

TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE INTENT AND PURPOSE

- **Protect and preserve as many trees and ecological assets and services as possible.**
- Prohibit loss of high value habitat and areas of high biodiversity
- Balance City development goals: affordability, mobility, growth
- Implement a clear and consistent process
- Ensure there are equitable distribution of benefits and costs for all residents
- Align the TPO with other environmental and development requirements adopted within the City

I like this!

Not so much...

Missing/Other:

WHAT SHOULD ATLANTA'S METHOD LOOK LIKE?

TREE ASSESSMENT

A ranking system based on:

- Size
- Species
- Condition
- Location/Contribution
- Tree Groupings

Categories could be:

- High (most protection),
- Medium (moderate protection),
- Low (not as much protection),
- No value (these trees can go, invasives, etc.)

Only defining Excellent and High value trees

Only defining Specimen

Points or Formula: Protection compliance based on total point value of individual tree(s).

EXAMPLES FROM OTHER MUNICIPALITIES:

1 Definition only
 "Exceptional tree" means a tree or group of trees that because of its unique historical, ecological, or aesthetic value constitutes an important community resource, and is determined as such by the Director according to standards and procedures promulgated by the Department.

2 Excellent and High value:
 Any tree which qualifies for special consideration for preservation due to its size, type, condition, location or historical significance and which also meets the minimum size criteria set forth below:

Tree Size Criteria

- Pine Trees:** 30-inch diameter or larger for trees in the Pinus (Pine) genus.
- Coniferous Trees:** 20" diameter or larger for trees in the cedrus (deodar cedar), Thuja (Arborvitae), or other ecologically similar trees,
- Overstory Trees:** 30-inch diameter or larger for trees in the Liquidambar (Sweetgum) or Liriodendron (Tulip poplar) genus
- 20-inch diameter or larger** for trees in the Fagus (Beech), Nyssa (Tupelo), Diospyros (Persimmon), Sassafras (Sassafras), or other ecologically similar trees,
- 20-inch diameter or larger** for Magnolia grandiflora (Southern magnolia) and those cultivars that generally reach a mature height over 40'
- 24-inch (24") diameter or larger** for trees in all other genera
- Understory Trees:** 8-inch (8") diameter or larger.
- 10-inch (10") diameter or larger** for Oxydendron arboretum (Sourwood).

3 Total value and criteria ratings:
 To assess trees, the Trunk Formula method establishes the monetary value of the tree based on its size (as measured by the cross-sectional area of the trunk) and then adjusts for the tree's condition, species, and location.

1. Condition
2. Species. Evaluation ratings based on:
 - a. Tree stature (canopy size) at maturity
 - b. Expected tree life span

Stature	Longevity	Ratings	Examples
Large	Long	100%	Tree 1
Large	Medium	95%	Tree 2
Medium	Long	95%	Tree 3

continued...

3. Location
 - a. Site

High	100-90%	The site is in a park or landscaped area with ample belowground and overhead growing space The species is tolerant of the site's difficult growing conditions
Medium	90-70%	Physical space limitations at the site will challenge the success of the tree over time The species is only moderately tolerant of the site's difficult growing conditions

continued...

- b. Placement

High	100-90%	The tree is a native species in or adjacent to a natural area or large park The tree is a historic specimen or part of a grove, or is an original planting in historic landscape
Medium	90-70%	The tree is one of a group of plantings and its individual loss would have minimal visual or environmental impact on the entire group

continued...

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Protection standards could be:

- Protect all high value trees possible
- Protect percentage of trees/tree value
- Must meet minimum tree density by preservation or replanting regardless of existing conditions (trees on site)

Consider this:

Encourage better site design and lower impact construction

Alternative design and construction methods such as:

- Minimized site grading
- Foundation walls & piers
- Boring vs open cut for utilities
- Retaining walls
- Smaller building footprint
- Vegetated Roofs

What else?

Regulations could reference or include:

Technical guides:

Best practices sponsored by the City.

Credits:

- Stormwater
- Replanting
- Tree Protection/Preservation
- Conservation easement

Exemptions:

- Affording a buildable lot
- Environmental restoration or remediation
- Dam maintenance

Incentives:

- Flex Zoning
- Tax
- Fee credit
- Streamlined process with no appeal/posting required

Process:

