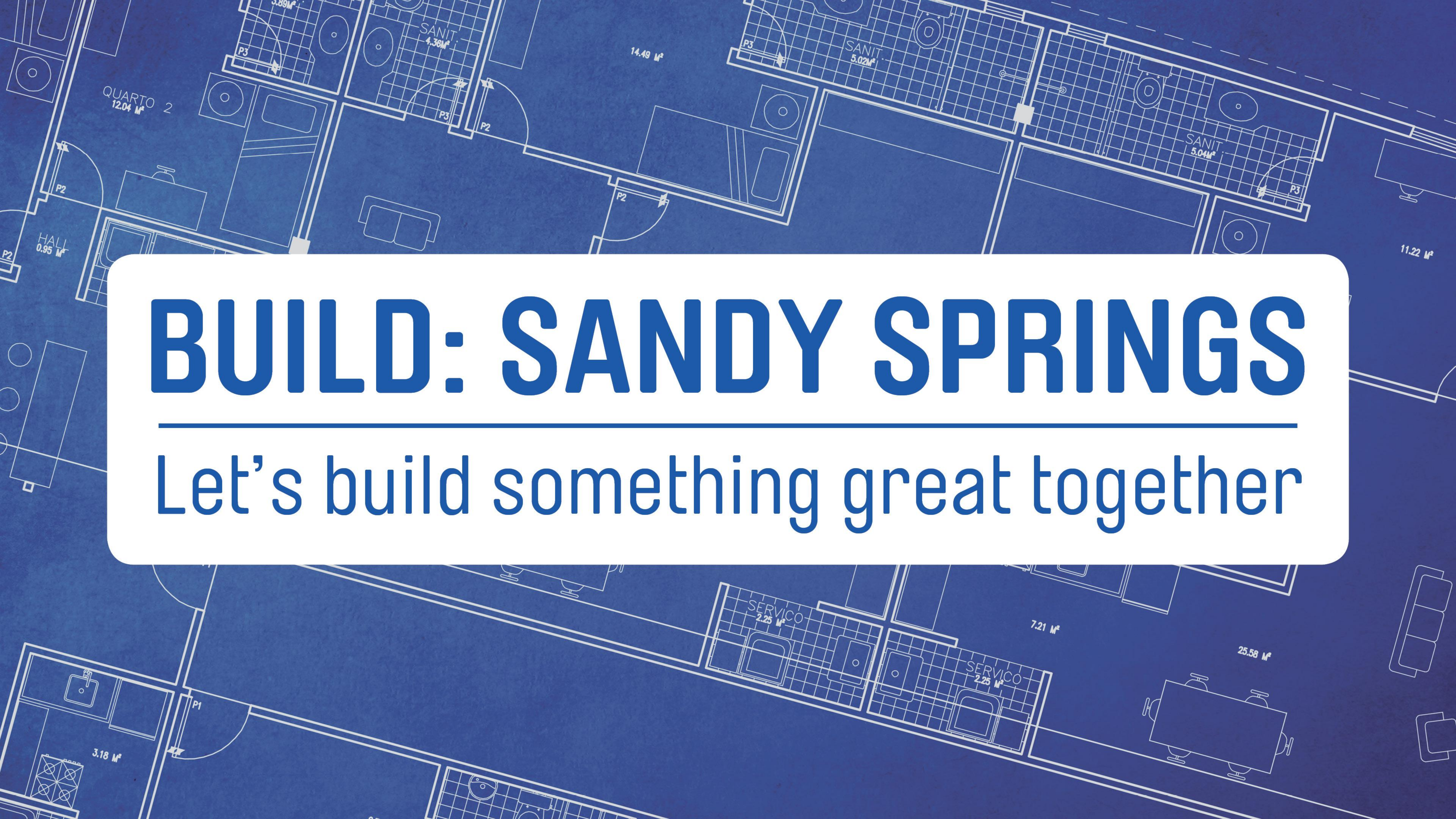


The background is a detailed architectural floor plan in white lines on a dark blue background. It shows various rooms including bedrooms (QUARTO), bathrooms (SANIT), a hallway (HALL), and service areas (SERVICO). Rooms are labeled with their area in square meters (M²). For example, QUARTO 2 is 12.04 M², SANIT 4.36 M², SANIT 5.02 M², SANIT 5.04 M², HALL 0.95 M², SERVICO 2.25 M², and SERVICO 2.25 M². There are also larger open areas labeled with numbers like 14.49 M², 11.22 M², 7.21 M², 25.58 M², and 3.18 M². The plan includes furniture like beds, sofas, and tables, and architectural details like doors, windows, and stairs.

BUILD: SANDY SPRINGS

Let's build something great together

TREE TALK

UNDERSTANDING REMOVAL, DEVELOPMENT, AND CONSERVATION



SANDY SPRINGS™
GEORGIA

September 22th, 2026

CITY STAFF – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

City Arborists

Layton Rideout

lrideout@sandyspringsga.gov

404-922-2257

Roger Bledsoe

rbledsoe@sandyspringsga.gov

770-283-0877

Chief Environmental Compliance Officer

James Sanders

jsanders@sandyspringsga.gov

770-687-5153

CITY STAFF – RECREATION AND PARKS

Urban Forester

William Park

wpark@sandyspringsga.gov

470-586-0378

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Part I – Tree Ordinance
 - Permit Application Information
 - Permit Application Types
 - DDH Notification
 - Tree Removal Permit
 - Tree Conservation Plan
 - Mitigation Requirements
- Part II – Urban Forestry
 - Application of the Tree Fund
 - Sandy Springs Canopy Coverage
 - Urban Forestry Program
 - Trees Atlanta Program
 - Eco Stewards Program
 - Invasive Species Identification

