BUILDING A BETTER URBAN FOREST

TPO Public Meetings | November 2019

Department of
CITY PLANNING
BUILDING A BETTER URBAN FOREST IN ATLANTA

TONIGHT’S AGENDA

Welcome & Introductions (10 minutes)
Presentation (20 minutes)
  TPO Project Process Update
  TPO Goals Alignment
  Recommendations
  Next Steps
Site Example Exercises (40 mins)
Q&A (20 mins)
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
NOTE:
Future public meetings on next iterations
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 environmentally 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

240 attendees
4 citywide meetings

Over 150 emails received

Over 250 letters received
Three important principles help drive the process.

**Specificity.** Not all trees can be treated the same, because they aren’t the same.

**Simplicity.** Rules must be clear, the process must be open, transparent, and flexible enough to meet the needs of different types of owners.

**Equity.** The benefits of urban trees flow to the city as a whole, as well as individual neighborhoods.
TPO REVISIONS DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS
Technical, Administrative and Operational
TPO Recommendations For Discussion Tonight

Overall Structure
Components

- Tree Valuation – Main Topic Tonight
- Preservation & Protection Standards
- Recompense
- Replacement
- Non-Development Activity
- Standards Alignment

Operations & Administration Recommendations

Zoning Code Updates
Staffing & Resources
Public/Private Partnerships
Continuation of Data / Studies
Tree Trust Fund spending
TPO RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Structure

Components
Tree Valuation
Preservation & Protection
Replacement
Recompense
Non-Development Activity
Standards Alignment

Operations & Admin

Additional TPO Recommendations For Future Meetings

- Additional Implications of Overall Structure
- Posting and Appeals
- Enforcement
- Invasive and Exotic Management
- Site Density or Contribution Requirements
The TPO will use the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers (CTLA) Tree Valuation Method to calculate the base value of a tree.

In addition to the CTLA, City Design & UEF Context Factors specific to the City of Atlanta will be added as a component to the TPO Valuation.

The TPO Valuation will be used to assess both public and private trees.

Based on the TPO Valuation, trees will be placed in one of five categories.
## TPO RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overall Structure
- Tree Valuation
- Preservation & Protection
- Replacement
- Recompense
- Non-Development Activity
- Standards Alignment

### Components

### Operations & Admin

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## VALUATION METHOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTLA</th>
<th>CONTEXT FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Nationally used tree appraisal method | Distills UEF elements
| Provides base value | Can increase or decrease tree value
| Assigns tree to one of five categories |

### APPLICATION TO BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No removal except by variance</th>
<th>Cost?/Variance/ Other Factors</th>
<th>Cost?/Variance/ Other Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Removal conditioned on max. replacement</td>
<td>3X Adjusted DBH* Removed</td>
<td>3X Base Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal OK w/ base replacement</td>
<td>1X Adjusted DBH Removed</td>
<td>1X Base Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal OK w/ Less replacement</td>
<td>.75X Adjusted DBH Removed</td>
<td>.75X Base Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal permitted</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*DBH is Diameter at Breast Height*
Species (native, non-native/naturalized, exotic, exotic/invasive)
Size (diameter)
Condition (Dead/Dying/Hazardous; non DDH; specific attributes)
Placement (positive and negative attributes)
The Basis of CTLA
A GUIDE FOR DETERMINING A REALISTIC, DEFENSIBLE TREE VALUE

Figure 5-3. Trunk formula technique (TFT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tree being appraised</th>
<th>Nursery tree used for cost basis</th>
<th>Extrapolation of nursery tree to the tree being appraised</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illustration by Tim Toland.</td>
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</table>
### EXAMPLES OF THE CITY DESIGN & UEF CONTEXT FACTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>UEF &amp; Ecology</strong></th>
<th><strong>Regulatory/Project Type</strong></th>
<th><strong>Infrastructural</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floodplain</td>
<td>Park</td>
<td>Hardscape Damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riparian Corridor</td>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>Restricted Root Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetland</td>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>Within 5'-10' of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steep Slope</td>
<td>Public Street</td>
<td>Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grove</td>
<td>Mobility Projects</td>
<td>Fruit/Litter/Thorns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Forest</td>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>Insect/Disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Growth Forest</td>
<td>LEED/Sustainable</td>
<td>Presence or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Habitat</td>
<td></td>
<td>Susceptibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Designation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Design Growth</td>
<td>Environmental Benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DBH, Species, Condition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Environmental Benefits**

- Shading/Solar Management
- Wind Screening
- Visual Screening

**Non-Development Activity**

- Operations & Admin

**Standards Alignment**

- Regulatory/Project Type
- Park
- Zoning
- Utilities
- Public Street
- Mobility Projects
- Affordable Housing
- LEED/Sustainable

**Regulatory/Project Type**

- Park
- Zoning
- Utilities
- Public Street
- Mobility Projects
- Affordable Housing
- LEED/Sustainable

**Infrastructural**

- Hardscape Damage
- Restricted Root Area
- Within 5'-10' of Foundation
- Fruit/Litter/Thorns
- Insect/Disease
- Presence or Susceptibility
- Retaining Wall Tree
**TREE VALUATION CALCULATIONS**

**Existing Tree Recompense Calculation in Atlanta**

$100 \times (\# \text{ trees removed} - \# \text{ trees replaced}) + $30 \times (\text{total DBH removed} - \text{total DBH replaced})$

$= \text{Tree Value/Recompense Cost}$

**Proposed CTLA Method**

$\text{Diameter} \times [\text{Market Value Factor of new tree}] \times \text{Species Value (}%\text{x Condition Value (}%\text{x Placement Value (}}$

$= \text{Base CTLA Tree Value}$
Example of a 30” oak being removed (good condition & placement). Let’s look at scenarios with and without replacement.

