

# 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)





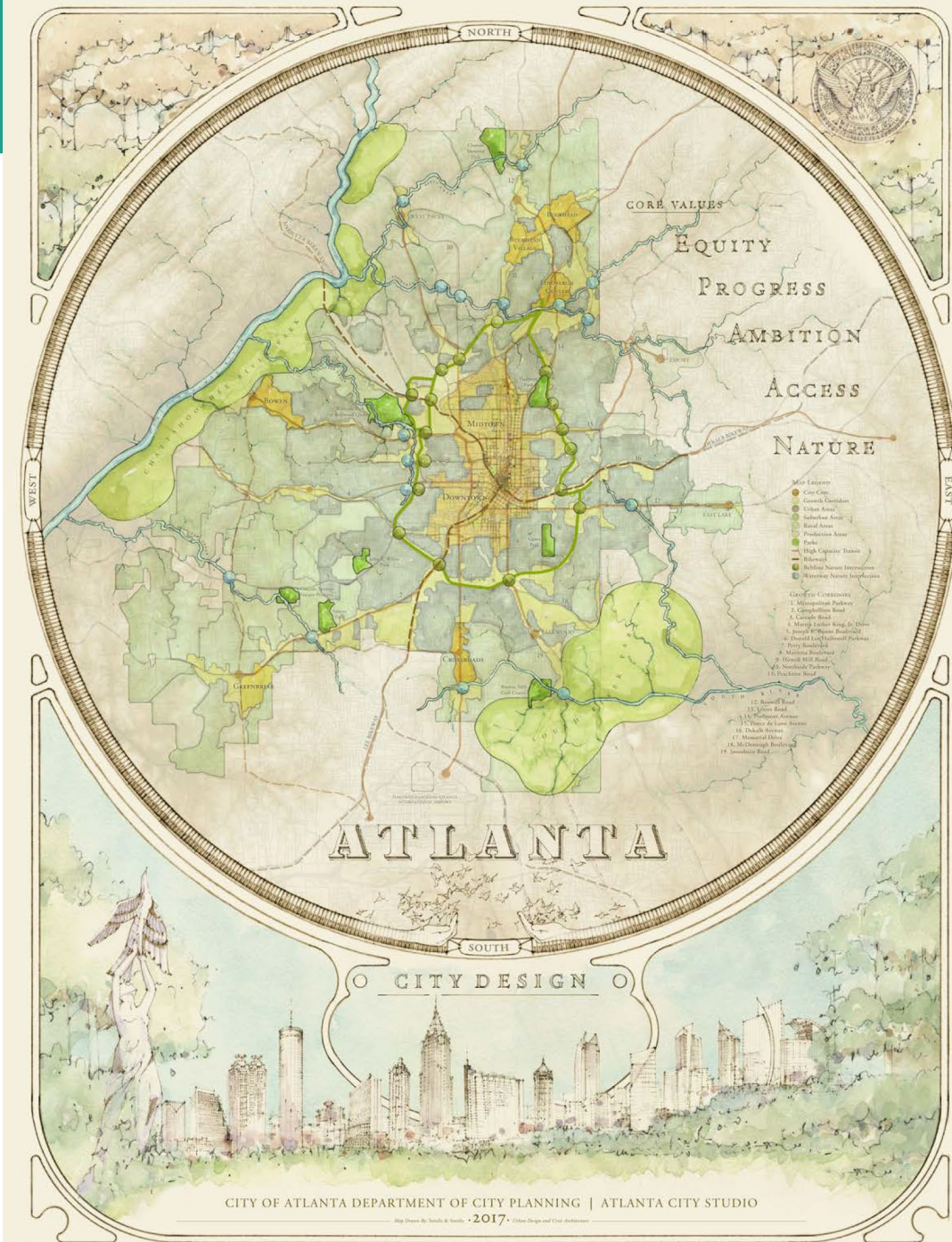
# ATLANTA CITY DESIGN

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**

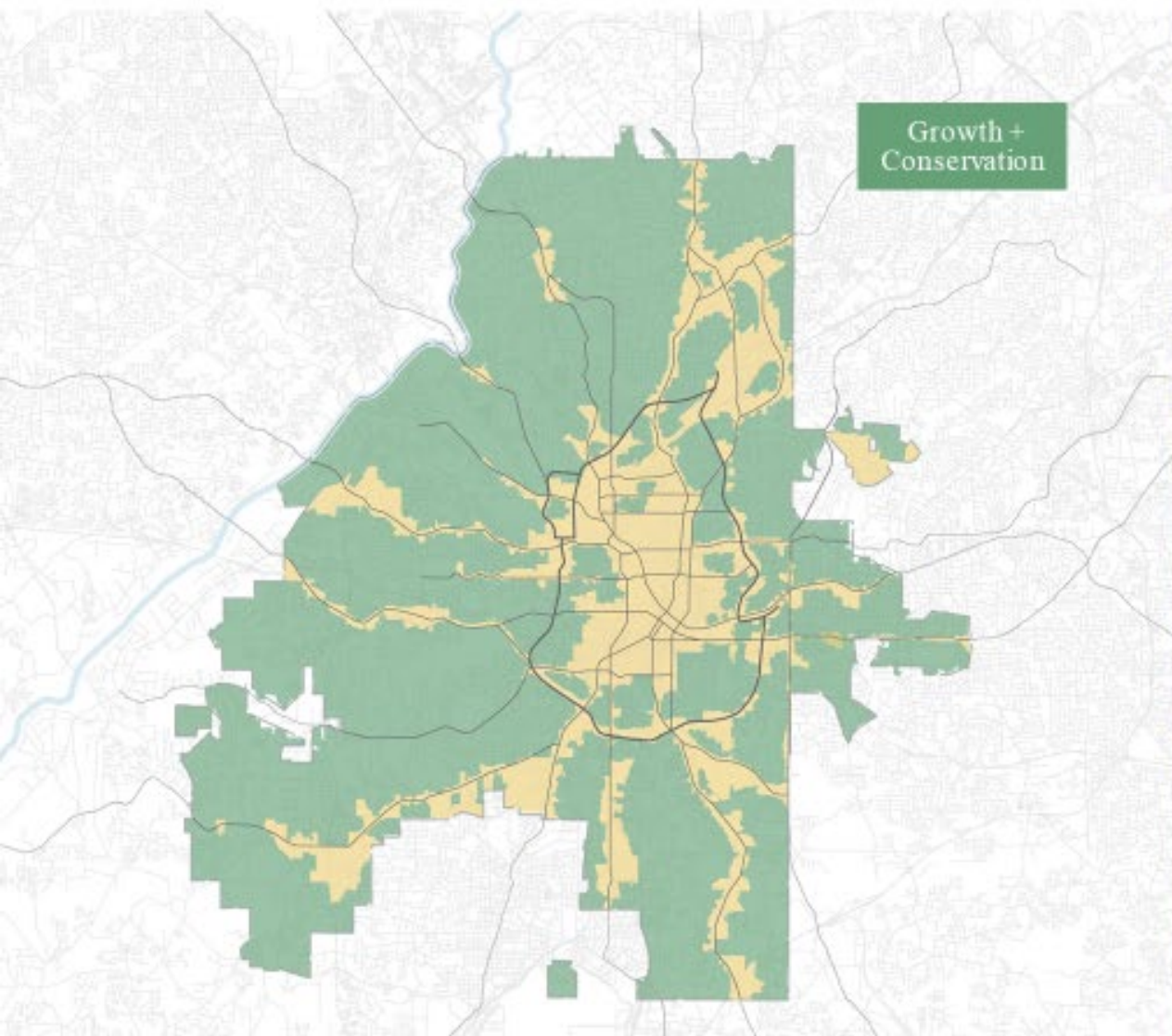