PART I – TREE ORDINANCE

PERMIT APPLICATION INFORMATION

Basic information needed when applying for a permit

TREE ORDINANCE

[Sandy Springs Development Code](#)

<i>Section 9.3</i>	<i>Tree Conservation (primary code section)</i>
<i>Section 9.4.2.G</i>	<i>Side Setback Grading Mitigation</i>
<i>Section 8.3.3</i>	<i>Residential Front Yard Trees</i>



[Sandy Springs Technical Manual](#)

<i>Section 1</i>	<i>Landscape, Tree and Buffer Submittal Plans and Planting Standards (approved tree lists, construction details, etc.)</i>
------------------	--



NEED HELP? FIND AN ARBORIST

ISA

International Society
of Arboriculture

About

Tree Owner Information

Sign in

International Society of Arboriculture - Credential Holders

46,017 Directory Members

Need help navigating the directory?

Check out our video guide

Search by...

Profile Name

Default (Most completed)

Viewing 1-20 of 21

<

Page

1

of 2

>

Rafael Santiago

Atlanta, GA, USA

Rafael has a long history in the green industry. Graduated in Forest Engineering from the University of Vicosa (2015), with a Master's degree in harvesting operations from the Auburn School of Forestry (Auburn AL, 2015-2017.). While working at Premier Tree Solutions in Atlanta GA, he became an ISA Certified Arborist and TRAQ qualified (2018). He is deeply committed to tree preservation, applying his expertise to restore and protect trees whenever possible rather than default to removal. Default has extensive experience evaluating tree conditions and results in a clear tree solution.

Skills: arboriculture - community tree assessment - consulting arborist +11 more skills

ISA Certified Arborist®

ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification®

Gold Canopy Partner: Not Applicable

Employer/Company Website : CONTACT via text or call: (470) 502 - 6240

Matthew L. Mosher

Atlanta, GA, USA

Matthew Mosher was the Founder, Owner, and President of Wise Oak, Inc., a premier tree care, landscape, caretaking, and snow and ice management company based in South Londonderry, Vermont. A graduate of the University of Massachusetts Amherst with a Bachelor of Science in Arboriculture and a minor in business, and an Associate of Science in Forest Technology from Penn State University, Matthew began his career in arboriculture in the late 1980s, building a strong foundation in tree health care, safety, and operations with consultations including SouthTree and Boston Tree Experts. He

Skills: arboriculture - community tree assessment - consulting arborist +11 more skills

ISA Certified Arborist®

ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification®

Gold Canopy Partner: Davey Tree Expert Company

Employer/Company Website : https://www.davey.com/

Filters

Clear Filters

Credentials

Clear

ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification®

☐ ISA Board Certified Master Arborist®

☐ ISA Certified Arborist®

☐ ISA Certified Urban Forest Professional

☐ ISA Certified Arborist Utility Specialist®

☐ ISA Certified Tree Climber

☐ ISA Certified Tree Worker Aerial Lift

Location

Filter by city

Clear

Atlanta, GA, USA

☒ Specify a surrounding radius

Unit

Miles

Kilometres

5 mi

120 mi

Selected radius miles

Or by country and state ⓘ

Select Country

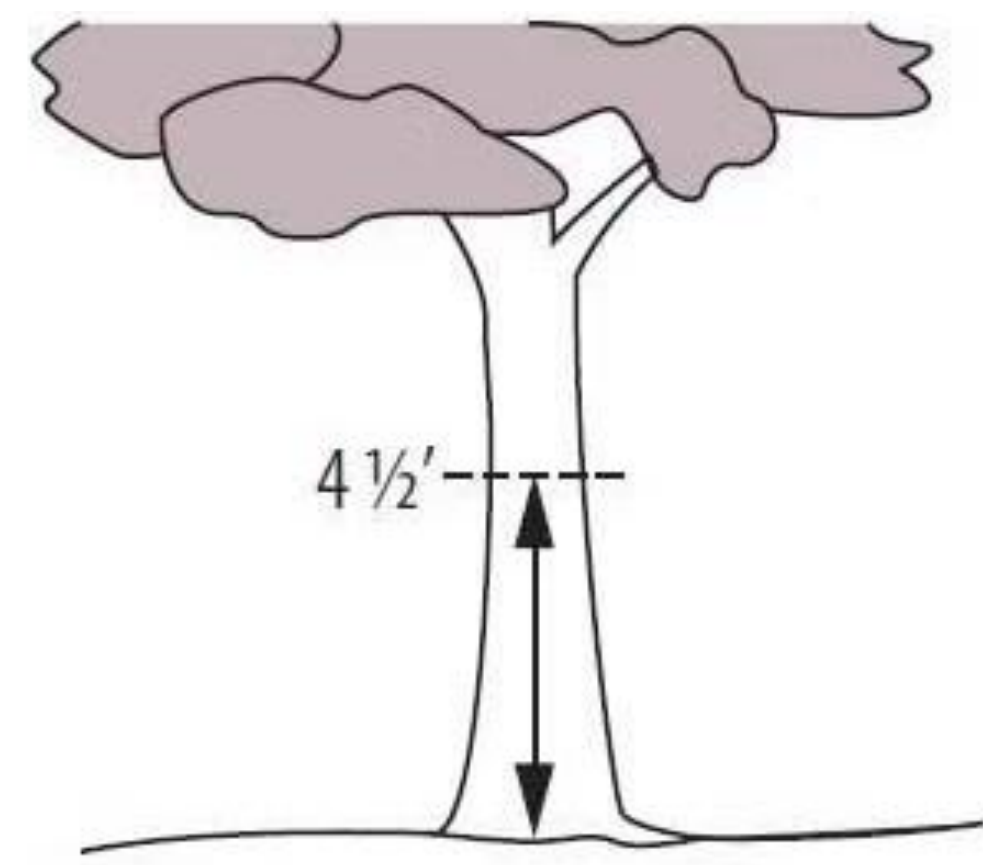
[Georgia Arborist Association](https://www.georgiaarborist.org/)
<https://www.georgiaarborist.org/>

