

## **GREYSTONE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FRONT AND REAR AREA OF TOWNHOME** **(Proposed addition to include Tree Pruning, Removal and Planting... July 2019)**

The standards and guidelines are hereby included for the subject matters listed herein for the front, rear and sides of homes will include requirements for the Greystone Townhomes Community. For the sake of simplicity in these standards and guidelines shall be called "Tree Standard".

It is generally recognized that numerous requests for modifications were formally and informally granted by the developer/prior ARC board(s) during the build out and transition phase(s) of Greystone. It is understood the ARC is not bound by past waivers for future changes to the community guidelines.

**Purpose:** One of the benefits of life at Greystone Townhomes is the beauty of surrounding environment: the landscaping, the green spaces, the proximity to the park, conservation area and full or partial water views. Greystone Townhome's trees are a prominent element that provide benefits of beauty, shade, and moreover contribute to property value; however, as trees grow, they can also cause issues and concern for homeowners. Trees that are obviously growing near the sewer or water lines combined with constant clogs can be one sign of tree root problems. Slow drains or gurgling toilets can be another indicator of something (such as a tree root) may be obstructing a line.



Obvious sinkholes in the yard are another calling card of tree root damage. In some instances, tree roots can clog pipes to the point that water or sewage actually backs into the home, causing a huge health risk and headache for homeowners.

**This standard provides criteria to govern maintenance of the trees, their pruning, removal, planting and/or replanting.**

The Greystone Townhomes CC&Rs are not specific regarding the Association's actions on tree issues. Hence this standard enacted by the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) and approved by the Greystone Board (HOA) is in place to manage the landscaping to provide a balance between beauty, shade and property issues.

All pruning, removal, and planting of trees will be treated equally throughout the community and must be done in consultation with the HOA; however, the HOA and ARC gives special consideration to mature trees because they significantly impact property values. Mature trees are defined as the large Oaks trees that were planted by the original developer to define the character of the green space. The mature Oak trees in Greystone Townhomes typically have a diameter at breast height (DBH) of at least 12 inches.

**Objective/Goal:** To maintain and improve the infrastructure and environmental benefits for the Greystone Townhome community. To maintain a harmonious, and visually integrated appearance with the architecture of the townhome or other contiguous structure, the townhome community and attractive in all seasons and at all times.

## General Information/Definitions:

- Tree – Any living, self-supporting, woody plant which normally grows to a minimum overall height of fifteen (15) feet and usually has a single trunk.
- Canopy Tree\* – Tall trees that form the uppermost leaf layer in a natural landscape as may be required by these regulations.
- Specimen Tree – A particularly fine or unusual example of any tree due to its age, size, rarity, environmental value or exceptional aesthetic quality. A tree may also be designated a specimen due to its association with historic events or persons.
- Credit for Existing Trees and Plant Material. Healthy trees and shrubs existing on the premises may be credited toward meeting the requirements
- Removal - any action to directly, or indirectly, cut down, destroy, remove or relocate, or damage any living tree situated on a property. (Once again, the definition of a tree is any living, self-supporting, woody plant which normally grows to a minimum height of fifteen (15) feet and usually has a single trunk).

\*Canopy Trees shall be a minimum of 4" caliper and 12' height.

**Cost of Installation, Maintenance, Repairs and Replacement:** All costs of acquisition, installation, maintenance, removal or replacement of trees or damaged components shall be borne by the owner when incurred. This includes removal of tree and re-installation when necessitated, Association repairs, such as repair of building structure, townhome pipes, sewage pipes, electrical components, sod replacement, planting materials and painting. **Owner assumes full responsibility and liability for any damage incurred by installation, removal or weather or wind event caused by any tree.**

## Review Process

First, you live in an area that has a Homeowners Association (HOA), you should always seek (*informational*) approval from your HOA and property management team through an ARC Request **before** removing or replacing any landscape material, especially trees. If additional information is required, contact the Greystone Townhome property manager in person, via phone or email.

## Minimum replacement sizes, quality and grade

The replacement tree(s) must meet a size requirement and a quality, or grade consistent with the community appearance.

