



Gainesville Tree
Ordinance
Review Summary
12.8.16

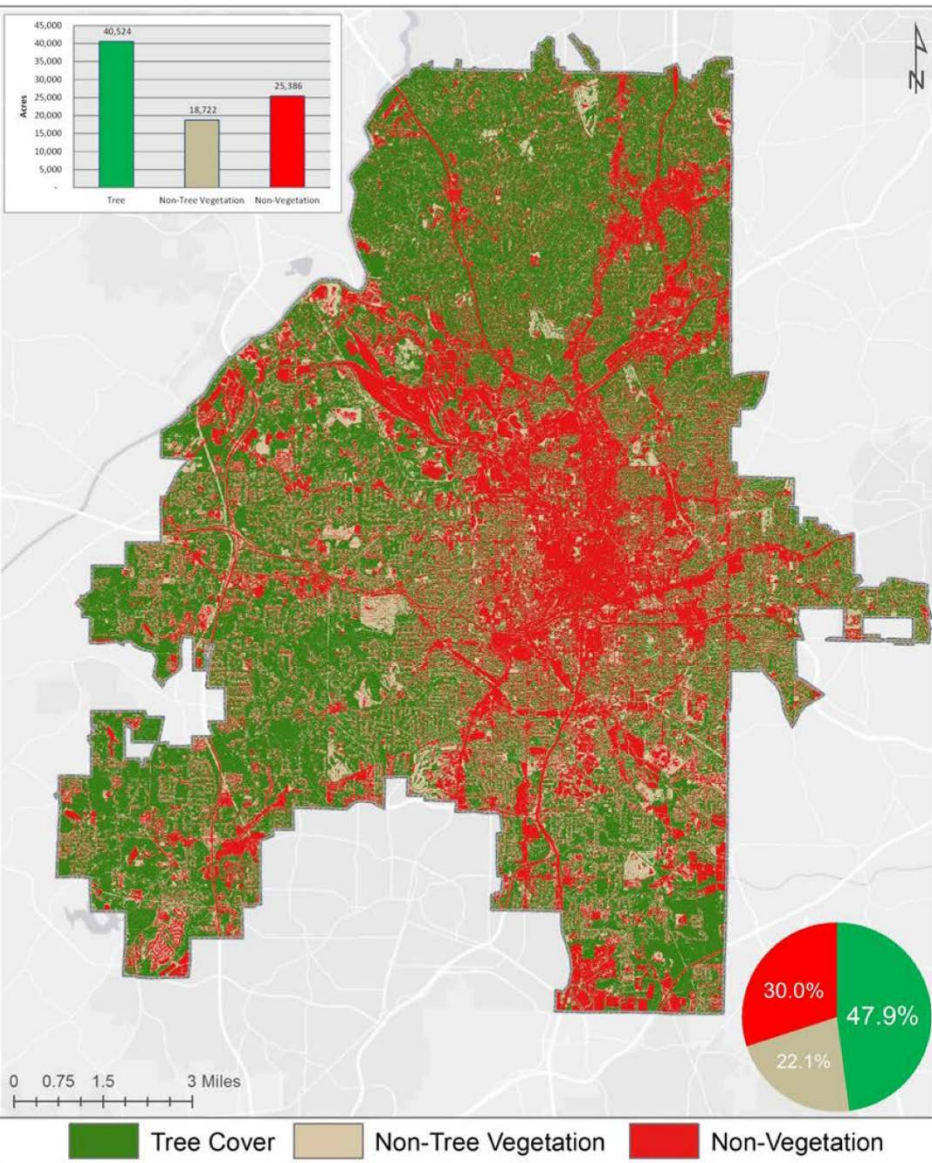


PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

- Three meetings:
- January 27, March 30, and July 26

Issues Identified:

- Uses of Mitigation Funds
- Incentives for Tree Preservation
- Economic Hardship of Mitigation
- Equity of Mitigation Requirements



Urban forest ecological assessment outcomes:

- Identify the canopy coverage and how this has changed over time
- Species composition
- Function and economic benefits of Gainesville's trees

Urban forest management plan

- Roadmap that will create a shared vision for the future of the city's trees
- Will guide management of the city's trees
- Plan will be informed by results from ecological assessment and input from a broad range of stakeholders

Mitigation fund balance as of 9.30.16 :

- \$2,460,847
- \$781,067 committed to projects

Approved uses of mitigation funds:

- Tree planting
- Tree establishment
- Land acquisition
- Habitat restoration projects
- Program coordinator for tree mitigation funds
- Soil measures that support tree growth
- Contract growing of desired species
- Tree planting in medians of state and county roads and public works projects

Additional uses of mitigation funds possible with code change:

- Urban forest ecological assessment
- Urban forest management plan
- Eradication of invasive plants in Right of Way (not recommended by Staff)

Tree mitigation funds not possible for these uses since there is a lack of direct correspondence to the removal of trees:

- Tree care educational programs
- Allow funds to be reinvested into landowner's property to support green projects
- Tree maintenance for property owners who are unable to maintain the tree canopy on their property

Issues for interim review and/or review during development of an Urban Forest Management Plan:

- Incentives for Tree Preservation
- Economic Hardship of Mitigation
- Equity of Mitigation Requirements

Incentives for tree preservation

- Incentives used in other communities: flexibility in setbacks, exemptions for lot sizes, reduced parking requirements, bonuses for tree preservation in a performance based approach.
- Other more complex measures can be explored
- Multiple options needed
- Close review needed

Economic Hardship of Mitigation

Ideas discussed in meetings:

- Cap on mitigation fines
- Maximum recompense per acre with a graduated scale based on zoning
- Incentivize desired outcomes to offset mitigation fees- credits for elements like green roofs and upsizing trees

Equity of Mitigation Requirements

- Urban forest ecological assessment needed to evaluate impacts
- Commercial versus residential
- Both economic and ecological impacts need to be evaluated

Options for consideration

A. Revisit possible tree ordinance revisions after the urban forest ecological assessment and management plan have been completed

B. Make revisions to the ordinance to allow the mitigation funds to be used to fund urban forest ecological assessments and management plans.

C. Continue stakeholder engagement process without information from the urban forest ecological assessment with a goal of making more immediate changes to the tree ordinance.

Estimated Schedule for Option A:

- March 2017- Urban Forest Ecological Assessment completed
- March 2018-August 2018- Urban Forest Management Plan and stakeholder engagement process complete
- August 2019 - February 2020- Changes to ordinance enacted



DISCUSSION