[TreesAreGood.org](https://www.treesaregood.org/)

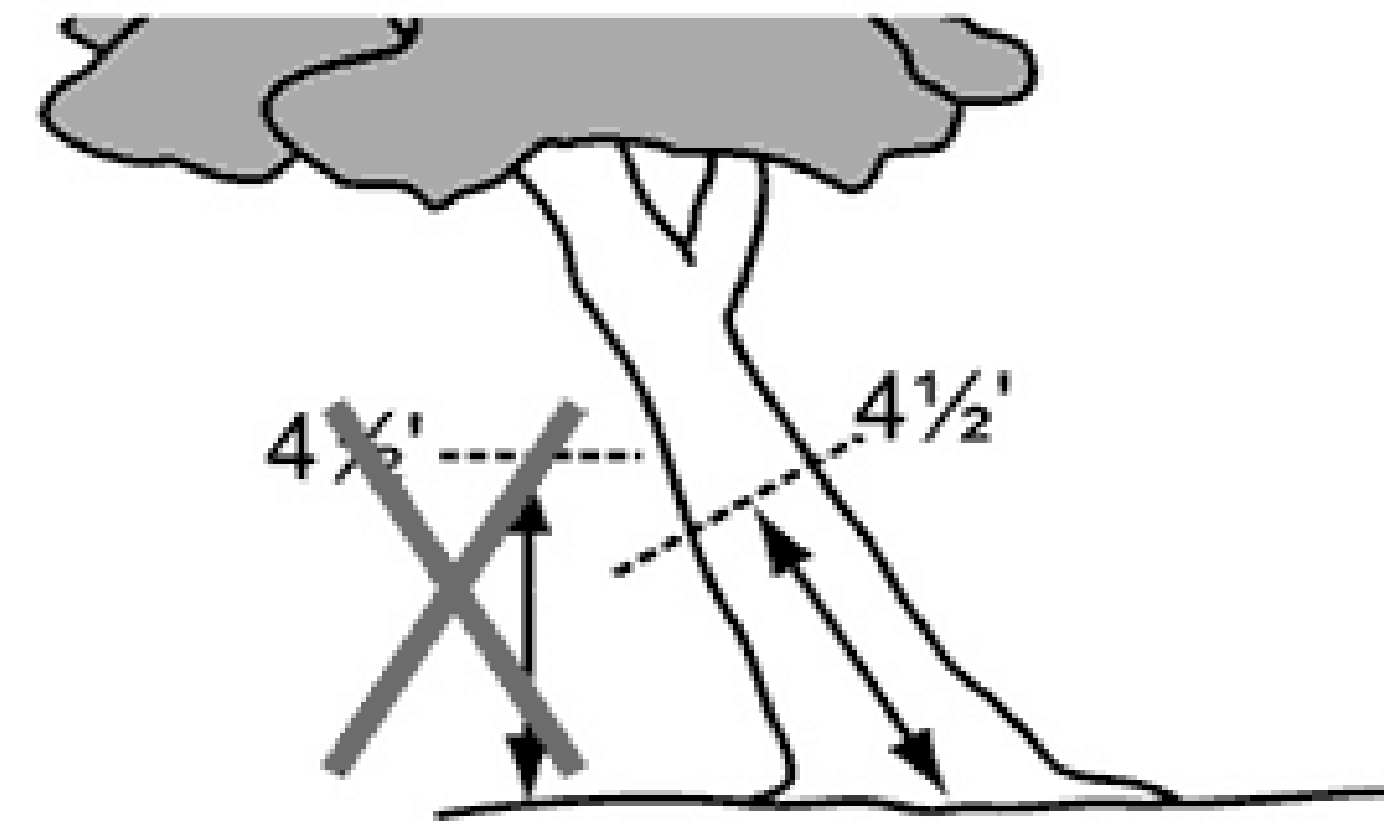
International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Credentials