Design for **Nature**

Design for **People in Nature**





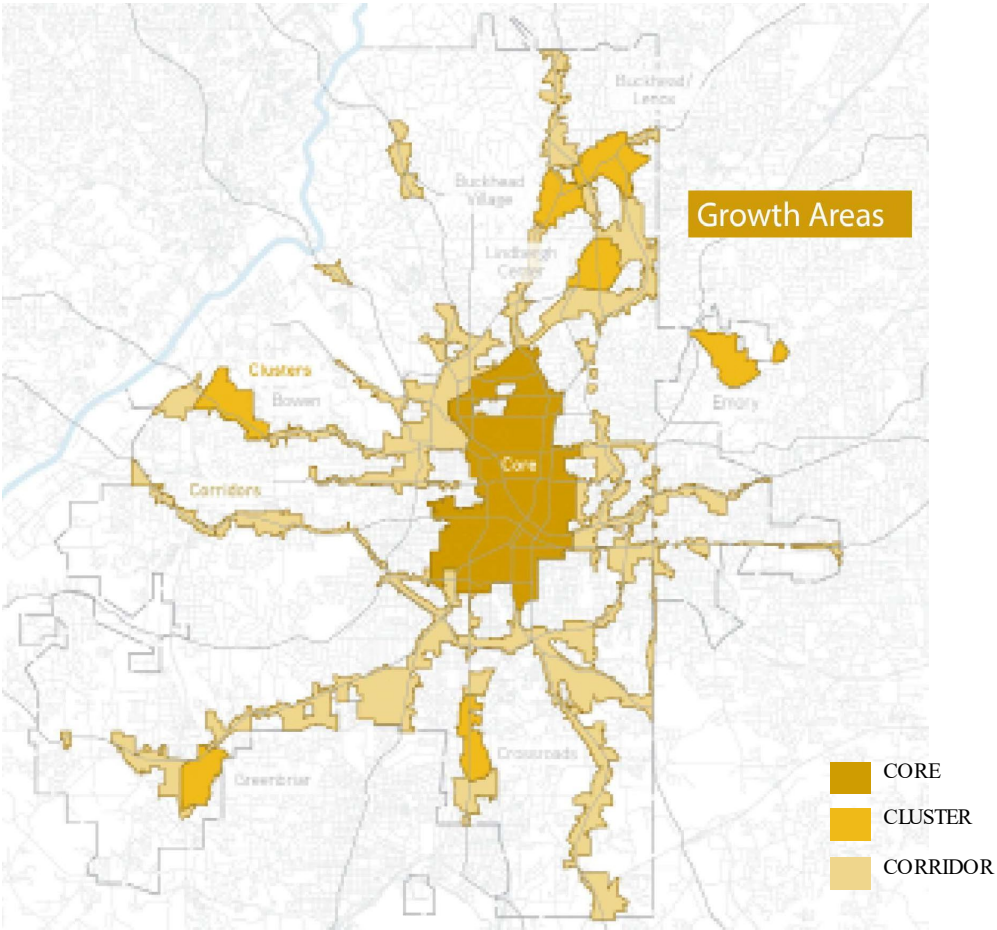
**THIS IS HOW ATLANTA GROWS ANYWAY.  
WE'RE JUST GOING TO BE MORE  
INTENTIONAL ABOUT IT.**





