

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ARTICLE III OF THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE OF THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA, GEORGIA; TO ADD REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO TREE CONSERVATION; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, on or about May 21, 2001, the City of Alpharetta (the "City") adopted a comprehensive zoning ordinance known and cited as the Unified Development Code of the City of Alpharetta, Georgia, which has subsequently been amended from time to time (the "Unified Development Code"); and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the City of Alpharetta (the "City Council" or "Council") are charged with the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the City of Alpharetta; and

WHEREAS, the Unified Development Code was designed to be amended from time to time when circumstances warrant that modifications be made in order to make said Codes more responsive to community needs; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that ordinances and regulations governing the uses of land and development of land within the City, as well as the City's operations, should be continually improved from time to time and modified as necessary to better protect and promote the public health, safety and welfare of the residents and businesses of the City of Alpharetta; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to amend Article III of the Unified Development Code for the foregoing purposes; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the following amendments to the Unified Development Code promote the health, safety, morals, convenience, order, prosperity and general welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the City of Alpharetta; and

NOW THEREFORE, The Council of the City of Alpharetta hereby ordains, as follows:

Section 1: Article III, Subsection 3.2.2 titled "Definitions" and Subsection 3.2.8(K) titled "Tree Conservation" of the Unified Development Code is hereby added by amending same as set forth in Exhibit "A" attached hereto as if fully set forth herein.

Section 2: If any section, subsection, provisions, or clause of any part of this Ordinance shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional or, if the provisions of any part of this Ordinance as applied to any particular situation or set of circumstances shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity shall not be construed to affect the portions of this Ordinance not so held to be invalid, or the application of this Ordinance to other circumstances not so held to be invalid. It is hereby declared as the intent of the City Council that this Ordinance would have been adopted in its current form without the invalid or unconstitutional provision contained therein.

Section 3: This Ordinance shall be effective immediately upon its adoption by the City Council and the amendments made herein shall be incorporated into the Unified Development Code of the City of Alpharetta, Georgia, as applicable. This Ordinance hereby repeals any and all conflicting ordinances and amendments.

SO ORDAINED this the 3rd day of January, 2023



Attest:

Lauren Shapiro
Lauren Shapiro, City Clerk
(Seal)

Approved as to Form:

Molly Cosmeiri
City Attorney

Approved:

[Signature]
Jim Gilvin, Mayor

COUNCILMEMBERS

[Signature]
[Signature]

[Signature]
[Signature]

Council Member Will - ABSENT

Council Member Mitchell ABSENT

Exhibit "A"

3.2.2 Definitions.

For the purposes of this Section, unless the context indicates otherwise, the following terms shall have the meaning set forth below:

Boundary Tree. Any tree located on adjacent property with a critical root zone that will be impacted by proposed land disturbance activity.

Buffer. An area required to remain undisturbed or replanted where existing vegetation is sparse, as determined by the director.

Caliper. A standard of trunk measurement for replacement trees. Caliper inches are measured at the height of 6 inches above the ground for trees up to and including 4 inch caliper and 12 inches above the ground for trees larger than 4 inch caliper.

Conifer Tree. Any tree with needle leaves and a woody cone fruit including, but not limited to, pine, juniper and cedar species.

Conserve. Protect from harm or destruction; preserve; save.

Critical Root Zone (CRZ). The minimum area beneath a tree which must be left undisturbed in order to preserve a sufficient root mass to give a tree a reasonable chance of survival. The Critical Root Zone will typically be represented by a concentric circle centering on the tree's trunk with a radius equal in feet to one and three-tenths times the number of inches of the trunk diameter. EXAMPLE: The CRZ radius of a twenty (20) inch diameter tree is twenty-six (26) feet.

Dead Tree. Any standing tree which is no longer alive or has the ability to sustain itself through natural processes as determined by a qualified professional.

