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RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF DEKALB COUNTY, TO ADOPT A NO NET LOSS OF TREES POLICY

WHEREAS, the purpose of the policy is to ensure that there will be a no net loss of trees on DeKalb County property. Trees provide an abundance of ecosystem services that are vital to human and environmental health. Trees aid in reducing flooding and erosion, filtering runoff, and protecting the watersheds that provide clean drinking water, recreational activities, and wildlife habitats.

WHEREAS, trees are particularly important in regulating our local climate. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and aid in cleaning our air and reducing pollution. Trees reduce the urban heat island effect caused by pavement, buildings, and other impervious surfaces. Trees provide shade and cooling, which lessens energy demands and pollution. Shade can reduce the surface temperature by 20 - 45 degrees Fahrenheit compared with/to unshaded areas.

WHEREAS, trees provide social and health benefits by enhancing the beauty of communities and areas, creating a sense of place, providing privacy, and reducing illness recovery time. Properly placed trees can increase property values and add to the aesthetic vistas within DeKalb County. 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 County.

WHEREAS, this policy seeks to establish standards of no net loss of trees on county-owned property. Furthermore, this policy reinforces the County's commitment to environmental, economic, and social stewardship. By incorporating environmental considerations into public use of resources, DeKalb County will positively impact human health and the environment, reduce costs and improve the environmental quality of the region.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners of DeKalb County, Georgia that the following policy be adopted as discussed:

Definitions

AGENT means an official contracted or subcontracted person who is authorized to work on behalf of DeKalb County.

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

COUNTY ARBORIST specializes in the proper care of individual trees on behalf of DeKalb County. The County Arborist holds responsibility of overseeing the No Net Loss of Trees Policy, as well as the primary contact for county departments.

DETENTION PONDS are basins that receive and hold runoff for release at a predetermined rate, thereby reducing the peak runoff delivered to storm sewers and streams

DIAMETER AT BREAST HEIGHT (DBH) refers to the diameter of the main stem of a tree or the combined diameters of a multi-stemmed tree as measured 4.5 feet above the natural grade at the base.

DISEASE means any fungal, bacterial, or viral infection that will result in the death of the tree, as determined by the County Arborist. Disease also means any fungal, bacterial or viral infection that has progressed to where treatment will not prevent the death of the tree, as determined by the County Arborist. For the County to deem that a tree has a disease, the person requesting such determination must present a lab report identifying and presenting the etiology (the cause and origin) of the fungal, bacterial or viral infection.

HAZARD TREE means a tree with uncorrectable defects severe enough to pose present danger to employees, county-owned buildings, or the general population under normal conditions, as determined by the County Arborist.

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.

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

RELEAF PROGRAM is an effort to beautify in DeKalb County, and increase our tree canopy, it is the goal of the department to plant trees in commercial redevelopment corridors, industrial areas, transportation islands, potential pocket parks, gateways and residential areas of the County.

REVEGETATION means the compensatory replacement of trees and other landscape plant materials into the minimum required landscape areas, as determined by the No Net Loss of Trees Policy, and the Dekalb County Tree Ordinance.

RIPARIAN CORRIDORS is a unique plant community consisting of the vegetation growing near a river, stream, lake, lagoon or other natural body of water.

ROOT SAVE AREA means the area surrounding a tree that is essential to that tree's health and survival. For a free-standing tree with no apparent root restrictions, the root save area shall consist of a circle having a radius of one foot for each one inch of diameter at breast height of the tree. Adjustments to the root save area may be made by the County Arborist if justified by specific documented site conditions.

SPECIMEN TREE SPECIES are defined as any tree in fair or better condition which equals or exceeds the following diameter sizes:

1. Large hardwoods, i.e. oaks, hickories, yellow poplars, and similar species: Thirty (30) inches DBH.
2. Large softwoods, e.g. pines, evergreens, and similar species: Thirty (30) inches DBH.
3. Small trees, e.g. dogwoods, redbuds, sourwoods, and similar species: Ten (10) inches DBH.

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

TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE is the county's policy for the preservation and/or the replacement of trees for the betterment of Dekalb County's citizens. The ordinance sets guidelines which covers both residential and commercial properties.

Scope

The terms and provisions of this policy shall apply to all public property owned by Dekalb County and subject to County regulations and policies.

1. This policy is intended as a general guide for trees removed from county-owned property due to construction.
2. Replace trees lost or removed in construction easement for construction on county-owned property.
3. When not feasible to replant on a site where trees were lost, trees should be replaced in areas such as targeted revitalization corridors, detention ponds, stream banks and riparian corridors, if recommended by the County Arborist.
4. The County Arborist shall make suggestions on appropriate tree species under the approved species list from the ReLeaf Program.
5. Trees should be replaced during the time of year that provides the best chance of survival and viability of the tree, as recommended by the County Arborist.

Exceptions

1. If a tree is dead or presents a hazard or danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the public, such tree may be removed immediately by the County or the County's Agent. Re-vegetation shall follow based on the County Arborist's suggestions as to an appropriate tree species and appropriate location for replacement trees.
 - a. Trees may be alive or dead, that pose a threat and/or hazard to the health, safety, and welfare of persons, Dekalb County employees, and/or the general population.
 - b. Trees may be alive or dead, that negatively impact the orderly operation of motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic through County-owned property.
2. This policy is not intended to require replacement of trees on public property lost to inclement weather events such as storm, snow, ice, and wind damage.
3. 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 or modified as required by the County Arborist, Planning & Sustainability Director, and Public Works Director.
4. Trees lost due to disease and ages. If a tree is diseased or insect-infected, such tree may be removed after consultation with the County Arborist. Re-vegetation may then follow, based on the County Arborist's suggestions as to an appropriate tree species, size, season for installation and appropriate location for replacement trees.

Responsibility

As the steward of DeKalb County's sustainability program, the County Arborist shall have the following duties and powers regarding the No Net Loss of Trees Policy. DeKalb County Arborist, alongside the Planning and Sustainability Department and Public Works Department, has primary enforcement responsibilities for this policy and is charged with the responsibility for approval of all tree removal and tree replacement plans for county-owned property in DeKalb County required pursuant to this policy.

1. Work with the Planning and Sustainability Department and Public Works Department Heads to make certain that County and contracted employees are aware and educated about this No Net Loss of Trees Policy.
2. Communicating with the Planning and Sustainability Department and Public Works Department Directors when a tree could possibly be removed or damaged due to performing essential work duties and projects.
3. Reviewing all and any plans for tree removal and/or tree replacement on public property within Dekalb County as required in conjunction with this policy.
4. Monitoring and ensuring the success of the No Net Loss of Trees Policy, and when appropriate, working with the Planning and Sustainability Department and Public Works Department Heads to assess technical feasibility and/or cost effectiveness.

Dekalb County Departments and Divisions are responsible to self-report to the County Arborist to monitor and ensure the success of the No Net Loss of Trees Policy. These departments include: Sanitation, Parks & Recreation, Facilities Management, Roads & Drainage, Community Development, Watershed Management, Planning & Sustainability, and Public Works.

ADOPTED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this _____day of _____, 2021.

STEPHEN R. BRADSHAW
Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, this __day of _____, 2021.

MICHAEL THURMOND
Chief Executive Officer DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

BARBARA SANDERS-NORWOOD, CCC
Clerk

VIVIANE ERNSTES
County Attorney