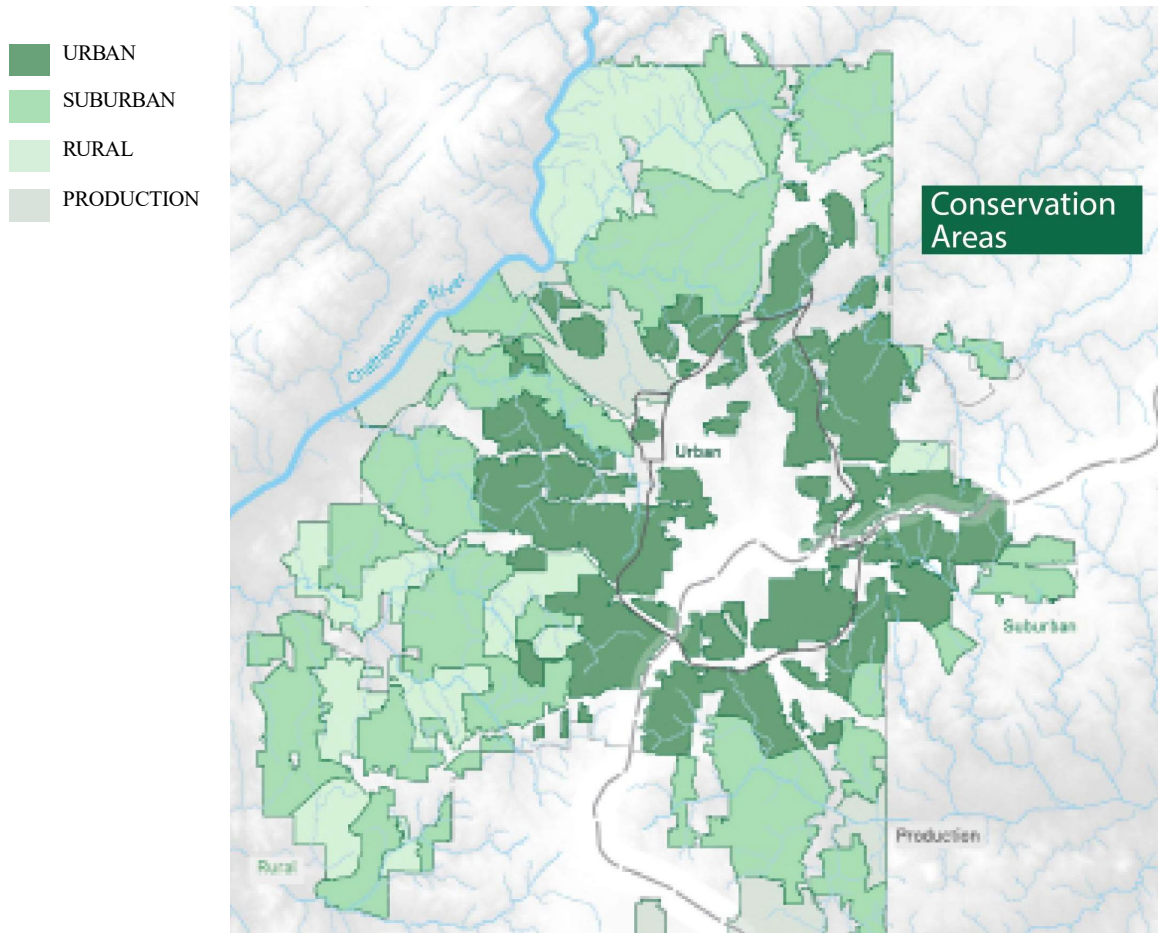
## GROWTH AREAS

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**

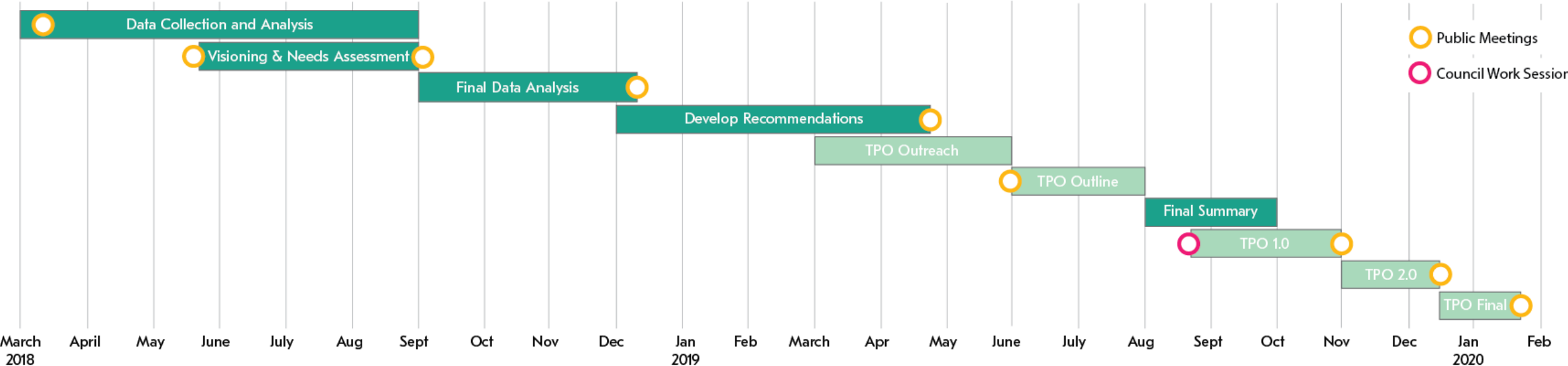
**STRATEGIC REPLANTING**

**INTERNAL COORDINATION & PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT**

**TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE REWRITE**

# PROJECT UPDATE

*Background on Project / Update on Progress*



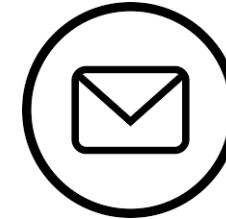
NOTE:  
Future public meetings on next iterations

# COMMUNITY INPUT SO FAR

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.



240 attendees  
4 citywide meetings



Over 150  
emails received



Over 250  
letters received

## 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



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

## Overall Structure

### Components

Tree Valuation

Preservation & Protection

Replacement

Recompense

Non-Development Activity

Standards Alignment

