The motive for a study of nature
Community input so far
Critical components
Current state
City of Atlanta Tree Ordinance background
BOTTOM LINE

- The ordinance is not effective for tree protection as it’s written today.
- The ordinance lacks clarity and legibility for consistent interpretation.
- The process is unpredictable for those moving through the permitting system.
- Appetite for increased administrative capacity.
- Thoughtful and data driven policy changes are desired.
NOT CHANGING IS NOT AN OPTION.
THE MOST STRATEGIC SCENARIO FOR GROWTH INCLUDES EVERYONE.
OUR APPROACH

When we’re at our best, Atlanta celebrates this juxtaposition of a vibrant city and a verdant forest. With our core values in mind, therefore, we’ll base our approach to the design of the city on this enduring logic.

Design for People
Design for Nature
Design for People in Nature
THIS IS HOW ATLANTA GROWS ANYWAY. WE’RE JUST GOING TO BE MORE INTENTIONAL ABOUT IT.
Growth Areas
Growth will be organized into already-developed areas that are suitable to taking on growth. These growth areas represent an enormous capacity that, if properly designed, can easily accommodate Atlanta's expanding population.

Conservation Areas
The rest of the city will be protected from overwhelming growth. These Conservation Areas represent ecological value, historic character and housing options that, if properly designed, can make living with all those new neighbors a pleasure.
NATURE: URBAN ECOLOGY FRAMEWORK

PROTECT, RESTORE, ACCENTUATE

50% TREE CANOPY

STRATEGIC REPLANTING

INTERNAL COORDINATION & PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE REWRITE
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DESIGN FOR WILNESS
DESIGN FOR COMFORT
DESIGN FOR RETREAT & ADVENTURE
DESIGN FOR CONNECTIONS
DESIGN FOR LIFESTYLE
PROTECT RESTORE ACCENTUATE

with CITY DESIGN

Opportunities to apply ecological design and development principles, to protect, restore, build upon (see EcoClusters development principles)

- Nature Spaces
- High Quality Forest to Protect
- Forest Connectivity Corridors
- Restore Tree Canopy

- City Design Core
- City Design Clusters
- City Design Growth Corridors
RESTORE - TREE CANOPY

How do we get to 50%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Design Category</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Change needed</th>
<th>Major Initiative*</th>
<th>Protect &amp; Plant^</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clusters</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corridors</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>+3%</td>
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<td>Production Areas</td>
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<td>-1%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>+5%</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

*Major public realm tree planting of diverse tree species, soil volume, tree management and replacement initiative
^ Protection of tree canopy and new planting of diverse species

Key Actions

- Protection of existing tree canopy using the previously identified protection zones
- Major young forest initiative to plant 3,600 new acres of trees and manage to maturity
- Annual replacement of dead trees outside forests.
- City wide public realm tree inventory to inform new planting and management
- Assessment of tree mortality and demographics to track trajectory of forest and planted public realm trees.
PROTECTING OUR NATURAL IDENTITY
Rewriting the Tree Protection Ordinance
BECAUSE...TREES MATTER

PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY
including habitat for migrating birds and pollinators

REDUCING OBESITY LEVELS
by increasing physical activity including walking and cycling

MANAGING STORMWATER,
keeping pollutants out of waterways, and reducing urban flooding

INCREASING
neighborhood property values

REDUCING STRESS
by helping interrupt thought patterns that lead to anxiety and depression

REDUCING RATES
of cardiac disease, strokes, and asthma due to improved air quality

COOLING
city streets by 2-4°F, reducing deaths from heat and cutting energy use

FILTERING
up to a third of fine particle pollutants within 300 yards of a tree
WE MUST WORK DIFFERENTLY
DCP received input from a diverse set of audiences ranging from advocacy groups (Tree Next Door, City in the Forest), environmental based non-profits (South River Watershed Alliance, Trees Atlanta), engaged residents, the Development Industry (Council for Quality Growth, Greater Home Builders Association of Atlanta), and more.

**Engaged residents**
- Atlanta’s tree canopy is special and a major source of pride and enjoyment
- Allow for flexibility with homeowners going through non-development processes
- Increase education and support for tree protection and maintenance

**Advocacy groups**
- Support more protection and preservation of trees early in the process
- Stronger enforcement
- Plant more native trees
- Preserve and conserve land
- Ordinance needs more definition and clarity
- Build smarter, more environment-nally sensitive (grading, soils, etc.)