Shade/Canopy trees – 12'ht, 5' spread, 4" minimum caliper, FL #1 or better (grade)

Intermediate trees – 8'ht, 4' spread, 2" minimum caliper, FL #1 or better (grade)

Small trees – 8'ht, 4' spread, 1 ½" caliper, FL #1 or better (grade)

**Palm Trees:** Since palms generally do not provide significant canopy, in most cases palm trees must only be used as replacements for Intermediate or Small ornamental trees within the landscape. They must also meet certain size requirements, with the minimum clear trunk height starting at 4 feet.

## Greystone Approved Replacement Shade/Canopy Trees and/or Flowering Trees

Little Gem Magnolia



Single Trunk Natchez Crape Myrtle



Dwarf Japanese Blueberry



Tulip Poplar



Flowering Plum



Live Oak Tree (least recommended)  
(Existing trees on property)



**Miscellaneous Central Florida Replacement Trees Recommended by University of Florida  
(Small, Less than 30 feet in height)**

<https://ufdc.ufl.edu/IR00005858/00001>

***(Prior Approval Required by Greystone HOA)***



## Process

The City of Sanford no longer requires an Arbor Permit to remove, prune, top or plant a residential tree within the Greystone Townhome community. The State of Florida passed (04-26-2019) **CS/HB 1159 Private Property Rights** which went in effect on **07/01/2019**. In summary, *“The bill prohibits local governments from requiring a permit, application, notice, fee, approval, or mitigation for the pruning, trimming, or removal of a tree on residential property **upon documentation by a certified arborist or licensed landscape architect**, and prohibits local governments from requiring a property owner to replant a tree that is maintained under the specified conditions”*. The HOA will require an ARC *informational application* to “...maintain and improve the infrastructure and environmental benefits for the Greystone Townhome community. To maintain a harmonious, and visually integrated appearance with the architecture of the townhome or other contiguous structures, the townhome community and attractive in all seasons and at all times”.

- An owner makes an application request to have a tree pruned, removed, or planted. This can be done in writing or via email using the ARC Application found on the community website. Include facts and circumstances for such request (please be detailed). Include any images of the tree, it's roots, damaged area, proposed planting, etc.
- ***If a tree removal is requested, an arborist or landscape evaluation must accompany the application request.***
- The ARC committee adds the application request to the ARC meeting agenda.
- In cases where an owner's request and the arborist's plan of action differ, the owner may opt to address the ARC committee directly at the monthly ARC monthly meeting.
- Two (2) members of the ARC committee does a walk-around to view the area.
- The five (5) member ARC committee votes on the request. Homeowner is notified with seventy-two (72) hours of committee's decision.
- Approval is granted or additional information may be requested
- The project may commence.
- Once project is complete, two (2) members of the ARC committee does a walk-around to view the completed project.
- ARC request is marked closed/complete. (ARC request may remain open for up to ninety (90) days.



## Pruning

Based on the advice of an arborist specifically for Greystone Townhomes:

- All trees are pruned to maintain or improve their structure.
- Not more than one-third of the volume of foliage can be removed in a single pruning.
  - The ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) standard pruning for a tree must first consider the health and age of the tree.
  - Trees that are considered healthy and actively growing can have up to one-third of the canopy pruned within one growing season.
  - Trees that are newly planted, mature, or overly stressed should have less than one-third pruned per growing season.
- The ISA does not find it acceptable to ever top a tree. ISA classifies pollarding as a specific type of pruning only for certain species trees.
- Drop-crotching is an acceptable form of pruning as long as:
  - No more than one-third of the canopy is pruned (assuming it is of age and healthy).
  - ISA standard pruning practice requires that a heading cut (limb reduction) must not exceed one-third the diameter of where you are cutting back to.
  - If the limb that you drop-crotch or reduce is greater than one-third the size of what is left the remaining limb will not be able to support itself and will most likely die.
- Vista pruning (i.e., creating visual access to lakes, rivers, and valleys) is possible without the need to top a tree.

The ARC committee works to maintains views and tree safety as much as possible with biannual pruning of trees. Every effort should be made to maintain the Oak trees in a healthy and responsibly pruned condition.



## Removal

The ARC committee may consult with an arborist (or similar expert) about a tree's condition and have the expert provide his expert opinion on a course of action.

- The arborist will indicate whether a tree is healthy, and if not, will explain the tree's condition and impact on its surroundings (e.g., what is impacting the tree's health, whether the tree poses a risk to other vegetation or structures).
- Trees that are healthy and pose no risk to property or people should not be removed.



- Trees that the arborist recommends for removal should be removed.