Development Activity. Any alteration of the natural environment, which requires the approval of a development or site plan and issuance of a Land Disturbance Permit. Development Activity shall also include the "thinning" or removal of trees from land in conjunction with a forest management program, the removal or destruction of trees incidental to the development of land or to the marketing of land for development, the removal or destruction of trees in conjunction with any grading activity, including the removal or filling (stockpiling) of soil, and logging or the removal of trees not in conjunction with an ongoing forest management program. Nothing in this definition shall be deemed to require or authorize the issuance of a permit for any activity described herein.

Diameter Breast-Height (DBH). The standard measure of tree size (for trees existing on a site). The tree trunk is measured at a height of 4½ feet above the ground. If a tree splits into multiple trunks below 4½ feet, the trunk is measured at its most narrow point beneath the split.

Director. The Director of Community Development or designee shall administer and enforce the provisions of this Ordinance; provided, however, that a designee shall have no authority to revoke permits.

Georgia 400 Tree Protection Zone. All property within a horizontal distance of 120 feet of the right-of-way of Georgia 400. At major intersections on Georgia 400 having exit and/or entrance ramps the protection zone shall be reduced to 60 feet. The reduction shall apply for the length of each such ramp. The Georgia 400 Tree Protection Zone is a Buffer.

Grading Activity. Altering ground surfaces to specified elevations, dimensions and/or slopes; this includes stripping, cutting, filling, stockpiling and shaping or any combination thereof and shall include the land in its cut or filled condition.

Guidance Document. A document maintained by the City of Alpharetta Arborist that includes clarifications to requirements with examples and additional technical standards about tree protection, tree planting, species selection, and other information relevant to the protection and replanting of trees in the City of Alpharetta. The document may be revised by the City Arborist as conditions and technical standards evolve.

Hardwood Tree. Any tree that is not coniferous (cone bearing). This definition is based on the colloquialism, and does not necessarily reflect any true qualities of the tree.

International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). A professional organization that promotes the professional practice of arboriculture, sets standards for obtaining professional credentials for arborist, and establishes best practices for tree care, pruning, and protection.

Land Disturbance Permit. A permit issued by the City that authorizes Development Activity and includes, but is not limited to, Soil Erosion Protection, clearing and grubbing, land disturbance and building construction.

Landscape Strip. A portion of a lot required to be reserved for, installed with, and maintained with vegetation. Such a strip may or may not be required to be of a linear form. No utilities or parking shall be allowed within a required landscape strip.

Landscape Tree. A tree or trees that were planted or retained on a developed or previously developed site.

Lot Building Area. The area of a lot encompassed by front sides and rear yard setbacks or building line as required by City Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

Mass Grading. The grading within existing or across proposed property lines including the removal of trees and disturbance of soils in order to prepare a site for construction where buildings are not approved.

Mulch. An organic material spread around the base of a plant or on a plant bed to enrich and insulate the soil. Types of mulch include Pine Straw, Shredded Hardwood, Wood Chips, and Bark Chips. Mulch should be free of disease and pests. Synthetic or artificial mulches are not acceptable for use in the City of Alpharetta.

Non-Development Activity. Any alteration of the natural environment which does not require development or site plan approval, but which would include the proposed removal or destruction of any tree(s). Any removal of trees that constitutes Development Activity as that term is herein defined shall not constitute non-development activity.

Ornamental Tree. A tree that provides a visual impact in the landscape. The impact may be provided through form, bark, branching structure, leaf color, and/or flower color. Typically a small or medium size tree.

Overstory Tree. Those trees that compose the top layer or canopy of vegetation and will generally reach a mature height greater than 40 feet and typically have a spreading canopy.

Permit (Tree Removal Permit). An official Permit for tree removal issued by the City of Alpharetta.

Pervious Surface. All that area of land that can be landscaped or planted, allows natural passage through by water, and is not covered by man-made materials or structures such as buildings or paving.

Pine Tree. An evergreen coniferous tree that has clusters of needle-shaped leaves.

