ARBOURIST PROCESS FLOW

Common Arborist Information
- Contact the Arborist Division by phone at (404) 330-6874 or email at arborist.dpcd@atlantaga.gov
- Contact the Parks Customer Service Call Center by phone at 404.546.6813 or by email at parkscustomerservice@atlantaga.gov to discuss public property tree matters.
- To view parcel and property data, visit our GIS website at gis.atlantaga.gov
- To find all of our Arborist forms and checklists visit our webpage at https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/departments/city-planning/office-of-buildings/arborist-division/arborist-forms-and-checklists
- To view our Tree Protection Ordinance online visit our webpage at https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/departments/city-planning/office-of-buildings/arborist-division
- To learn more about the Tree Conservation Commission and the tree appeal process visit our webpage at https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/departments/city-planning/office-of-buildings/arborist-division/tree-conservation-commission

Tree Concern? Start here.
- Is the tree on private property?
  - No: Contact City Arborists in the Department of Parks and Recreation.
  - Yes: Is the tree on your property?
    - Yes: Are you looking to appeal a tree posting?
      - No: Give us a call or visit gis.atlantaga.gov.
      - Yes: Is the tree a threat to the public right-of-way?
        - No: See Section 158-26, 158-102, & 158-109 for clarification.
        - Yes: Submit request to Arborist Division to be inspected. A field arborist will determine if it is a nuisance tree.
    - No: Are you concerned about tree health?
      - No: Contact a private Arborist for consultation.
      - Yes: This would be a civil matter between private property owners.

Want to remove a tree? Start here.
- Is the tree on private property?
  - No: Start here.
  - Yes: Is the tree an undesirable species?
    - No: Is the tree healthy?
      - No: Contact City Arborists in the Department of Parks and Recreation.
      - Yes: Is the tree within 5 ft. of dwelling foundation?
        - No: Submit construction plans, including site plan with Arborist requirements, to the appropriate workstream in the Office of Buildings. Plans will be routed for review by the Arborist Division. Sign posting and recompense, or combination of tree planting and recompense is required.
        - Yes: Submit three (3) copies of a site plan, with requirements, to the Arborist Division as a landscape or silvicultural plan. Posting and recompense, or combination of tree planting and recompense is required. You may not be approved to remove the tree.
    - Yes: You may file an appeal to be heard by the Tree Conservation Commission. Note: A neighbor may not appeal the approval of a tree to be removed through the DDH inspection process.
      - Is the tree being removed as part of proposed site construction?
        - Yes: Submit a DDH (dead, dying, hazardous) inspection request. A City field arborist will schedule a visit to the property to assess the tree, and send results via mail or e-mail.
        - No: Contact the Arborist Division. This tree could be considered DDH (dead, dying, hazardous) and will need City field arborist review.
      - No: See Section 158-102 (b) for clarification.
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

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<th>Stature</th>
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<tr>
<td>Large</td>
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<td>Tree 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>Tree 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>Tree 3</td>
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3. Location
   a. Site
   b. Placement

   | High 100-90% | The site is in a park or landscaped area with ample background and overhead growing space. The species is tolerant of the site’s difficult growing conditions.
   | Medium 70-90% | 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.
   | 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 70-90% | The tree is one of a group of plantings and its individual loss would have minimal visual or environmental impact on the entire group.
**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
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?
What projects should go through this process?

**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 trees now preserved due to tree preservation and ecological benefits at the forefront of site & project design. Mr. Potato Head buildings now contributing designed 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.

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**Potential to add on case-by-case basis:**
- Office of Cultural Affairs: Arts
- Office of Resilience: Sustainability

**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**

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/or supplanting with grants (civic or community spaces)

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

What else?
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

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?

What else?