<u>**Summary of Sticky Note Comments**</u>
UEF Tree Ordinance Draft Outline Review
North Atlanta Public Meeting Presentation Boards
June 6, 2019

Feedback from the comments on the presentation sticky notes show that the public is very concerned about being able to plan for trees with clear, measurable goals, both in conserving and replanting trees. A large part of this is holding developers more accountable for tree removal, strengthening enforcement of the tree ordinance, and creating more effective deterrents to illegal tree removal. The public wants protection for all trees, not just those in stream buffers/intact forests. Also, they do not necessarily see some projects qualifying more than other projects for a pre-application due diligence review.

Reaction to being able to remove one tree per year is extremely negative; the City clearly has overestimated citizen need to independently determine which trees they want removed. People want the City Arborist to determine if a tree should be removed, not the property owner, although there is some concern about the way the City Arborist Department is being managed.

Reaction to eliminating the appeal/posting process is equally negative. Instead of eliminating the appeal/posting process, people want the process to be made easier, with more lead time, and better notification and instructions on how to appeal, especially for those who are elderly or poor and/or cannot deal with the current complexities and expense of filing an appeal. Also, people want more education about the tree ordinance, protecting trees and habitat, and safety/tree maintenance issues, both for citizens and tree professionals.

While people want special protection for trees of ecological significance, the "high value" model raises questions as to its scientific objectivity as well as its ability to preserve overall canopy. People are concerned about impervious surfaces, excessive grading, and stormwater runoff -- these factors need to be included in any model assessing which trees are to be saved.

There is a huge lack of public trust in the process the City is recommending to streamline the review process and reward developers who the City arbitrarily determines is "doing everything right". The proposed new tree ordinance lacks transparency and citizen oversight, and therefore, is viewed as ripe for corruption and abuse. It appears that the City may be placing more emphasis on affordability, mobility, and growth goals than the goal of growing the tree canopy to 50% -- or at least maintaining no net loss of trees.

(Number of Comments in Parentheses)

<u>**Development Standards (45)**</u>

Planning for Trees (11): Make stormwater part of the tree conservation planning process; deny permits to builders who don't plan for trees; hold developers more accountable for tree removal and clear cutting.

Deterrents to Illegal Tree Removal (10): Need to increase penalties to effectively stop illegal tree removal: increase fines, put a moratorium on future work permits, deny certificate of occupancy, revoke developer's license.

Impervious Surfaces and Grading (7): Need to protect soil by reducing grading and impervious surfaces; use existing footprint.

Transparency and Trust (5): Lack of faith in the streamlined review process to protect trees and prevent corruption.

Tree Recompense and Planting/Replanting (5): Plant more street trees, native trees, tie recompense with land value, remove recompense caps.

Tree Valuation (4): Trees must be valued in terms of lifetime ecological value and contribution to the future canopy.

Education (3): Need more educational services about trees for the public, architects and engineers; need to understand regulation definitions better.

Non-Construction Related (33)

Dislike One Tree Per Year Proposal (16): Overwhelming rejection of this proposal, seen as arbitrary and a disaster for the tree canopy; only DDH trees or undesirable species (if replanted) should qualify.

Arborist Oversight (5): The City Arborist should determine which trees should be removed; dissatisfaction with City Planning manager.

Education (5): Need more education on what "high value" means, as well as protecting habitat and safety/tree maintenance issues.

Replanting (3): Concerns that replanting does not adequately replace mature trees, need to be able to replant in other less tree-dense areas; define "equal value" for replanting high value trees.

Low Income/Elderly Assistance (2): More resources are needed for low income and elderly in helping with tree maintenance/emergency removal.

Like One Tree Per Year Proposal (2): Support idea for private property, but maybe once every five years?

Protection Zones (27)

Lack of Coverage (17): Map does now show protection for many single-family neighborhoods, city parks, city urban core, headwaters, or underground streams; protection focused on areas developers are less interested in developing; confusing zones.

Merit (4): Protection zones are a good idea but need citizen input and should be used to encourage tree replanting.

Protection Criteria (3): Need more specific language; "high-value" is not a scientifically defined term; who decides protection categories?

Issues Not Directly Related to Protection Zones (3): Concerns about tree removal rights, enforcement penalties, and education about ordinance.

Doing Everything Right (26)

No Appeals and No Postings (12): Appeals and postings needed to keep transparency, prevent corruption, and provide citizen oversight.

High Value Trees via Affordability/Mobility (6): Confusion over how high value trees are designated in relation to affordability and mobility, keeping sustainable footprints, and if City can be trusted to do what's right.

Incentives to "Doing it Right" (3): Recognize builders and developers who do it right with special signage.

Staffing (3): Concerns that staff is not adequate for the job, dissatisfaction with Arborist Division Manager.

Enforcement (2): Ensure that the tree ordinance is enforced by increasing penalties and preventing gamesmanship.

TPO Intent and Purpose (25)

Lack of Trust (10): Disbelief that the stated TPO intent and purpose are measurable goals and will save trees, much less grow the canopy to 50% coverage.

No Net Loss of Trees (3): TPO intent and purpose does not include that there will be "no net loss of trees".

Enforcement (3): TPO intent and purpose includes no language about enforcement.

Aligning TPO with Other Development Requirements (2): TPO must be given equal footing to other regulations/development requirements and be considered in the beginning of permitting process.

Importance of Trees (2): Trees provide other benefits that need to be recognized, and their contribution to high value habitat and high bio-diversity is critical.

Community Input (2): TPO intent and purpose needs to include statement on community input, especially those whose voices are not heard over developer money.

Grading and footprints (2): Limit land grading and buildable footprints to protect soil.

Replanting Trees (1): TOP intent and purpose needs to include tree replanting objectives.

Arborist Process Flow (24)

Process (6): Need plans made available electronically; overall process too complex and/or expensive for elderly and poor; need more instructions; need more focus on saving vs. removing trees.

Enforcement (6): Greater need for enforcement; need Saturday coverage; too many trees coming down even under existing ordinance; nuisance trees not followed up on.

Appeals (6): Appeals should be free, with more than 5 days to appeal, have clear notification, and occur earlier in the permitting process.

Public Trees (3): Workflow does not seem to apply to trees on public property; Parks Department non-responsive.

Staffing (3): Too little staff, front desk needs more training, dissatisfaction with Arborist Division Manager.

What Should Atlanta's Methods Look Like? (18)

Tree Assessment (7): Need to prioritize saving the more valuable trees, but some questions around determining what is valuable; need to include stormwater mitigation and erosion control in the value equation.

Examples from Other Municipalities (11): What % of the canopy will the valuation method save; need to save smaller trees for future canopy; need more community input on tree valuation, include/exclude certain trees; enforce with moratoriums on building.

Due Diligence - Point A - Pre-Application (15)

What projects should go through this process (8)? No indication that some projects qualify more than others for this type of review.

Missing or other (7): Need pre and post review, native tree replanting, inclusion of other stakeholders & Watershed Management for stormwater review.