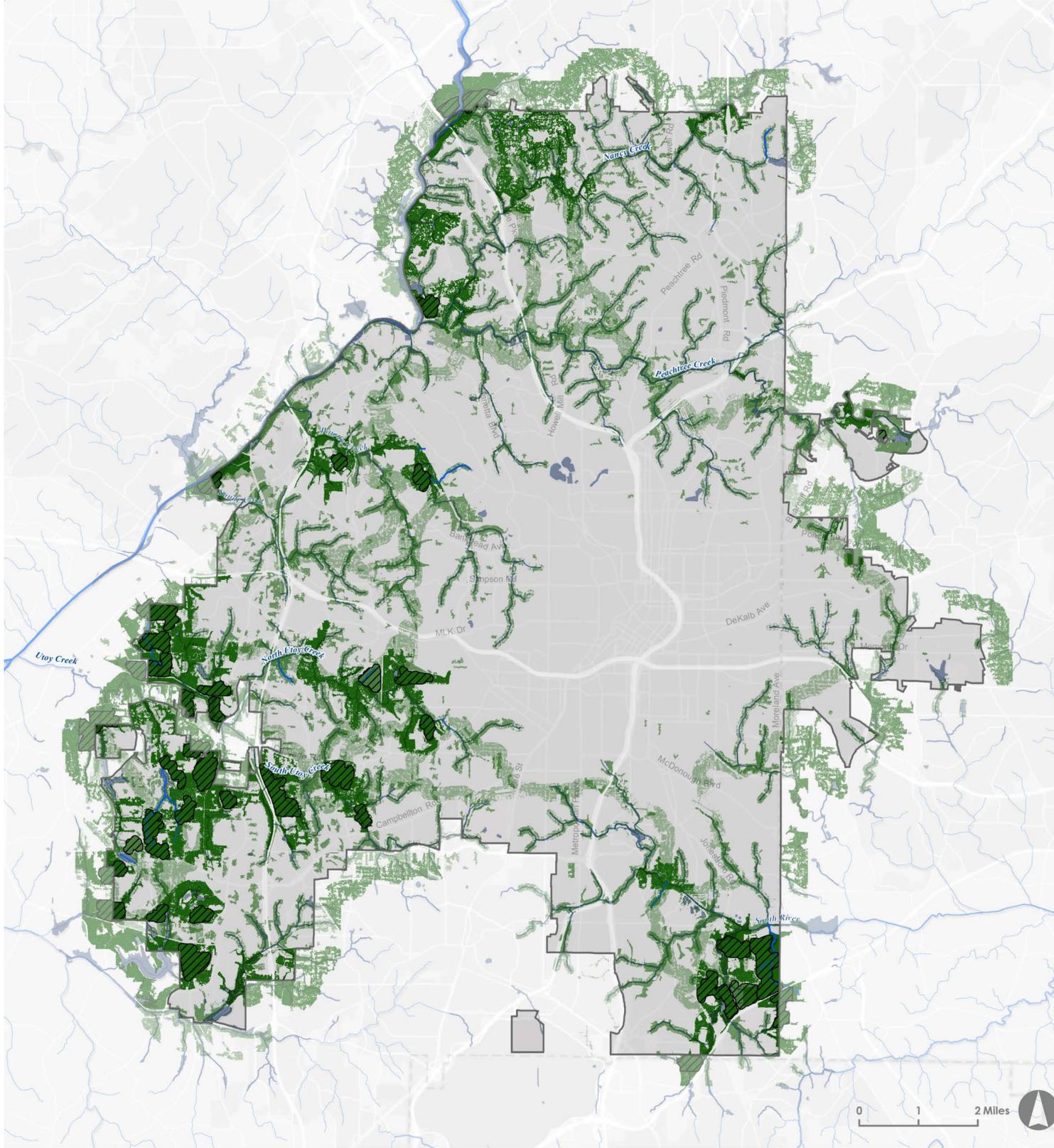
- Pre-submittal meetings
- Variances (through Tree Conservation Commission)
- Assessment required for submittal

City assistance, where needed

- City staff conducting assessments
- City contracted arborists on retainer

Comments/Other:

PROTECTION ZONES



Legend	Descriptions:
	Atlanta City Limits + Streets + Radial Streets — Radial streets identified in City Design, Design for Connections.
	Streams Creeks Rivers + Riparian Corridors — 100yr floodplains, streams, and stream buffers measured from 300' on each side of stream centerlines.
	Forest Connectivity Corridors — Areas of high animal connectivity importance between Interior Forest Cores.
	High Biodiversity Areas — Areas of highest habitat and biodiversity value, including: interior forest cores, mature forest and soils, floodplain forest, and wetlands.
	Interior Forest Core — Continuous tree canopy from 2014 data, not over impervious surface, that is 300' from any forest edge.