Plantable Area. The pervious surface area available for the preservation or planting of trees. Plantable Area shall not include that portion of the lot that is covered by buildings and structures permitted pursuant to the maximum lot coverage standards of this Ordinance.

Planted Area. An area of living plant material created for the purpose of establishing open space and consisting of a minimum of 50% of the area devoted to trees and shrubs.

Pruning (Tree Pruning). To cut away dead, overgrown, or undesirable branches or stems. Pruning of trees to be done in compliance with standard arboricultural practices as outlined in ANSI A300 and shall maintain the trees natural form and structure.

Qualified Professional. An International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist, an American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA) Registered Consulting Arborist, or a Registered Forester.

Recompense. Replacement of trees or payment into the City held tree fund for the removal of Specimen Trees.

Replacement Planting. The planting of trees on a site that before development had more trees, and after development shall have less trees per acre.

Responsible Party. Any individual, firm, principal, or other entity who is a signatory to a Tree Removal Permit Application or Land Disturbance Permit for Development Activity or any person or company caught in the act of tree removal without a City-issued permit, or who violates any other provision of this Ordinance.

Shade Tree. Any tree that has a spreading canopy that provides partial to full shade to the ground with a minimum height of 20 feet.

Semi-Pervious. Hardscape, aggregate or porous paver that allows at least fifty percent (50%) of surface water to pass through the manmade material and into the underlying soil.

Softwood Tree. Any coniferous (cone bearing) tree. This definition is based on the colloquialism, and does not necessarily reflect any true qualities of the tree.

Specimen Tree. Any tree which qualifies for special consideration for preservation due to its size, type, condition, location or historical significance and which also meets the minimum size criteria set forth below.

Size Criteria:

Pine Trees:	30-inch diameter or larger for trees in the <i>Pinus</i> (Pine) genus.
Coniferous Trees:	20" diameter or larger for trees in the <i>cedrus</i> (deodar cedar), <i>Thuja</i> (<i>Arborvitae</i>), or other ecologically similar trees,
Overstory Trees:	30-inch diameter or larger for trees in the <i>Liquidambar</i> (Sweetgum) or <i>Liriodendron</i> (Tulip poplar) genus
	20-inch diameter or larger for trees in the <i>Fagus</i> (Beech), <i>Nyssa</i> (Tupelo), <i>Diospyros</i> (Persimmon), <i>Sassafras</i> (Sassafras), or other ecologically similar trees
	20-inch diameter or larger for <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> (Southern magnolia) and those cultivars that generally reach a mature height over 40'
	24-inch (24") diameter or larger for trees in all other genera
Understory Trees:	8-inch (8") diameter or larger.
	10-inch (10") diameter or larger for <i>Oxydendron arboreum</i> (Sourwood).

See additional requirements for Specimen Trees in "The Guidance Document."

Street/Streetscape Tree. Any tree located or proposed to be located along a public or private street. The actual location will be determined by the specific zoning district or overlay. In situations where there is limited planting space in the right-of-way and or safety concerns, street trees may be located at the back of the sidewalk or within the landscape strip on private property and the discretion of the Director.

Structural Root Plate. The zone of rapid root taper that provides the tree stability against wind throw. The radius of the structural root plate is equal to 0.5 feet per inch of DBH.

Timber Harvest. Harvesting of timber from sites as a timber management activity as part of a demonstrated ongoing agricultural land use.

Tree. Any living, self-supporting woody or fibrous plant which normally obtains a diameter breast height of at least three (3) inches, and typically has one (1) main stem or trunk and many branches.

Tree Care Plan. A plan developed to provide an impacted tree the best possible chance of survival. A tree care plan should be prepared by a qualified professional and conform to the requirements of ANSI A300 and the Guidance Document

Tree Density. A measurement of trees on a property, expressed as inches per acre. For existing trees density is calculated based on DBH. For proposed trees tree density is calculated based on the caliper.