- ISA Certified Arborist
- TRAQ – Tree Risk Assessment Qualification

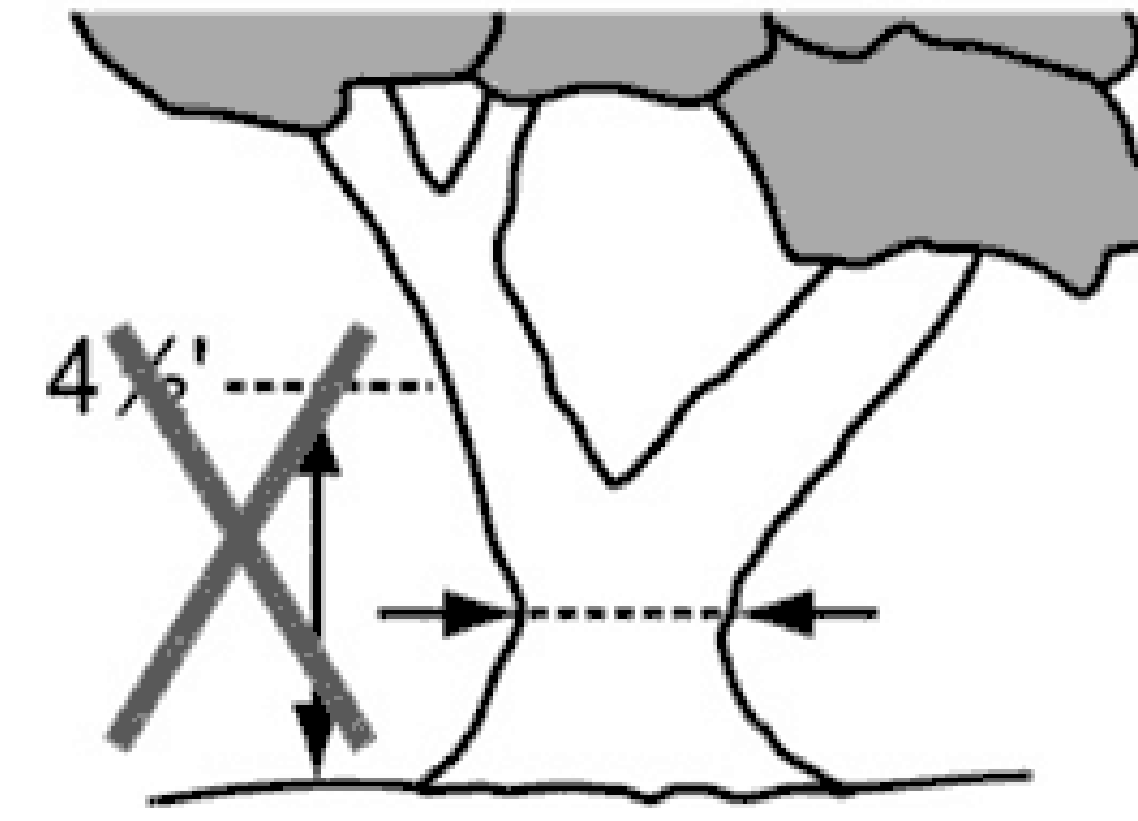
REQUIRED TREE INFORMATION



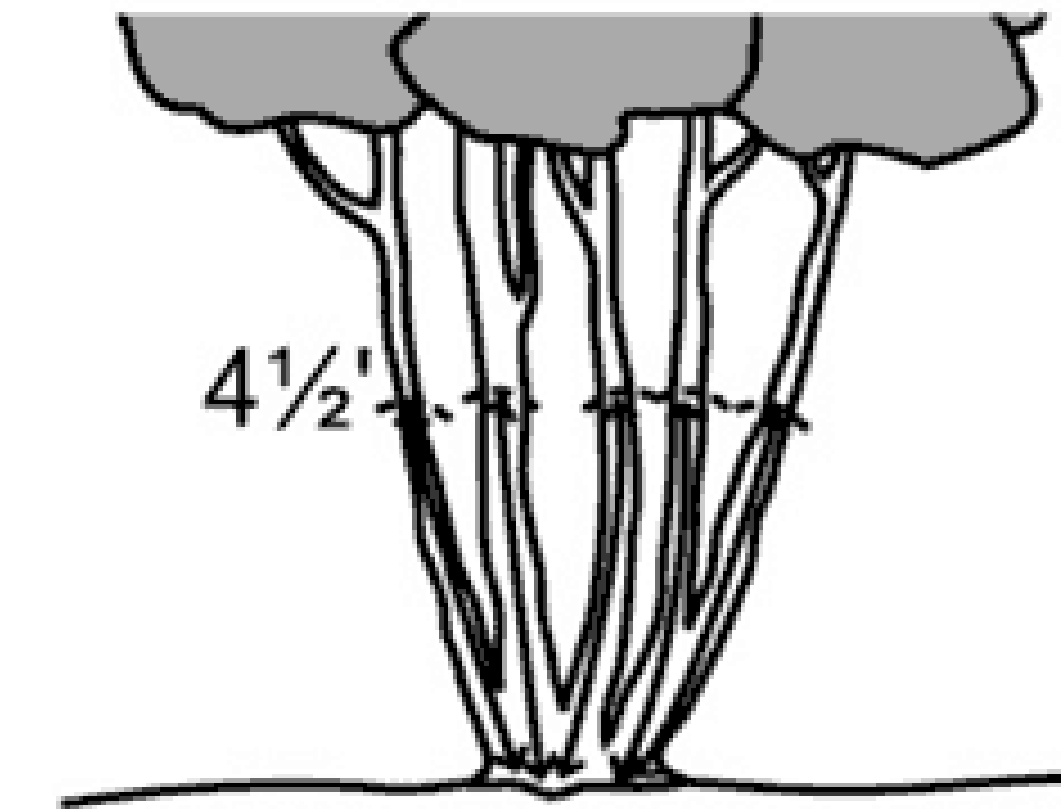
Typical
Tree



Leaning
Tree



Codominant
Stem Tree



Multi-stem
Tree

Tree Size - Diameter at Breast Height

1. Wrap a tape measure around the trunk of the tree at 4.5 ft above the ground to get the circumference of the tree.

2. Divide the measurement by 3.14 to get the diameter

(Diameter = circumference divided by 3.14)

- For Codominant: measure at narrowest point below split
- For Multi-stem: add up all stem diameters at 4.5 ft above ground

REQUIRED TREE INFORMATION

Tree Species found in Sandy Springs



Pine / Evergreen



Hardwood

Sources

Pine - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pinus_taeda_loblolly_pine_large_crown.jpg;

Hardwood - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Acer_rubrum_%28red_maple_tree_in_fall_colors%29_%28Newark_campus_of_Ohio_State_University,_Newark,_Ohio,_USA%29_%2820_October_2015%29_3_%2821724086524%29.jpg

REQUIRED TREE INFORMATION

Tree Species found in Sandy Springs con't.