## Operations & Admin

## TPO Recommendations

### 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

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### Operations & Admin

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.



CTLA



CONTEXT FACTORS



TREE VALUE

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

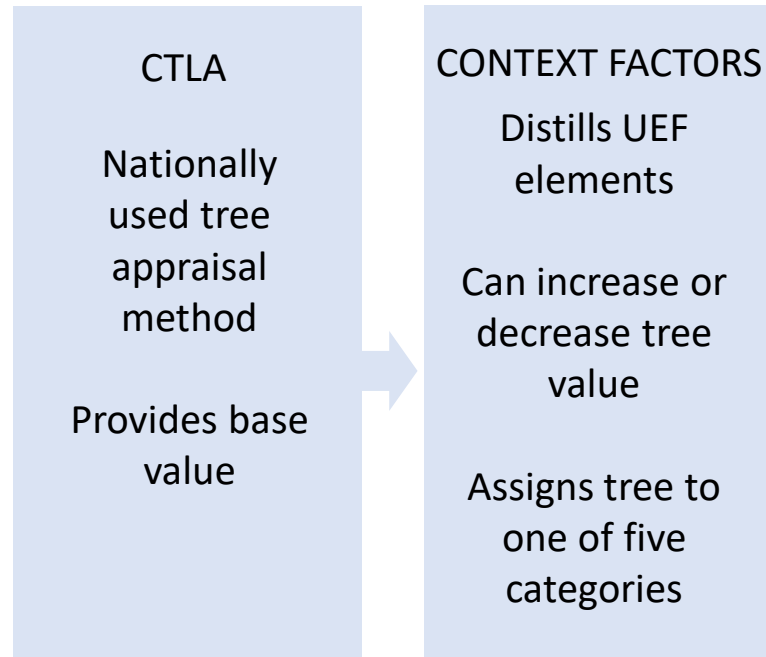
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### Components

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

### Operations & Admin

## VALUATION METHOD



APPLICABLE TO BOTH  
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROJECTS

	PROTECTION	REPLACEMENT	RECOMPENSE
5	No removal except by variance	Cost?/Variance/ Other Factors	Cost?/Variance/ Other Factors
4	Removal conditioned on max. replacement	3X Adjusted DBH* Removed	3X Base Value
3	Removal OK w/ base replacement	1X Adjusted DBH Removed	1X Base Value
2	Removal OK w/ Less replacement	.75X Adjusted DBH Removed	.75X Base Value
1	Removal permitted	None	None