Tree Grouping. A community of trees as determined by the Director to merit special consideration as an ecological feature based upon species composition, form, structure, age, and condition. Specimen trees and trees of quality may be included in tree groupings and every alternative should be evaluated to save these trees. Except as otherwise provided in Section 3.2., Tree Groupings will be treated as specimen trees for preservation credits and every alternative should be evaluated to save these trees.

Tree of Quality. A tree that merits special consideration due to historical significance, ideal shape and structure, or uniqueness of the species as determined by the Director. Except as otherwise provided in Section 3.2., Trees of Quality will be treated as specimen trees for preservation credits and every alternative should be evaluated to save these trees.

Tree Removal or Removal of Trees. Removal of trees through an act of cutting down a tree or any act which causes a tree to die within 2 years after commission of the act or impedes the ability of the tree to sustain itself, including but not limited to damage inflicted upon the root system, trunk, or canopy as a result of:

1. The improper use of machinery on the trees;
2. The storage of materials in or around the trees;
3. Soil compaction;
4. Altering the natural grade to expose the roots or to cover the tree's root system with more than 4 inches of soil;
5. Causing the infection or infestation of the tree by pests, fungus or harmful bacteria;
6. Pruning judged to be excessive by the Director or not in accordance with the standard set forth by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA);
7. Paving with concrete, asphalt or other impervious surface within such proximity as to be harmful to the tree or its root system; and
8. Application of herbicides or defoliants to any tree without first obtaining a permit.

Tree Planting List. List of preferred tree species for use in the City of Alpharetta. Species not included on this list may be approved at the discretion of the Director. The Tree Planting List is included in the Arborist Guidance Document.

Tree Protection Area. An area encompassing the critical root zone of a tree that shall remain in an a pervious state.

Tree Save Area. An area designated for the purpose of meeting tree density requirements, saving natural trees, and/or preserving natural buffers that shall remain in a pervious state.

Understory Trees. Those trees that grow beneath the overstory, and will generally reach a mature height less than 40 feet. Understory trees may include coniferous trees that meet these same height characteristics.

Zoning Districts. Those areas as defined in the Zoning Ordinance and shown on the Zoning Map. (Ord. No. 739 , 5-1-2017; Ord. No. 749 , § 4, 9-18-2017; Ord. No. 769 , § 1, 11-12-2018)

3.2.8 Tree Replanting, Buffer, and Landscape standards.

A. Tree Replanting.

1. Unless otherwise approved by the Director, it is recommended that trees selected for replanting be on the Recommended Tree List. Trees selected for planting must be free from injury, pests, disease, nutritional disorders or root defects, and must be of good vigor and form in order to assure a reasonable expectation of survivability. Standards for transplanting shall be in keeping with those established in the International Society of Arboriculture publication Tree and Shrub Transplanting Manual or similar publication. Reference the American Association of Nurserymen publication American Standard for Nursery Stock

(ANSI Z60.1-2014) for plant material quality specifications. Reference the Manual of Woody Landscape Plants (Michael Dirr, 2009, Stipes Pub Llc.) or similar publication for information on tree species and site requirements.