Dogwood



Sources

Dogwood- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2020-04-17_13_08_26_Red_Flowering_Dogwood_blooming_along_White_Barn_Lane_in_the_Franklin_Farm_section_of_Oak_Hill,_Fairfax_County,_Virginia.jpg
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cornus_kousa_001.jpg;

REQUIRED TREE INFORMATION

Tree Species found in Sandy Springs con't



Redbud

Sources

Redbud- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2021-04-18_10_39_46_Eastern_Redbud_blooming_along_Indale_Court_in_the_Franklin_Farm_section_of_Oak_Hill,_Fairfax_County,_Virginia.jpg
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cercis_canadensis_15zz.jpg

PERMIT APPLICATION TYPES

Three Types of Tree Removal Applications

- ***DDH Notification*** – The tree looks dead/dangerous.
- ***Tree Removal Permit*** – I just want the tree removed. Depending on the size of the tree, species and location, a tree removal permit may be required.
- ***Tree Conservation Plan*** – I'm building something (a pool, addition, grading, and other site work may require a Tree Conservation Plan submitted with your building or land disturbance permit.

See Removal Applications types on the following sheets.



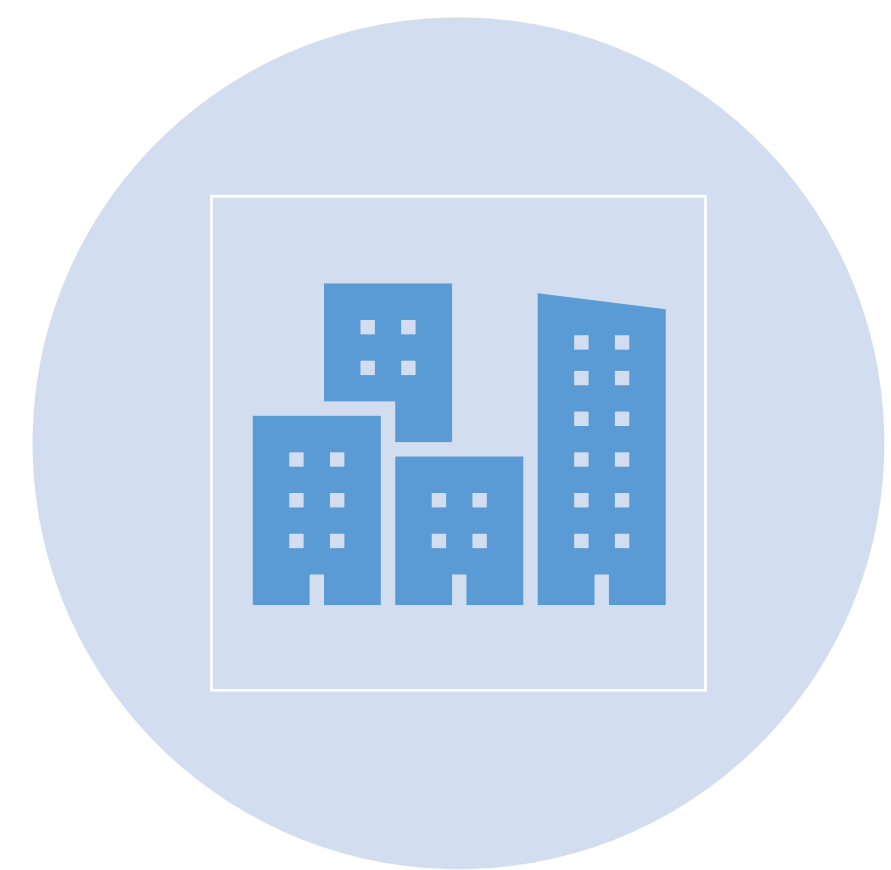
Before you Apply: Four Things to Know



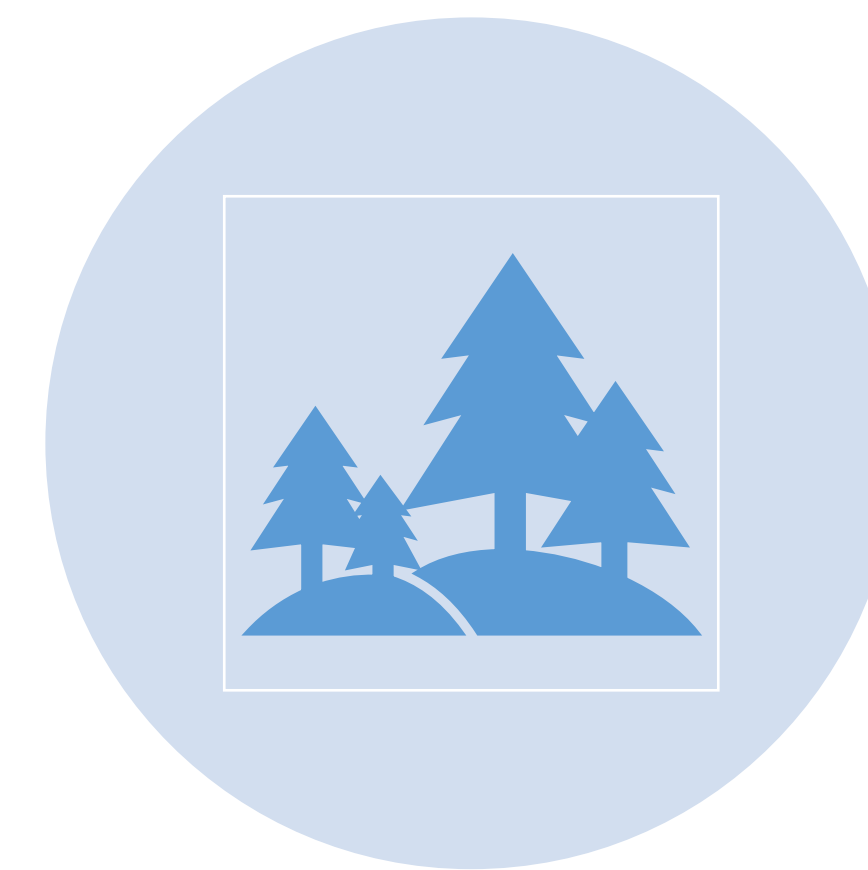
What - Hardwood, Pine, Dogwood, or Redbud?