**CURRENT TPO**

$100 \times (\# \text{ trees removed} - \# \text{ trees replaced}) + 30 \times (\text{total DBH inches removed} - \text{total DBH replaced})$

\[
100(1) + 30(30) = 1,000 \text{ value}
\]

**PROPOSED TPO CTLA VALUE**

$\text{Diameter} \times [\text{Market Value Factor of New Tree}] \times \text{Condition \%} \times \text{Placement \%}$

\[
8,580 \times 60\% \text{ condition} \times 70\% \text{ placement} = 3,600 \text{ value}
\]
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BASE VALUE

CTLA FORMULA
Value in dollars based on size, condition, placement

CONTEXT FACTORS

FACTORS INCREASING TREE VALUE

FACTORS DECREASING TREE VALUE

1 Lowest Value/Least Restrictive
2
3
4
5 Highest Value/Most Restrictive
PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION

What can apply to different categories?

HIGHEST SCORING TREES
Require a variance to be removed
Trigger a higher fee to be removed (cost-driven)

OTHER VALUATION
Must protect/preserve/restore
a prescribed minimum of tree value on site

Some combination of the above
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PRESERVATION & PROTECTION STANDARDS

Ex. of Tree Removal Allowed Under Current TPO

Proposed New ADA Ramp
Existing Driveway
Proposed Driveway

Ex. of TPO Preservation Enhancements Being Explored

Proposed New ADA Ramp

Tree Preserved due to Value; Driveway Needs to be Redesigned

5
PRESERVATION & PROTECTION STANDARDS

Ex. of Tree Removal Allowed Under Current TPO

Ex. of TPO Preservation Enhancements Being Explored

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**BASE VALUE**

**CTLA FORMULA**

Value in dollars based on size, condition, placement

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**CONTEXT FACTORS**

**FACTORS INCREASING TREE VALUE**

**FACTORS DECREASING TREE VALUE**

---

**REPLACEMENT**

1. None
2. .75X Adjusted DBH Removed
3. Base Value
4. 3X Adjusted DBH Removed
5. Cost?/Variance?/Other Factors?
Options under consideration may include:

- Minimum tree value per land use type.
- Different standards for UEF Conservation Areas and Growth Areas.
- Incentives for planting in areas that need trees.
- Harmonizing TPO with zoning minimum requirements.
- Different Zoning categories would require preserving a minimum value of preservation standard.
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>RECOMPENSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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**TPO RECOMMENDATIONS**
- **Overall Structure**
- **Components**
  - Tree Valuation
  - Preservation & Protection
  - Replacement
  - Recompense
- **Non-Development Activity**
- **Standards Alignment**
- **Operations & Admin**

**CONTEXT FACTORS**
- **BASE VALUE**
  - Value in dollars based on size, condition, placement
- **RECOMPENSE**
  - 5: Cost?/Variance?/Other Factors?
  - 4: 3X Base Value Removed
  - 3: 1X Base Value
  - 2: .75 X Base Value
  - 1: None
Non-development Tree Removal Options Being Considered

Allowances or Exemptions
- Trees that are public safety threats
- Existing infrastructure threats—e.g. retaining walls, driveways, etc.
- Dead, dying and hazardous/invasive/undesirable similar to current TPO

Standard Practice
- Remove one low to medium value tree per year—with thresholds
- With measures to prevent misuse related to future development
- Requires a permit and data tracking by Arborist.
- Policy has a re-evaluation date
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Currently there are different public/private tree removal standards

Identified need to align standards—requirements should be similar, and process should be clear

In the future, trees on public property will be evaluated, categorized, protected and compensated similar to those on private property
OVER TIME, ZONING, DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS WILL BE REVISED TO ALIGN AND REINFORCE THE TPO
OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATIVE EFFORTS

- Zoning Code Updates
- Staffing & Resources
- Create *Urban Forest Master Plan*
- Utilize Public/Private Partnerships
  - Education campaign and programming
  - Prioritized planting and management plan
  - Tree Trust Fund Spending
- Continuation of Data / Studies
  - Regularly updated tree canopy assessments
  - Future evaluations of TPO effectiveness
Group Exercises
Review one development site in groups.

Can't Stay?
Please feel free to reach us at urbanecology@peqatl.com

and see

https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/departments/city-planning/urban-ecology-framework
Q&A Session

To Allow the Most Participation, Limit Questions/Comments to 2 minutes

Additional Questions or Comments?
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