\*DBH is Diameter at Breast Height

# TPO RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Structure

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Operations & Admin

## THE CTLA VALUATION METRICS

**Species** (native, non-native/naturalized, exotic, exotic/invasive)

**Size** (diameter)

**Condition** (Dead/Dying/Hazardous; non DDH; specific attributes)

**Placement** (positive and negative attributes)





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## Overall Structure

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#### Tree Valuation

#### Preservation & Protection

#### Replacement

#### Recompense

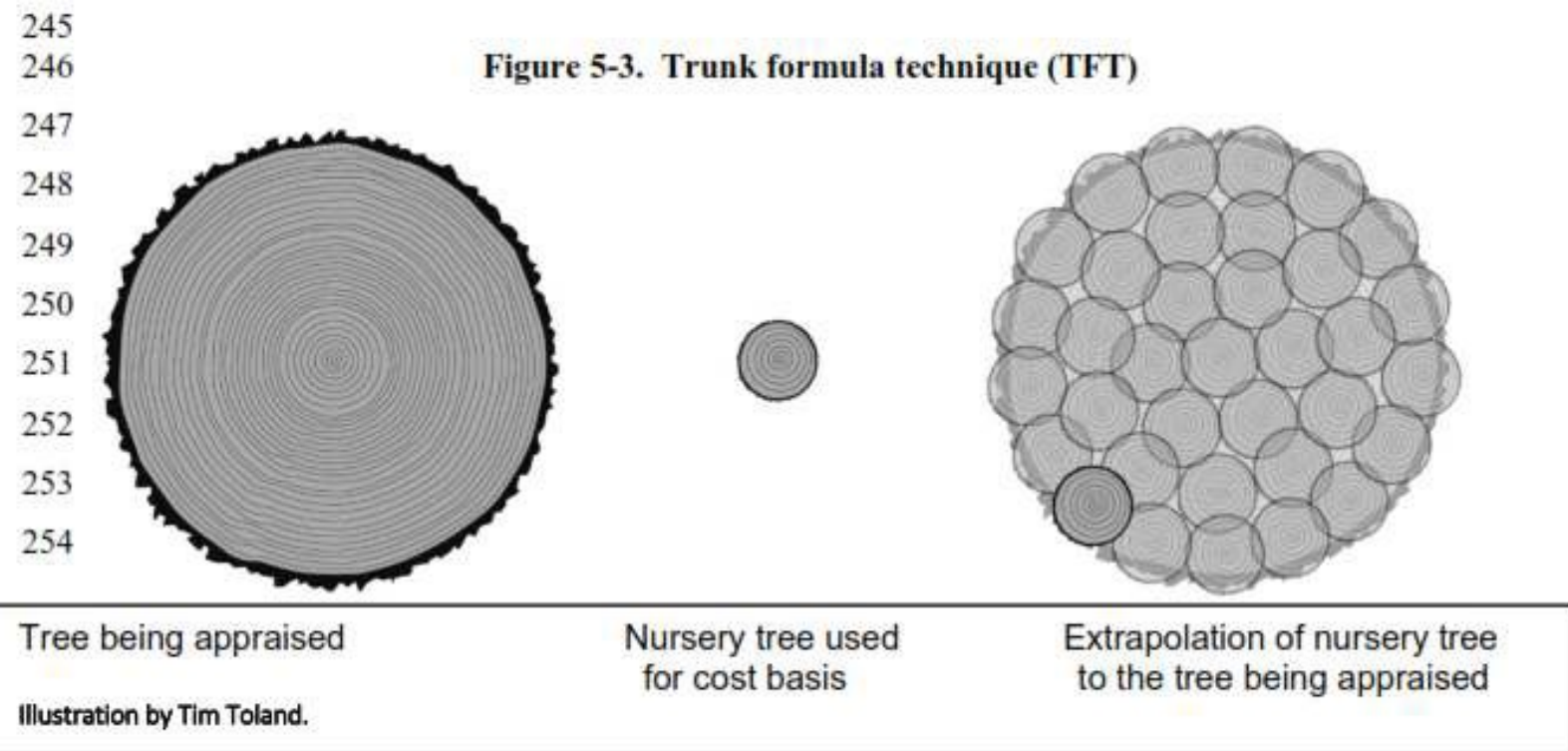
#### Non-Development Activity

#### Standards Alignment

## Operations & Admin

### The Basis of CTLA

### A GUIDE FOR DETERMINING A REALISTIC, DEFENSIBLE TREE VALUE



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## EXAMPLES OF THE CITY DESIGN & UEF CONTEXT FACTORS

### UEF & Ecology

Floodplain

Riparian Corridor

Wetland

Steep Slope

Grove

Interior Forest

Old Growth Forest

Unique Habitat

Special Designation

City Design Growth

Designation Area

### Regulatory/Project Type

Park

Zoning

Utilities

Public Street

Other Public Property

Setback Tree

Boundary Tree

Affordable Housing

### Environmental Benefits

Shading/Solar Management

Wind Screening

Visual Screening

### Infrastructural

Hardscape Damage

Restricted Root Area

Within 5'-10' of

Foundation

Fruit/Litter/Thorns

Insect/Disease

Presence or

Susceptibility

Retaining Wall Tree



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Operations & Admin

**BASE  
VALUE**

**CTLA  
FORMULA**

Value in dollars  
based on size,  
condition, placement

**CONTEXT  
FACTORS**

**FACTORS  
INCREASING  
TREE VALUE**

**FACTORS  
DECREASING  
TREE VALUE**

**5** Designated historic tree; trees over 30" dbh;  
old growth forest and other context factors

**4**

**3**

**2**

**1** Dead, diseased, hazardous, invasive species

# TREE VALUATION CALCULATIONS

## Existing Tree Recompense Calculation in Atlanta

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

= Tree Value/Recompense Cost

## Proposed Calculation for Future

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

= Tree Value/Recompense Cost



# TREE VALUATION EXAMPLE

Example of a 30" oak being removed (good condition & placement). Let's look at scenarios with and without replacement.

