

Quick Summary: Town of Wellesley Tree Bylaw

The **Town of Wellesley Tree Bylaw** was passed by Annual Town Meeting in 2011 and amended by Special Town Meeting in 2020. (Please refer to the complete bylaw to determine whether it applies to a specific property. Click here for the full text: [Town of Wellesley Zoning Bylaw](#), Section XVII.E.)



Credit: [House & Oak Tree Silhouette Landscape | Company](#)

Purpose of the bylaw:

- To encourage property owners to protect large, mature trees when a property is undergoing construction activities, such as demolition, new construction, or the construction of significant additions.

Trees protected by the bylaw:

- The tree bylaw only applies to trees that are 6 inches in diameter at breast height or larger and located in the "tree yard," which is the area around the perimeter of the property, similar to building setbacks. (The size of the tree yard varies depending on how the property is zoned.)
- These trees are defined as "protected trees".

When to apply the bylaw:

- The tree bylaw only comes into play when an application is made to the Building Department for a permit for one of the following activities:
 - If a project includes **demolition** of a structure that is 250 square feet or larger
 - If a project includes construction of a **retaining wall**
 - If a project includes construction on **vacant lot**; or
 - If a project **enlarges the footprint** of an existing structure (or structures) by 50 percent or more.

What the bylaw requires the property owner to do:

- If a project meets any of the applicable conditions (see above), the property owner must provide a plan identifying the protected trees located on the property, and whether the trees are to be retained and protected or removed.
- If protected trees are to be retained, the plan must show the manner in which the tree will be protected (i.e. chainlink fencing), with additional measures proposed if the entire root zone of the tree is to not be protected with fencing.
- If protected trees are to be removed, the property owners must:
 - Propose new trees to be replanted equaling one inch for every inch of trees removed;
 - Make a financial contribution to the Town's Tree Bank, based on an established formula; and/or
 - Provide documentation from a certified arborist finding that one or more trees is hazardous or diseased.