

**Business Impact Estimate Form (see F.S. § 125.66(3)(a))**

**For:**

Chapter 138 and Chapter 166. Tree Ordinance

This Ordinance amendment is scheduled for second public hearing by the Pinellas County Commission on January 20, 2026 at 9:30 AM at 333 Chestnut Street, Palm Room, Clearwater, Florida 33756

*\* Unless an attachment is expressly referenced, the content in this Form encompasses the entire Business Impact Estimate for the Ordinance.*

**1. Summary of the Ordinance, including a statement of the public purpose to be served by the Ordinance, such as serving the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the County:** *[This Section does not need to be lengthy. The Recitals ("WHEREAS" Clauses), or the "Purpose" or "Legislative Intent" Sections of the Ordinance, may be helpful to reference.]*

To more effectively regulate the county's tree permitting process, revise tree replant requirements and landscaping requirements for residential and commercial properties, Chapters 166 and 138 of the LDC are being revised. Provisions related to tree permitting from these sections are being combined into a stand-alone tree ordinance in Chapter 58-Environment, and remaining provisions in Chapter 166 (Habitat Protection) and Chapter 138, Article X, Division 3 (Landscaping Requirements) are being updated.

The overarching goal with the update is to get to an improved outcome of optimizing tree canopy retention and incentivizing trees being planted on private property. The drivers include the formulation of a practical methodology to tree removal mitigation, calibrating required trees on residential lots and providing flexibility with landscape compliance.

The following is a summary of the updates:

- Move tree permitting and replacement requirements from LDC chapters to create a stand-alone tree code in Chapter 58 - Environment.
- Redefine tree replacement requirements for permitted tree removal.
- Revise and simplify the tree rating system.
- Revise minimum trees per lot requirement for residential properties.
- Clarify language requiring compliance with previously approved site plans.
- Designate payment in lieu of replanting amounts for residential and commercial properties.

**WHEREAS Clauses:**

**WHEREAS** tree removal frequently occurs independent of development activities; and

**WHEREAS**, protecting and enhancing the urban and natural tree canopy reduces stormwater runoff, improves air quality, decreases urban heat island effects, and provides shade and habitat; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan instructs staff to encourage and incentivize the use of Florida Friendly Landscaping practices when evaluating development and redevelopment proposals; and

**WHEREAS**, the Local Planning Agency held a duly noticed and advertised public hearing on November 12, 2025 as to the proposed Ordinance and recommends that the Board of County Commissioners approve the proposed amendments contained therein; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners finds that proposed amendments to the Land Development Code as set forth herein are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the review requirements set forth in the Land Development Code.

**2. An estimate of the direct economic impact of the Ordinance on private, for-profit businesses in the County, including the following, if any:**

The ordinance updates will result in beneficial economic impacts on private and for-profit businesses within the unincorporated County based on:

- reduced costs associated with tree placement requirements and required landscaping
- reduced costs associated with lower fixed mitigation fees associated with the payment-in-lieu option for tree mitigation

It is important to clarify that any estimate of direct economic impact will fluctuate year over year correlated to site plan volume, building permit volume and tree/habitat permits. Qualitatively, the benefits will be significant at a property owner level and also in aggregate.

**3. A good faith estimate of the number of businesses likely to be impacted by the Proposed Ordinance:** Similar to the direct economic impact explanation, an estimate of businesses that would benefit will fluctuate year over year correlated to site plan volume and building permit volume. A good faith estimate would be from 200 to 400 business annually benefiting from the ordinance update.

**4. Any additional information the BCC deems useful:** *[This Section is not legally required.]*