2. It is desirable that replanted trees be ecologically compatible with the site and neighboring sites. Accordingly, the replanted trees shall be of the same or similar species as those removed when practical.
 3. All replanted overstory trees shall be at least six (6) feet tall and have a trunk of not less than two (2) caliper inches. All replanted understory trees shall be at least four (4) feet tall or have a trunk not less than one (1) caliper inch. In order to provide sufficient growing area for planted trees, the following minimum criteria must be observed unless otherwise approved by the Director.
 - a. No more than 25% of any one genus may be included in any replanting plan.
 - b. A minimum of 40% of the required tree density on a site is recommended to be met through overstory tree planting.
 - c. Greater than 50% of the trees shall be natives.
- B. Buffer Requirements.
1. A lot zoned or used for a rental dwelling, office, institutional, commercial, industrial uses or occupied by a non 'For-Sale' residential use shall provide a fifty foot wide undisturbed buffer along all property lines adjoining property zoned for or used by 'For-Sale' residential purposes. Where commercial or industrial districts or developments abut R-10M zoning districts, the same buffer requirements apply. The buffer shall be in addition to the required building setback line.
 - a. When a new, 'For-Sale' development is proposed adjacent to an existing, non-residential use with no buffer present, the 50' buffer must be provided by the residential development.
 - b. If a 50' buffer has been provided on the property adjacent to a proposed, non-residential development, the buffer requirement may be waived with the approval of the Director.
 2. Except as otherwise provided, herein, buffer strips shall be preserved in their natural undisturbed state, except that sparsely planted buffers shall be enhanced with additional plant material. Enhancement plants must provide an opaque screen within two (2) years of planting and must consist of trees, shrubs, and groundcover plants meeting the following standards:
 - a. Plant selection will consist of eighty (80) percent evergreen species and twenty (20) percent deciduous species;
 - b. Deciduous trees must be a minimum of 2 inch caliper at time of installation;
 - c. Evergreen trees must be a minimum of 9 feet tall at time of installation;
 - d. Shrubs must be a minimum of 3 feet tall at time of installation;
 - e. Plants will be spaced a maximum of eight (8) feet on center or as approved by the Director;
 - f. Plantings shall be designed with plant palate containing a mixture of colors, textures, and heights.
 3. Undisturbed buffers shall not contain any surface parking or storm water, detention facilities, or any structures except that the Director may approve underground facilities within the buffer or the crossing of the buffer for the purpose of extending utilities.
 4. The Director may approve vegetated runoff reduction measures within the buffer. The planting requirements above may be varied to accommodate vegetated runoff reduction

measures as part of an approved stormwater management plan, if properly designed to provide stormwater management and screening functions.

5. Stream buffers must be replanted where disturbed for approved access and utility crossing. Replacement plantings must be native and be arranged to have a natural appearance.
6. All buffer plantings are subject to the approval of the Director.

C. Parking Lot Landscaping.

1. Surface parking lots shall provide a minimum 200 square foot wide landscape island at the end of each parking bay, and a 200 square foot island located each 72 feet of single parking length. Each landscape island shall be planted with one shade tree. Islands shall be excavated to 3 feet deep or to a depth 6 inches greater than the height of the root ball and backfilled with a minimum of 600 cubic feet of friable soil. Islands that are 400 square feet or larger and corner islands shall be planted with a large overstory tree. Parking lot trees must be 2" caliper minimum at time of planting and have a clear trunk to a minimum height of 6 feet. The remainder of a landscape island shall be planted with shrubs, ornamental grasses, and ground covers; and mulch shall be applied. Turf grass will not be accepted. Utilities and lighting shall not be allowed within required parking lot landscape islands.
2. Alternate landscape configurations may be approved if the Director determines that the alternate design exceeds the standards above and/or is part of a smart stormwater design for the site that includes multi-functional, vegetated runoff reduction measures. An alternate configuration could also include a stormwater component or the preservation and enhancement of existing trees which are provided above and beyond other tree preservation requirements; which are deemed of community value by the Director; and shall result in a minimum of 50% parking lot canopy coverage within 15 years.
3. The required tree area shall be protected against compaction and shall provide sufficient area for tree growth. Utilities are not allowed within the minimum area. The trees shall be maintained in accordance with best management practices as defined by the International Society of Arboriculture guidelines, and shall not be removed or pruned without permission from the City Arborists.
4. Shrubs shall be provided to screen paved areas and parking lots from the public right-of-way, private drives and adjacent property year round. Shrubs shall be 2 feet tall at time of planting, 2 rows deep and shall provide a screen within 3 years of planting. Alternate screening methods such as fencing may be approved by the Director.