What would happen here:

- Avoid removal of trees wherever possible
- Encourage smart and sustainable development
- Ensure balance for areas of overlap with City Design growth areas

Note: Data, boundaries and geographies to be confirmed by City

Potential regulations specific to these zones

- Minimized disruption of intact large forest (development should occur on the edges)
- Tree Assessment required
- Required pre-submittal reviews
- Special replanting standards (more stringent)
- Appeal process
- Exemptions
- Stronger enforcement

What else?

Due Diligence//Point A//Pre-Application

A pre-submission meeting program intended to aid the navigation of the City's development processes. It will serve as an opportunity for customers to meet with reps from the City's plan review agencies to discuss and refine project plans and scope in an open, yet organized, format. Bringing challenges or process clarifications to the forefront of the project with the right individuals in the room will decrease the number of follow-ups down the road thereby streamlining the review process and saving time for both applicant and the City. The City will take this opportunity to learn about successes of existing process, implement where lacking and eliminate where necessary.

What does this look like?

The stand of oaks now preserved due to tree preservation and ecological benefits at the forefront of site & project design.
Mr. Potato Head buildings now contributing elevated design towards Atlanta streets and residents.
Micro-living options in a historic building with innovative, yet unfamiliar building code and construction approaches.
A nonprofit campus wanting to do creative, thoughtful reuse in the face of pre-existing site and legal conditions.
Owner of a complex site feeling confident about navigating the City site development and permitting processes.
A well-thought through site protecting Atlanta's watershed & ecological assets while contributing to responsible growth.
A successful meshing of often conflicting interests (density and ecology, transit and affordability) played out on one site.

The Why:

- **A BETTER ATLANTA:** Emphasize design and innovation in development and construction
- **CUSTOMER SERVICE:** Provide technical assistance and a roadmap of feasibility
- **EFFICIENCY:** Improve process and service improvement both externally and internally
- **APPROACHABLE:** Allowing for increased transparency and engagement with COA

The How:

Pilot Program for 1 year
Dedicated coordinator to monitor workload, coordinate schedule, customer liaison
Dedicated Chair to provide committee guidance, make decisions
Customer application to determine attendees and project type
Biweekly meetings of Committee
Log of comments/Deliverable for customer – avoid interpretations of varying reviewers after submittal
Commitment to not extend review timeline or accentuate the regulations
Data tracking and reporting – analysis of program to assess strengths and weaknesses

The Stakeholders:

Representatives from various City departments who address design, development, and construction issues including design, historic preservation, building codes, zoning requirements, stormwater management regulations, traffic impacts, fire codes, and right-of-way improvements.

Office of Buildings – Plan Review	Building Code
Office of Buildings – Arborist	Tree Protection Ordinance
Office of Buildings – Fire Review	NFPA
Office of Zoning & Development	Zoning Code
Office of Mobility Planning	Mobility
Office of Housing & Community Development	Housing
Office of Design – Atlanta City Studio	Design
Office of Design – Historic Preservation	Historic Design

Non-DCP agencies

Department of Watershed Management	Site Design
Atlanta Fire & Rescue Department	Code & Design
Department of Public Works - Traffic	Streets

Potential to add on case-by-case basis:

Office of Cultural Affairs	Arts
Office of Resilience	Sustainability

What projects should go through this process?

Missing or other:

DOING EVERYTHING RIGHT

IF

Saving high value trees AND contributing to mobility in Atlanta.

The project is...

- Building within proximity to MARTA stations - 1/2 mile.
- OR
- Offering alternative options to increase walking, biking and transit to residents, tenants or lessees (bike racks, subsidized transit passes, bike shares, etc.)

Other variables:

THEN

Streamlined review process

- Flexibility with other development regulations
- Dedicated staff for review, inspections
- No postings
- No appeal options

What else?

Saving high value trees AND contributing to affordability in Atlanta.

The project is:

- Providing X# of affordable units (qualified by AMI)
- OR
- Using affordable housing funding (City and other)
- OR
- Housing elderly or student
- OR
- Offering subsidized commercial rents and/by supplementing with grants (civic or community spaces)

Other variables:

NON-CONSTRUCTION RELATED

A property owner wanting to remove trees (healthy, dead, dying or hazardous) for purposes unrelated to construction. Existing areas with existing infrastructure.

PROPOSED

Ability to remove one (1) non-high value tree per year no matter the condition

Provisions could include:

- Required permit with the City (free and easy). Allows for tracking and quality control.
- Replant of equal value on site unless meeting established tree densities
- Count exemptions for hazardous, emergency, diseased and/or dying.
- Include trees that are potential threats to retaining walls and/or other structural and support on site.
- Applicant appeal or variance options only when considering high-value tree removal

What else?

DON'T LIKE THIS?

Uncomfortable with this scenario. Tell us what you would like to see:

How many trees should you be able to remove?

How often?