How Big - What is the DBH of the tree?



Where - Is the tree located in a buffer? Is your property near the Chattahoochee? Close to a property line?



Why - Is the tree in the way of a pool you want to build? Is it a hazardous tree?

DDH Notification

Removal Application Type 1 – DDH Notification

- DDH stands for *Dead, Dying, or Hazardous*.
- No official permit is required for the removal of DDH trees,
 - **NOTE:** You **must** send an email that include photos of the tree to the City Arborist (arborist@sandyspringsga.gov) to be exempt from the permit process.
- Dead and dying trees are more obvious than hazardous trees.



Hazardous Tree Examples:



**Typical tree that
is splitting**



**Typical
lightening
damage to a tree**



Hazardous Tree Examples:



**Typical
hazardous,
leaning tree**



**Typical tree that
is dying**



Hazardous Tree Examples:



Mushrooms are a sign that a tree is in decline. Decaying wood provides the ideal conditions for mushrooms to grow.

Hazardous Tree Examples:



Typical hollow tree. Notice how deep the hollow goes into the tree.

Tree Removal Permit

Removal Application Type 2 – Tree Removal Permit

- A Tree Removal Permit is required to remove the following:
 - Any tree 18" in diameter and larger
 - 10" in diameter for Dogwoods and Redbuds
 - Any size tree within 2,000' of the Chattahoochee
 - Any size tree within 75' of a stream, creek or body of water