D. Landscape Strips.

1. The City wants to promote tree lined streets therefore, a minimum of ten (10) feet wide landscape strip shall be provided along all public right-of-ways and private roads. Main streets which are listed below shall have twenty (20) foot landscape strips, except those located within the Downtown Overlay District, which shall have ten (10) feet wide landscape strips or landscaping as approved by the Director.

MAIN STREETS:

Highway 9
Mansell Road
Windward Parkway
Northpoint Parkway
Westside Parkway
Old Milton Parkway
Haynes Bridge Road

Kimball Bridge Road

2. No permanent structures other than signage are permitted within the landscape strip. This includes pavement, retaining walls, drainage structures, detention ponds, flumes, curbing, etc. unless approved by the Director.
 - a. Retaining walls built with decorative masonry and designed as a landscape feature may be located within the landscape strip subject to approval by the Director. All required plantings must be installed so as not to interfere with the structural integrity of the wall.
 3. Actual spacing of street trees is based on the average canopy spread of the species selected as outlined in the Arborist Guidance document. If the spacing of shade trees exceeds 25 feet on center understory trees shall be required to fill in the gaps between each shade tree. Spacing of shade trees shall not exceed 40 feet on center. Shade trees shall be a minimum 4" caliper; ornamental trees shall be a minimum 3" caliper. The use of a combination of shade trees and ornamental trees is recommended.
 4. For commercial development and for master plan subdivisions, a minimum of five (5) foot landscape strip shall be provided along all property lines which do not adjoin a public right-of-way or private road. One (1) shade tree, minimum 4" caliper, shall be provided for every fifty (50) linear feet of landscape strip. For master plan subdivisions, this requirement is only required along the external property line of the overall project.
 5. Shrubs shall be provided in all landscape strips. Shrubs shall be a minimum of 2 feet tall at time of planting. Shrubs located in landscape strips may be used to meet the parking lot screening requirement.
- E. Additional screening shall be provided around all utility areas, detention facilities, dumpster/refuse areas, drive through areas, loading and unloading zones, etc. to screen views from the public right-of-way, private roads, drives, and adjacent properties year round. Screening shall be provided in any combination of the standards below or as approved by the Director.
1. Plant selection will consist of eighty (80) percent evergreen species and twenty (20) percent deciduous species;
 2. Deciduous trees must be a minimum of 2 inch caliper at time of installation;
 3. Evergreen trees must be a minimum of 6 foot tall at time of installation;
 4. Shrubs must be a minimum of 4 foot tall at time of installation;
 5. Screening for detention facilities must incorporate an alternating double row of evergreen shrubs 4 foot tall at time of planting.
 6. A combination of decorative walls, fences, and landscape material may be used with the approval of the Director.
- F. Lighting Fixtures shall be arranged so that the source of any light is screened from residential views and located as to not interfere with the tree canopy at time of planting or in the future.
- G. All required landscape areas shall be provided with a minimum of 1 water spigot or other water source within 150 feet.
- H. A bond shall be required for a minimum of 18 months to ensure the maintenance and irrigation of the landscaping materials.
- I. All landscape plans and tree planting plans for non "For Sale" residential properties shall be prepared as a to-scale map or a site plan prepared and sealed by a Registered Landscape Architect in the State of Georgia. Tree only plans may be prepared by a Qualified Professional.
- J. Outdoor Dining Areas. At-grade outdoor dining areas shall include perimeter landscaping and decorative detectable barriers in order to define the area. Detectable barriers shall include decorative planters, low

walls or other improvement approved by the Community Development Director. Uncovered outdoor dining areas shall include one (1) shade tree per 750 square feet.

- K. Tree Conservation. To preserve the character and existing tree canopy within the Downtown Overlay it is desired to maintain good quality trees. Specimen trees and trees of quality within the building setbacks along the roads listed below shall be conserved.

ROADS:

Academy Street

Canton Street

Church Street

Cumming Street

Marietta Street

Mayfield Road

Milton Avenue

Roswell Street