It is recognized that in some scenarios, a tree may grow in an unintended space or damage a homeowner's property. It is also recognized that a tree that damages homeowner's property may damage another homeowner (e.g., water/sewer pipes, sidewalks, etc.). The following criteria will provide the basis for deciding how / when to prune and remove trees if and when removal is not recommended by an arborist:

- Proximity of the tree: The location of the tree with regard to proximity to other units (as measured by the shortest straight line to an external wall of a unit's exterior wall). Units situated closer or closest to the tree will have more weight when the committee considers its decision.
- Oak Heritage trees: Oak Heritage trees are removed as a last resort, only as the result of a specific recommendation from the arborist and damage caused by said tree.

After considering the criteria, the ARC committee can opt to have a healthy tree removed. Owners have the option to appeal the decision to the HOA Board or Compliance Committee for further consideration.

**If tree is removed, stump grinding, or stump removal is required.** Tree replacement and/or sod replacement is based on application request and ARC approval.

### **Importance of Excavating/Grinding Tree Stumps**

Eliminating the stumps in your yard is one of the most important aspects of tree removal and should be executed carefully. Apart from improving the aesthetics and any sanitation concerns (mold), it also ensures the safety of family members and neighbors. Stump grinding is an intricate process that excavates the stump of the tree without removing the root. In this situation, a stump grinder is employed to mechanically grind out the stump, leaving fine sawdust as a residue. The advantage of tree stump grinding is that the stump is ground down to your desired height. The grinding can be just 1 inch below the soil level or as low as 12 inches underground. It is possible that there are stumps that can't grind all the way down because they are too close to utility lines. **USE CAUTION! Rupturing a utility line is serious. Locating, relocating and/or damaging service lines is the owner's responsibility.** Call 811 from your phone, the answering service is automated and operates 24/7. Utility departments come out at no charge, with spray can to mark the different lines. Power, water, sewer, cable, sprinkler system, sprinkler heads will need to be marked. Depths of utility lines vary from home to home and the grinding depth may vary as well.



## Planting

When an existing tree dies or an owner would like a tree added, a replacement or new tree is planted with the following conditions:

- The location has a water supply that supports the nurturing of a newly planted tree.
- The location is on Homeowner's property. Trees on the side of the property line adjacent to the conservation area will be given special consideration.
- The timing of the planting gives the new tree the best chance for survival — typically Spring, early Summer. However, the ARC plan is to replace dead/removed trees with new trees as quickly as possible.

## Background Information

### CC&Rs

The Greystone Townhomes CC&Rs are not specific regarding the Association's actions on tree issues. Hence this standard enacted by the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) and approved by the Greystone Board (HOA) is in place to manage the landscaping to provide a balance between beauty, shade and property issues. The fiduciary duty of the Board to maintain property values appears in other parts of the CC&Rs.

The following excerpts from the CC&Rs are relevant:

Section 7.2. through Section 7.11



## Resources

It is generally acknowledged that trees enhance the quality of life and add property value.

### Trees Add Value

- From ["How Your Garden Grows: The Effect of Trees on Property Value"](#): Your next home improvement project may be as simple as planting a tree. What's the best return on investment for home improvements that increase your home's value? What are some of the common characteristics of old, wealthy neighborhoods? Think about it. Most of them have big, old trees! Plant a tree in your yard. The value of a tree in your yard will increase as it grows
- [EarthShare](#) notes that the top 10 benefits of trees include: clean air, jobs, clean water, carbon sequestration, reduced crime, increased property values, mental health, temperature control, flood control, and wildlife habitat.

## Strategic Pruning versus Topping

- As an example of industry-standard practice, [Peterson's Tree Works](#) notes that:
  - Topping reduces a tree's food-making capacity.
  - Topping stimulates the regrowth of dense, unattractive, upright branches (water sprouts) just below the pruning cut.
  - Topping leaves large wounds so insects, and fungi can attack and decay the branch and spread to the trunk, killing the tree.
  - Topping creates a hazard as weakened stubs are more prone to wind and storm breakage because they generally begin to die back and decay.

To avoid topping, when a mature tree's height must be reduced, an alternative to topping is drop-crotching. Drop-crotching is a type of thinning cut that reduces a tree's size while preserving its natural shape. This type of thinning cut stimulates growth throughout the tree and discourages water sprout development.