## CURRENT TPO\*

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

IF TREE IS NOT REPLACED  $\$100(1) + \$30(30) = \$1,000 \text{ value}$

IF TREE IS REPLACED  $\$100(1) + \$30(30-6) = \$820 \text{ value}$

## PROPOSED TPO\*

$(\text{Diameter} \times [\text{Market Value Factor of New Tree}] \times \text{Condition \%} \times \text{Placement \%}) - \text{Market Value of Trees Replaced}$

IF TREE IS NOT REPLACED  $\$8,580 \times 60\% \text{ condition} \times 70\% \text{ placement} = \$3,600 \text{ value (7.2 Replacement Trees)}$

IF TREE IS REPLACED  $\$3,600 - \$1,500 = \$2,100 \text{ value}$

\*Replaced with three 2" oaks [\$500/ea.]

# 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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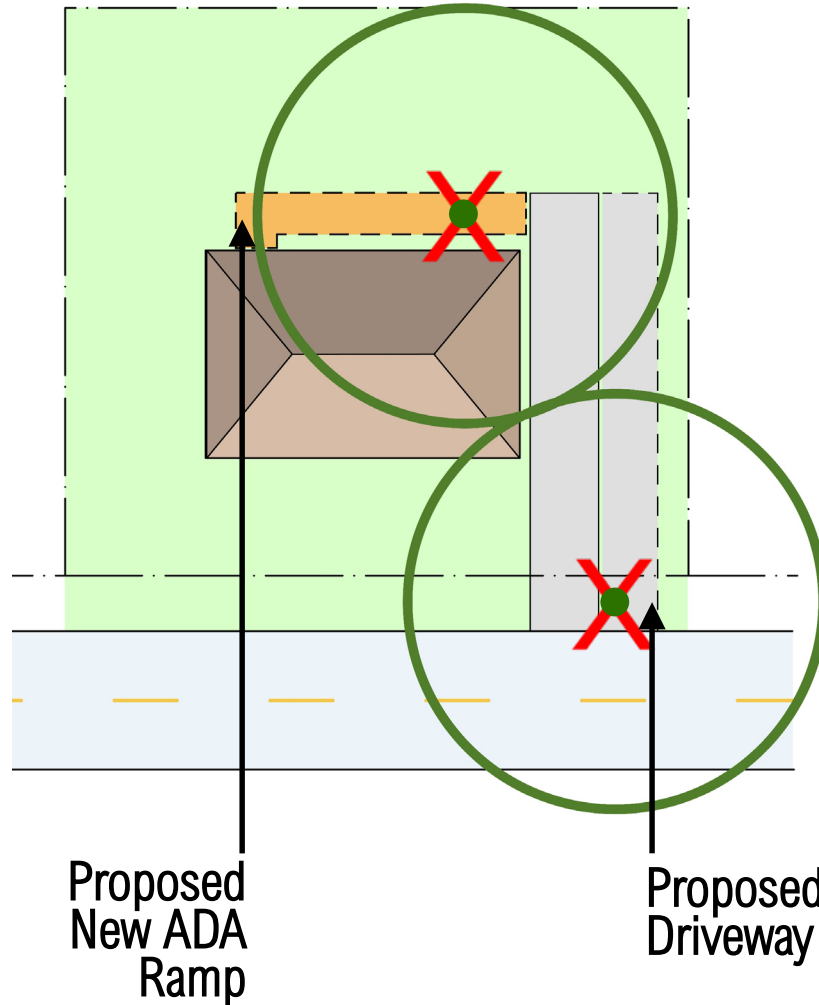
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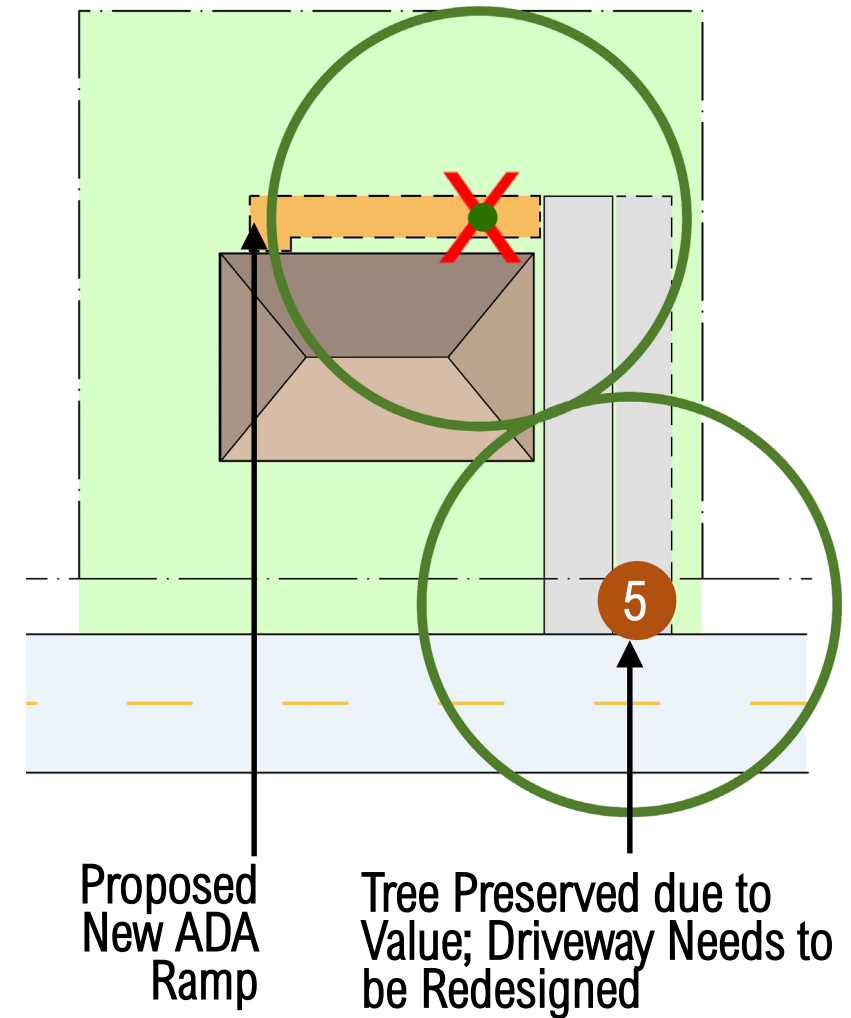
Operations & Admin

