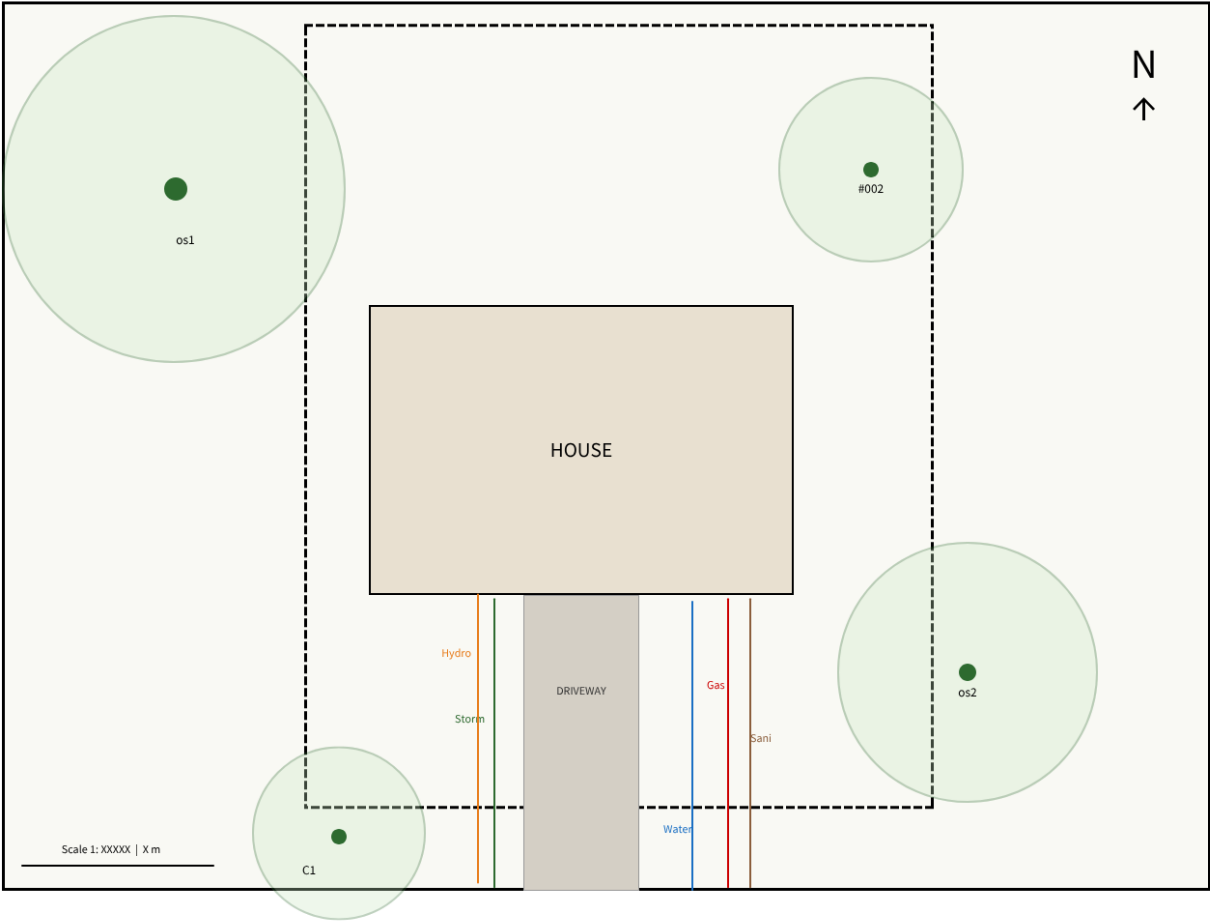
Plans

The next page provides an example of the expected plans to be submitted.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

TREE RETENTION PLAN



LEGEND

- Retained tree (centre + CRZ)
- Tree to be removed (X)
- Water line
- Gas line
- Sanitary line
- Storm line
- Hydro
- Property line

TREE INVENTORY

Tree ID	Species	DBH (cm)	CRZ (m)
#002	Liriodendron tulipifera	50	3.0
Os1	Sequoia sempervirens	105	6.30
Os2	Fagus sylvatica	83	4.98
C1	Quercus robur	40	2.40

NOTES

- Arborist to supervise all work within CRZ
 - Hand-dig only within CRZ
 - Non by-law trees removed from plans
- CRZ= DBH x 6