Village at Mount Hope Bay Tree Planting, Care, and Removal Policy
Updated December 18, 2024

Two of VMHB's greatest assets—our trees and our views—may occasionally conflict. Our stunning views of the bay and our beautiful mature trees both contribute to VMHB's desirability. These large specimen trees are invaluable to our community and should be preserved whenever possible. Obviously, trees grow, and the view that was there when residents moved in will not be the same as the view over time. In most cases, tree silhouettes soften harsh roof lines and make the view more interesting. Also, many larger trees have reached or are near their mature height.

All trees belong to VMHB, and the Board of Directors is responsible for all landscaping throughout the property. No trees in any common or limited common areas shall be pruned, altered, or removed by homeowners/residents. If a homeowner feels a tree should be pruned or removed, a detailed request stating the reasons should be submitted to the Property Manager using the Tree Removal Request form.

Tree Planting
Homeowners are prohibited from planting trees without permission from the Landscape Chair and the Board. Contact the Property Manager to request a tree be planted in your personal garden area (PGA).

Tree Pruning
To be done for the following reasons:
1. Too close to buildings
2. Health of the tree
3. Aesthetic considerations
4. Safety of residents
5. Limbing up for lawn mowing and garden maintenance
6. Thinning of the canopy to improve views

Homeowners may not prune trees. Some pruning jobs may be done by VMHB personnel as assigned by the Property Manager or Landscape Chair. Major pruning is to be done professionally, following professional standards.

The HOA does not top trees. Ultimately, a topped tree requires more attention in the future than a properly pruned tree. If topping doesn't kill the tree, topped trees regain their original height quickly, often within a year or two, depending on growing conditions. Topping requires continuous live branch removal to keep up with excessive growth and weakly attached branches. This constant pruning has adverse effects on tree health and can result in tree death. Ultimately, topping can be quite expensive. (See the fact sheet on the Landscape Committee page of the website for more information.)

Tree Removal
Appropriate pruning and thinning should be considered as an alternative to removal of any healthy tree.

Trees may be considered for removal for various reasons. The HOA will remove trees at the Association's expense if they are judged to be dead, dying, diseased, or structurally unsound and cannot be saved.

Healthy trees may be removed with the Board of Directors' approval, with input from the Landscape Committee and the On-Site Tree Removal Committee. Using their best judgment and input from the

Landscape Chair, this Committee will identify and notify all homeowners who may be affected by the removal of a healthy tree and ask for input. In some cases, the entire community may be affected.

Preservation of a bay view is considered, but privacy concerns and screening offered to affected residents will also be considered. Homeowners must realize that as trees grow, they expand into areas once not covered by the younger trees. Views are considered from the primary west-facing deck.

The following conditions may be considered for removal of a healthy tree or tree trunk:
1. It is too close to buildings and the situation cannot be corrected by pruning
2. It presents safety hazards to residents or contracted services
3. There was overplanting by either the association during development or a nature-loving homeowner
4. It obscures one-third or more of a homeowner's view of the entire bay from the primary deck
5. It is overly messy for the site

Financial responsibility for tree removal is largely decided by the source of the problem and is determined by the Board. For example, if the roots of a tree planted in a common area damage an adjacent homeowner's walkway or patio, the association would be responsible for the tree's removal and related repairs. If a tree is damaged or diseased because of the property owner's neglect, or if the owner requests the removal of a healthy tree, that owner must pay the bill for its removal.

Trees that are removed may or may not be replaced, based on the situation. If it is determined that a replacement tree is necessary, the costs will be borne by the homeowner(s) requesting its removal.