## PRESERVATION & PROTECTION STANDARDS

Ex. of Tree Removal Allowed Under  
Current TPO



Ex. of TPO Preservation  
Enhancements Being Explored





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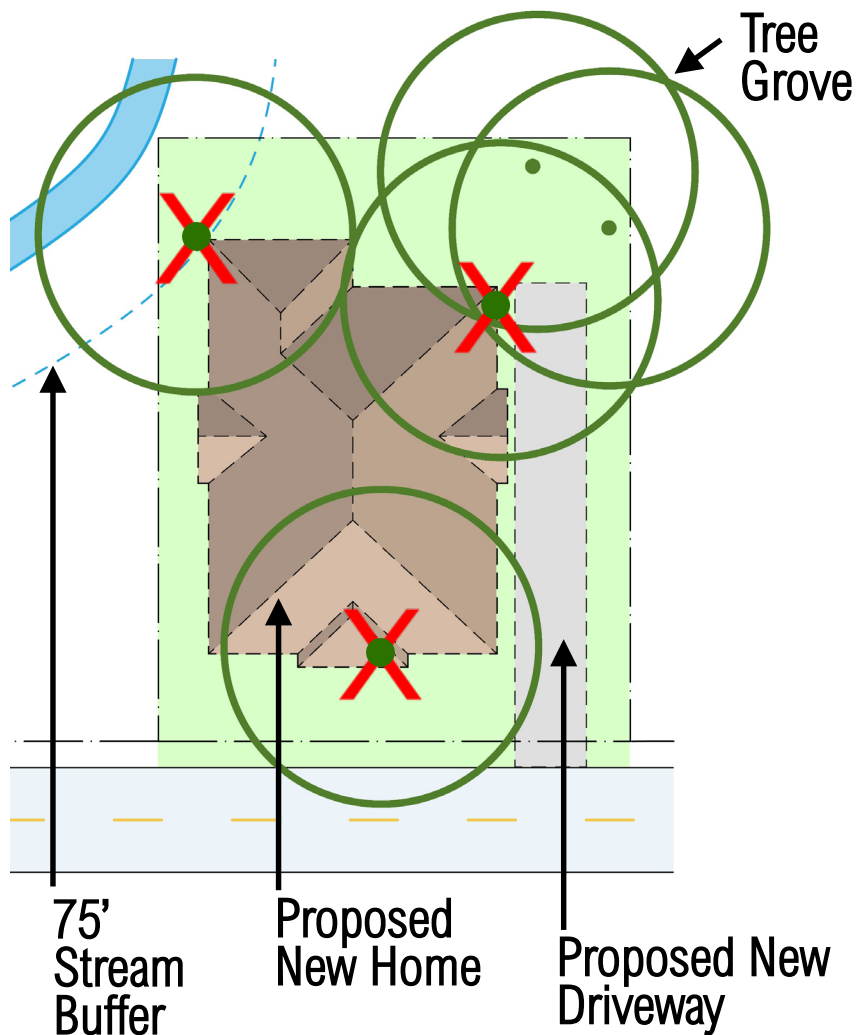
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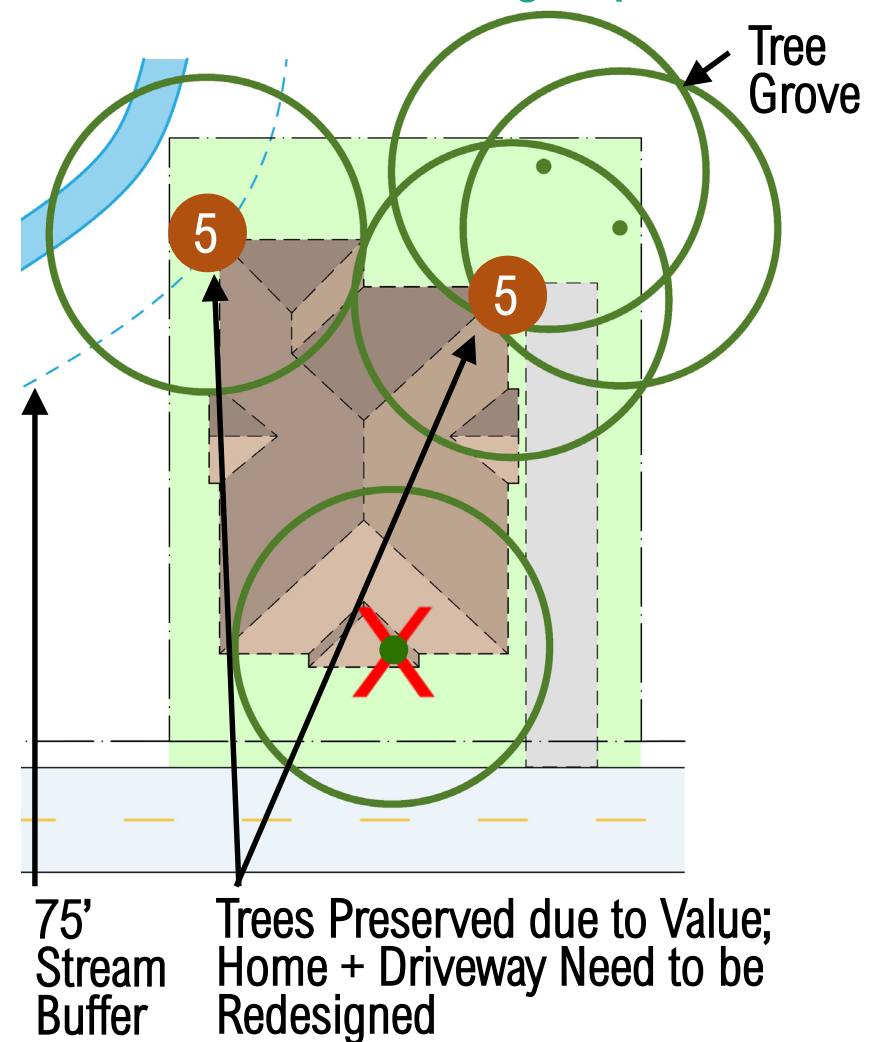
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Ex. of Tree Removal Allowed Under  
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**BASE  
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Value in dollars  
based on size,  
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**CONTEXT  
FACTORS**

