



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Sustainability Commission
Date: January 10, 2011
Subject: **Government Landscaping Policy**

BACKGROUND

In June 2010, the City of Dunwoody gained ownership of its first property—the parks within the city limits. As part of their pursuit of the Atlanta Regional Commission’s Green Communities certification, the Sustainability Commission has been researching best practices for governmental landscaping that would pertain to both current and future City-owned properties. Policies from nearby jurisdictions were considered, including Cobb County, as well as expert information from the Native Plant Society and the EPA.

DISCUSSION

The attached policy has been drafted to meet the requirements of the ARC Green Communities Measure 31: Government Landscaping Practices. In summary, the policy would establish guidelines to ensure environmentally conscious standards by which all landscaping on City property will be subject. This policy seeks to minimize the impact of fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation, and plant species on an ecosystem and the surrounding environment.

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 Landscaping Policy for the City of Dunwoody.



Article

CITY OF DUNWOODY

Landscaping Policy

Article

Version 2010.xx.xx



City of Dunwoody
Policies

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ORGANIC AND DROUGHT TOLERANT LANDSCAPING POLICY

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for maintaining landscapes on City property, keeping environmentally sensitive practices in mind as part of an ongoing effort to reduce the effects of landscaping maintenance through responsible irrigation and product selection. This document will clarify our policy to use environmentally responsible irrigation practices, drought tolerant plant selection, and chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Irrigating with potable water causes unnecessary stresses on the water system, public infrastructure, and ecosystems. Fresh water is a scarce resource, so it is important to find ways to mitigate consumption. The use of native and drought-tolerant plants facilitates less water consumption. Additionally, water from potable irrigation systems alters the natural state of resources on the site by introducing elements that were not previously present in the ecosystem. The infrastructure is also stressed when massive vehicles transport the water.

All City departments and agencies, namely Public Works and Parks and Recreation, shall implement the following Landscaping Policy for all City property:

II. Scope

The scope of this Landscaping Policy covers all City-owned property, including parks, right-of-ways, and other landscaped areas. The policy specifies maintenance guidelines, installation practices, and design standards to establish procedures so that the City may become and remain a responsible steward of public property.

III. Maintenance Guidelines and Installation Practices

The following establishes maintenance guidelines and installation practices to be performed by all City employees, officials, or their agents that identify appropriate procedures in accordance with sustainable and environmentally sensitive standards:

- A. Use integrated pest management to minimize adverse environmental impact
- B. Minimize the use of pesticides by planting native plant species that are more resistant to pests. Regional plants also are more sustainable because they are adapted to the average rainfall and are less likely to require irrigated water;



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- C. Group plants with similar water needs, and position them in appropriate habitat conditions, paying attention to sun exposure, soil conditions, size of planting area, and slope of the ground;
- D. Strive to produce mulch and compost from plant debris located on-site;
- E. Sustain a mulch covering of at least two inches in order to protect soil;
- F. Limit the disturbance of existing vegetation and topography when installing new landscaping because those plants have root systems that are more sustainable and require less maintenance;
- G. Select regionally adapted turf species to minimize irrigation requirements, maintain at a clear distance from trees to prevent weed-eater damage to the tree, and attempt to minimize turf area to reduce watering requirements;
- H. Develop an irrigation plan that distributes the appropriate amount of water to each established zone, and inspect the system annually to confirm efficiency;
- I. Hire landscaping companies that are experienced in environmentally sustainable landscaping practices and trained in the use and application of Integrated Pest Management.

IV. 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. CITY DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABILITY means the Director of Sustainability or other employee or agent as designated in writing by the City Manager.
- C. EMPLOYEE means an individual drawing a salary or wage from the City whether on a full-time, part-time basis or contractual third-party. The term shall encompass all members of the Governing Authority without regard to whether or not such individual is compensated.
- D. GOVERNING AUTHORITY means the City entity responsible for the contract.
- E. INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT means the sustainable process for pest control that involves setting action thresholds, monitoring and identifying pests, utilizing prevention methods, and using pesticides judiciously.



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

IV. Responsibility

A. Director of Sustainability

The City Council may appoint the City Manager, or said agent appointed by the City Manager, to serve as the Director of Sustainability for the City, or the Council may contract with an independent third party to serve as the Director of Sustainability (per City Charter, Section 3.02).

DUTIES: The Director of Sustainability shall have the following duties and powers in regards to the Organic and Drought Tolerant Landscaping Policy:

1. Work with all department heads to make certain that employees are aware and educated about the Landscaping Policy.
2. Work with all department heads to make certain that this, sustainable landscaping practices, is monitored.