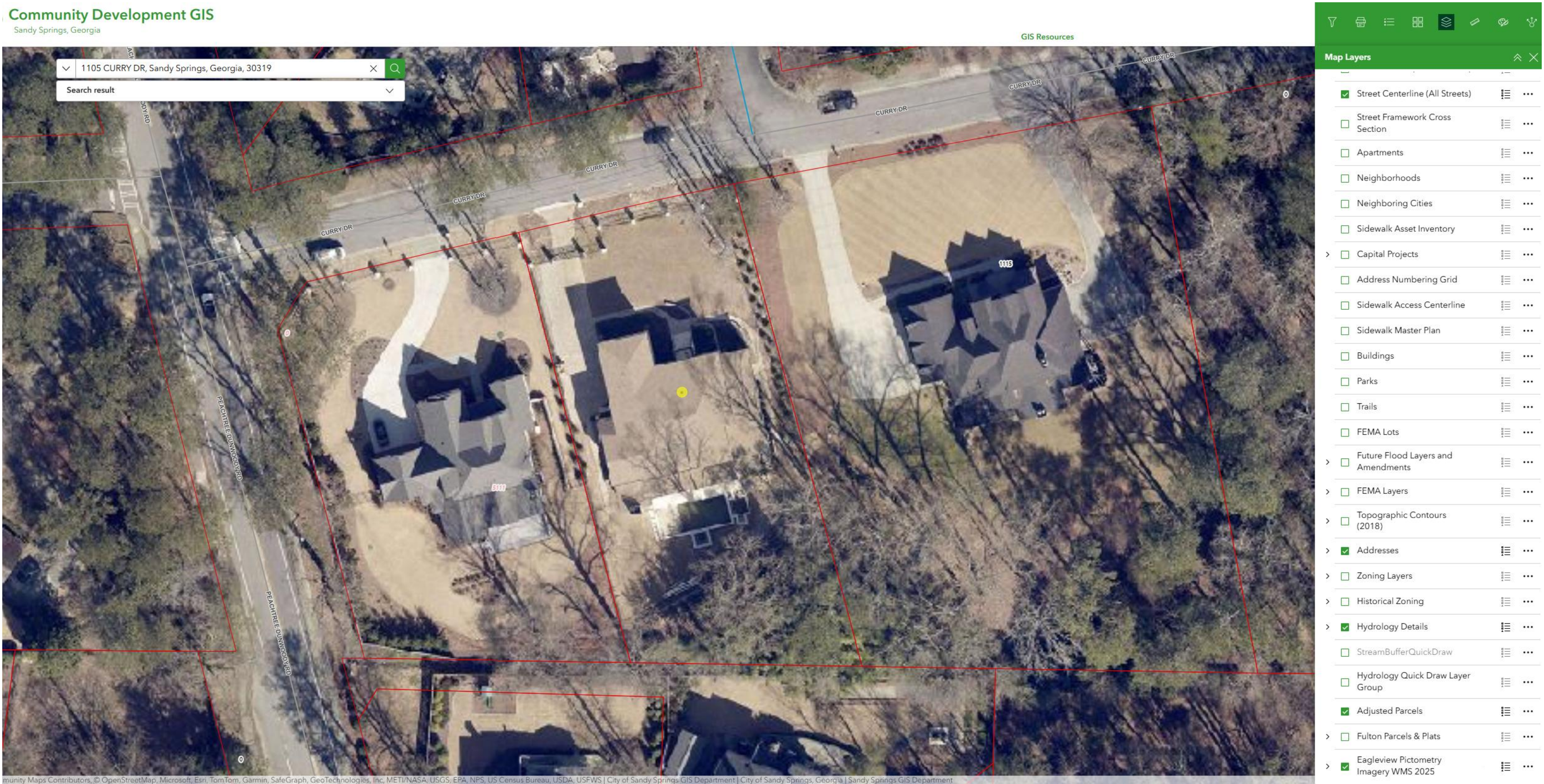
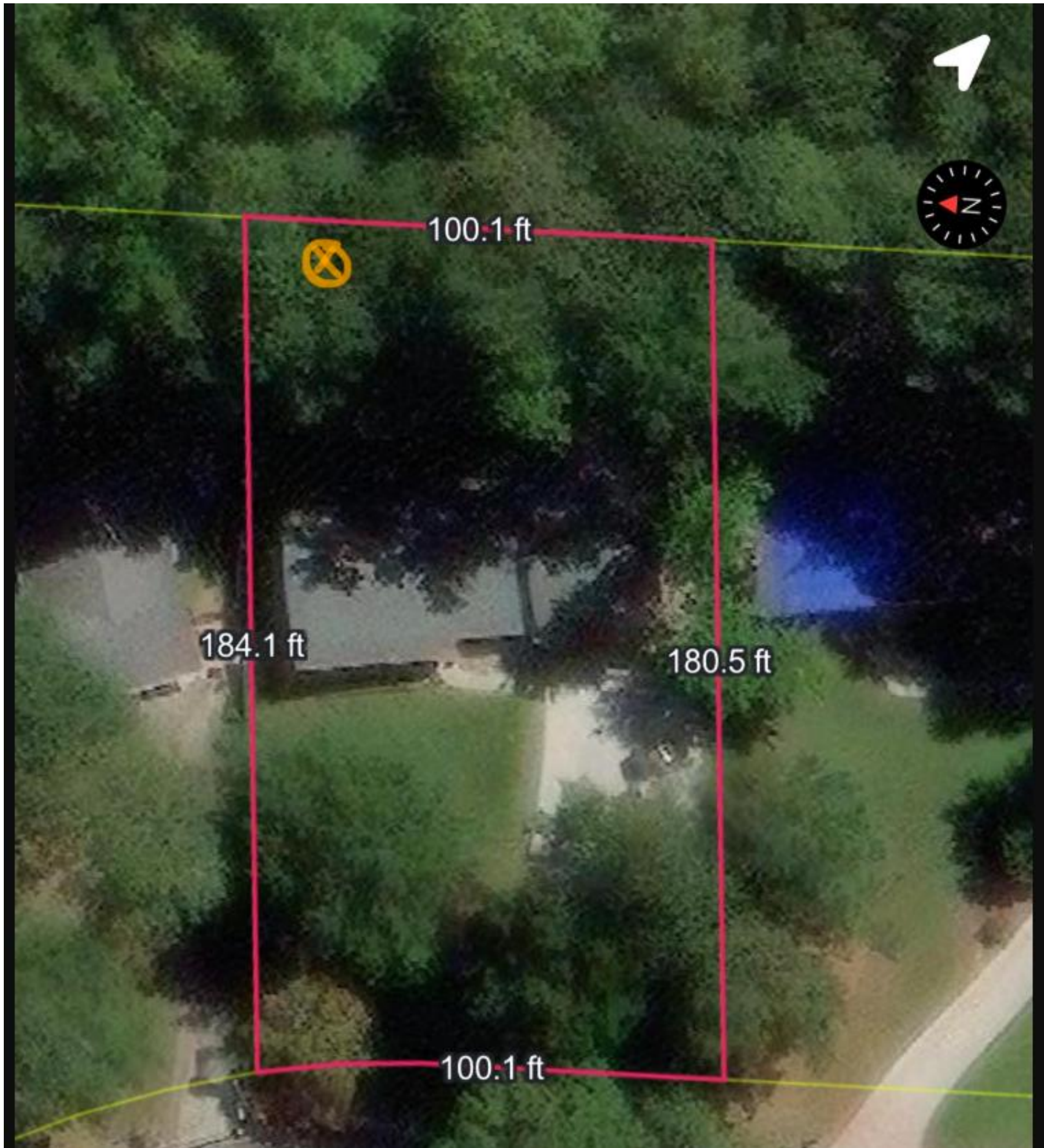
These trees are marked for removal.



How to Apply for a Tree Removal Permit

- To apply for a Tree Removal permit online, go to [SPR.GS/BUILD](https://spr.gs/build) and select tree removal permits.
- You will need to provide the following:
 - Pictures of the trees
 - Sketch showing the locations and diameter of the trees proposed for removal on your property
 - Report from a private tree professional (if applicable)
- We also need to know how many 18" in diameter or larger trees will remain on the property. These count towards canopy coverage.
- \$30 permit fee
- Staff reviews and can issue a tree removal permit within 3 business days.
- The City determine if Canopy and/or Landmark mitigation are required.