**FACTORS  
INCREASING  
TREE VALUE**

**FACTORS  
DECREASING  
TREE VALUE**

REPLACEMENT

**5**

Cost?/Variance?/Other Factors?

**4**

3X Adjusted DBH Removed

**3**

Base Value

**2**

.75X Adjusted DBH Removed

**1**

None

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## IN PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR REPLACEMENT

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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**FACTORS  
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TREE VALUE**

RECOMPENSE

**5**

Cost?/Variance?/Other Factors?

**4**

3X Base Value Removed

**3**

1X Base Value

**2**

.75 X Base Value

**1**

None

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## TREE REMOVAL REQUESTS – NON DEVELOPMENT

### 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

#### Standard Practice

- Remove one tree Category 3 or lower per year
- Requires a permit and data tracking by Arborist.
- Policy has a re-evaluation date





# TREE REMOVAL REQUESTS – NON DEVELOPMENT

## ATLANTA – UNDER CONSIDERATION

### **Can be removed with simplified permit**

- Trees that are public safety threats
- Existing infrastructure threats- e.g. retaining walls, driveways, etc.
- Dead, dying and hazardous/invasive/undesirable
- One tree in Category 3 or below annually

### **Categories 4 and 5 trees require permit approval**

- Approved site plan of removal and replacement trees
- Replacement or recompense that matches Category #
- Subject to post-removal site visit

**If this type of provision is adopted, will be reviewed and revised after 3 to 5 years.**

## SEATTLE – ALREADY IN TPO

- No “exceptional trees” may be removed
- Owners of residential lots may remove no more than three trees annually greater than 6” DBH without a permit
- Recompense and/or replacement required for all trees removed 24” DBH or greater

## CHARLOTTE – ALREADY IN TPO

- No tree equal to or larger than eight inches caliper may be trimmed, pruned, or removed from the tree protection zone, without a permit
- Fines assessed for violations, roughly based on CTLA
- Amount subject to adjustment by City
- Replanting can be substituted for fines



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## 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**

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## OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATIVE EFFORTS

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



## NEXT STEPS



### Group Exercises

Review one development site in groups.

### Can't Stay?

Please feel free to reach us at

[urbanecology@peqatl.com](mailto:urbanecology@peqatl.com)

and see

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



Department of  
**CITY PLANNING**