**Development industry**
- Homebuilders, homeowners, and property owners want to protect our natural environment AND have the homes the citizens of Atlanta need.
- Imperative that property owners must be able to fully utilize the “buildable area” of their lot.
- Improve the process to be more consistent and reliable
- Align standards with other ordinances and agencies
- Affordability concerns with more stringent regulation - will increase cost to build

**City agencies**
- Replanting standards and processes often hinder public projects funding and schedules. Ideal to have alignment with private development standards.
- Need for better communication and coordination among city agencies, potential centralization
SMALL LOT SF

Meets R-5 Zoning

Loss of large specimen tree

$1,365 in recompense

What can we do better?

Existing conditions

Approved in the current state
COMMERCIAL

Existing conditions

Allowed in the current state
Proposed to the City

After early design conversations
Proposed to the City

After early design conversations
TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE FRAMEWORK

CONSERVATION

GROWTH

PUBLIC & PRIVATE REALM
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
CRITICAL COMPONENTS
CONCEPT REVIEW COMMITTEE (CRC)

Beginning September 1, 2023, any projects seeking to submit for rezonings or subdivisions will need to consult with the CRC prior to submitting with the Department of City Planning.

The CRC is an independent advisory committee designed to aid residents in completing the CRC's vision for more sustainable, livable, and vibrant neighborhoods. The CRC monitors and provides input on tree protection during the development process. The CRC is a permanent advisory body consisting of representatives of neighborhood associations, other civic groups, the Department of City Planning, and City Planning staff.

Tree Assessment
Protection standards for development
Protection zones
Doing everything right

Pre-submittal meeting
Non-construction tree removal
Enforcement
Resources
PUBLIC: NATURE INTERTWINED WITH ATLANTA’S STREET EXPERIENCE

• Preserve high value areas and provide protection of existing canopy and streetscapes
• A strategic focus on increasing green experiences; less on replanting and replacement and more on ensuring the healthy, green public realm Atlanta envisions
• Align standards with private property thresholds while providing for the challenges and limited flexibility of public scopes of work

Tree Assessment Method
ISA’s guide for plant appraisal
 iTree

City Street Tree Standards
Canopy that provides benefit to public and environment using the streets as the vehicle, i.e. shade, enjoyment, heat island, emissions, traffic calming, etc.
Emphasis on ensuring the success of the tree health.
Exploring silva cells, continuous soils, etc.

Tree Bank
Flexibility for replanting to not hinder public projects
Option for resident engagement
PRIVATE: THE NATURE OUTSIDE YOUR FRONT DOOR

- Protect and preserve all high value trees

**DEVELOPMENT**

Tree Assessment Method
ISA’s guide for plant appraisal
iTree
City assistance, where needed

Concept Review Committee
Pre-submittal meeting for certain thresholds

Variance Review Board
if removing high value trees, seek a variance

Replanting and maintenance
Replant lower value when removed
Bond program

Tree Bank
Pay where protection and replanting not possible
Option for resident engagement

Doing it right
streamlined postings, appeals and permit process

**NON-CONSTRUCTION**

Tree Assessment Method
ISA’s guide for plant appraisal
iTree
City assistance, where needed

Flexibility
Allowances to remove healthy trees
Exemptions

Variance Review Board
if removing high value trees, seek a variance

Replanting and maintenance
Replant any value when removed

**GROWTH**

**CONSERVATION**
THE NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>DBH</th>
<th>DBH, unknown*</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>TCI</th>
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<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>8,284</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>392</td>
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<td>Infrastructure</td>
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<td>Illegal Activity</td>
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<td>2,506</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>179</td>
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<td>Plan Review</td>
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<td>38,903</td>
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<td>Totals for FY14-FY19</td>
<td>50,574</td>
<td>720,386</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>40,329</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Approved</th>
<th>Denied</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dead, Dying, Hazardous</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY19</td>
<td>5,636</td>
<td>7,702</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY18</td>
<td>5,336</td>
<td>7,337</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>10,972</td>
<td>15,039</td>
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</table>

*Does not include FY14-17 numbers for Dead, dying, or hazardous trees
*Does not include applications for tree removal on public property (managed by DPR)
Established in 2001
Associated Tree Trust Fund and Tree Conservation Commission
Multiple efforts to update over time, resulting in minor tweaks

Last major effort
2006: Atlanta Tree Ordinance Task Force changes adopted in 2006
July 2007: Legislation to contract with Consultant for an evaluation
2009: Consultant contracted by City to provide evaluation
June 2010: Evaluation Report produced
2012: Consultant contracted to rewrite ordinance
The legislation was held and later terminated.
THIS ISN’T AN EASY PROCESS

Davidson Town Planner Tim Keane addressed Tuesday’s crowd at Fairview United Methodist Church in Mt. Mourne.

Developing open space
View of Savannah, as it stood the 29th March, A.D. 1734.
THANK YOU!

https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/departments/city-planning/urban-ecology-framework