



CITY OF DUNWOODY

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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Sustainability Commission

Date: April 12, 2010

Subject: **No Net Loss of Trees Policy**

ITEM DESCRIPTION

The Sustainability Commission recommends the City of Dunwoody adopt a No Net Loss of Trees Policy.

BACKGROUND

As part of their pursuit of the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities certification, the Sustainability Commission has been researching No Net Loss of Trees policies. Policies from nearby jurisdictions were reviewed including Atlanta, Athens, and Roswell, as well as jurisdictions as far away as Cranford, New Jersey and Charlotte and Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The Sustainability Commission also reached out the Georgia Forestry Commission to gain additional insight.

The attached policy has been drafted to meet the requirements of the ARC Green Communities Measure 28: Government No Net Loss of Trees Policy.

In summary, the policy would establish guidelines to ensure there will be no net loss of trees on government properties. This policy seeks to prevent loss of canopy coverage as described in City of Dunwoody's Code of Ordinances, Chapter 14 Land Development and Environmental Protection. In cases where trees must be removed, the policy defers to the City Arborist to make suggestions as to an appropriate tree species and appropriate location for replacement trees.

This policy would affect all future maintenance and construction activities in relation to government-owned properties. As this does not amend any current ordinance, but functions as an operating policy, this policy would be read and voted on by Mayor and Council.

RECOMMENDATION

The Sustainability Commission recommends adopting the attached No Net Loss of Trees Policy for the City of Dunwoody.



CITY OF DUNWOODY

NO NET LOSS OF TREES

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Version 2010.03.30



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NO NET LOSS OF TREES

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure there will be no net loss of trees on City property. Dunwoody's trees contribute to a clean, healthy environment. As they grow, trees take in carbon dioxide from the air and produce life-giving oxygen. Trees are a vital component of the infrastructure for the City of Dunwoody, providing environmental and economic benefits. Trees in Dunwoody reduce the heat island effect caused by pavement and buildings. Trees provide shade and cooling, which lessens energy demands and pollution. Properly placed trees can increase property values and add to the aesthetic vistas within the City.

Dunwoody's trees face many hazards and hardships including insects, disease, construction, drought, and air pollution. Protecting the trees along our roads and in our parks is in the best interest of the City of Dunwoody. The City strives to maintain trees in Dunwoody in a healthy and non-hazardous condition through professionally accepted arboricultural practices.

The City of Dunwoody seeks to prevent any loss of canopy coverage as described in City of Dunwoody's Code of Ordinances, Chapter 14 Land Development and Environmental Protection. This policy furthers Article II, Section 12 Tree Protection by establishing standards of no net loss in canopy coverage on city-owned property.

II. Definitions

When used in this policy, the following words, terms and phrases, and their derivations, shall be the meaning ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning.

A. AGENT means an official contracted or subcontracted person who is authorized to act on behalf of the City of Dunwoody and represent their interests.

B. CALIPER means the diameter of a tree trunk, applied only to new or replacement plantings that is taken six inches above the ground for up to and including four-inch caliper size, and twelve inches above the ground for larger sizes.

C. CITY ARBORIST means the Community Development Director or designee of the City of Dunwoody having primary enforcement responsibilities under this policy, and charged with



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the responsibility for approval of all tree removals and tree replacements in the City of Dunwoody required pursuant to this policy.

D. CITY DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABILITY means the Director of Sustainability or other employee or agent as designated in writing by the City Manager.

E. LANDSCAPE PLAN means a plan that identifies areas of tree preservation and methods of tree protection within the protected zone, as well as all areas or replanting. Within replanting areas, the common and botanical names of the proposed species, the number of plants of each species, the size of all plants, the proposed location of all plants, and any unique features of the plant shall be indicated.

F. OFFICIAL means any elected or appointed person who holds office or serves in a position of public capacity.

G. REVEGETATION means the replacement of trees and landscape plant materials into the minimum required landscape areas, as determined by the Zoning Ordinance, conditions of zoning approval, or the Tree Preservation Ordinance.

H. TREE means any self supporting wood perennial plant which at maturity attains a caliper of four inches or more.

III. Scope

The terms and provisions of this policy shall apply to all public property owned by the City of Dunwoody and subject to city regulations.

A. Permitting for Tree Removal

No person shall directly or indirectly remove or destroy any tree located on public property without obtaining a permit as provided in this section.

1. Permits to remove or destroy trees for new construction, renovation, or demolition on public property shall be obtained by making application to the City Arborist in a form prescribed by the City.

a. Applications must be accompanied by a landscape plan showing tree replacements.



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- b. The replacement trees need not be located in the same parcel as the tree was removed, destroyed or injured. The City Arborist shall consider the entire City for the purposes of eligible areas of replanting.
 - c. The City Arborist shall make suggestions as to an appropriate tree species and appropriate location for replacement trees.
 - d. Replacement tree plantings shall be completed within one calendar year.
 - e. Replacement tree plantings shall be inspected by the City Arborist and verified by the dated signature of the City Arborist on the approved plan.
2. Permits to remove or destroy trees for safety, landscaping, silvicultural, infrastructure maintenance, or other purposes on public property shall be obtained by making application to the City Arborist in a form prescribed by the City.
- a. The City Arborist shall make suggestions as to an appropriate tree species and appropriate location for replacement trees.
 - b. The replacement trees need not be located in the same parcel as the tree was removed, destroyed or injured. The City Arborist shall consider the entire City for the purposes of eligible areas of replanting.
 - c. Replacement tree plantings shall be completed within one calendar year.
 - d. Replacement tree plantings shall be inspected by the City Arborist.

V. Exceptions

The City of Dunwoody's policy to ensure there will be no net loss of trees on City property is not always practicable. The following situations are exceptions to the No Net Loss of Trees Policy.

- A. If a tree is dead or presents a hazard or danger to health, safety, or welfare of the public, such tree may be removed immediately by the City or the City's agent. Within five working days of said removal, the City or the City's agent must provide a tree removal application to the City Arborist. Revegetation shall follow based on the City Arborist's suggestions as to an appropriate tree species and appropriate location for replacement trees.
- B. If a tree is diseased or insect-infected such tree may be removed after consultation with the City Arborist. Within five business days of said removal, the City of Dunwoody or the City's agent must provide the tree removal application to the City Arborist. Revegetation shall follow based on the City Arborist's suggestions as to an appropriate tree species and appropriate location for replacement trees.



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- C. During a period of any emergency, such as a tornado, ice storm, flood, or any other act of nature, the requirements of this policy may be waived by the City Manager or the City Manager's designee.

VI. Responsibility

A. City Arborist

The City Arborist has primary enforcement responsibilities for this policy and is charged with the responsibility for approval of all tree removal and tree replacement plans for public property in the City of Dunwoody required pursuant to this policy.

DUTIES: The City Arborist shall have the following duties and powers in regards to the No Net Loss of Trees Policy:

1. Communicating with the City Department Heads when a tree could potentially be removed or damaged due to performing essential work duties.
2. Reviewing all plans for tree removal and tree replacement on public property in the City of Dunwoody as required pursuant to this policy.
3. Monitoring and ensuring the success of the No Net Loss of Trees Policy, and when appropriate, working with Administration to assess technical feasibility and/or cost effectiveness.
4. Work with the Director of Sustainability to make certain that employees are aware and educated about this No Net Loss of Trees Policy.