Example Site Sketch for a Tree Removal Permit



How to Apply for a Tree Removal Permit

City of Sandy Springs, GA Search Login Sign Up

City Of Sandy Springs Online Permitting Portal

Your single source for all your permitting and inspection needs!

Search for something like "Article Inspections" or "Zoning Certification Letters"

Discover Online Services

Choose below to browse services by department



Construction Permits
Commercial Building Permit, Residential Building Permit + 12 more

[Explore](#)



Tree Removal Permit
Tree Removal Permit, DDH Tree Email Notification

[Explore](#)



Planning & Zoning Applications
Variance, Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning) + 6 more

[Explore](#)



Special Event, Film Production, and Public Assembly Permits
Film Production Permit Application, Public Assembly Permit Application + 2 more

[Explore](#)



Right of Way Permits
Right of Way Utility Permit

[Explore](#)



Contact Registration
Contact Registration

[Explore](#)



[SPR.GS/BUILD](https://spr.gs/build)

Tree Conservation Plan

Removal Application Type 3 – Tree Conservation Plan

- If the tree removals are associated with construction activity (e.g., grading, additions, pools, etc.), a Tree Conservation Plan will be required.
- More nuanced. A design professional (i.e., Professional Engineer, Professional Landscape Architect, or Registered Land Surveyor) is required to prepare the plan.
- The plan is prepared as part of the permit set submitted for a Building, Pool, Retaining Wall or Land Disturbance Permit.



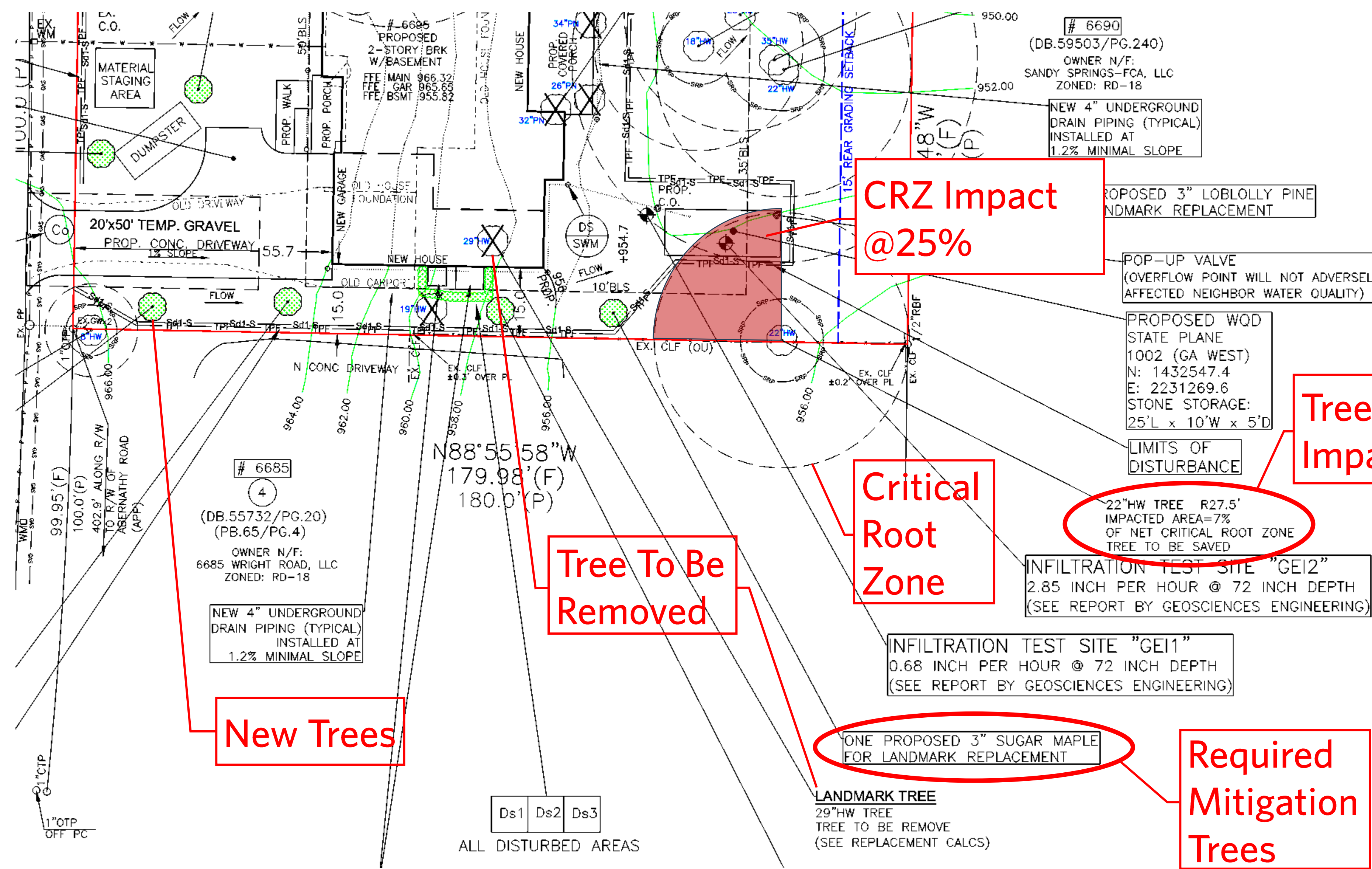
What is A Tree Conservation Plan?

- A Tree Conservation Plan (TCP) is a site plan that shows the following:
 - All trees 10" in diameter and larger labeled by their diameter size and species shown at their location on a property.
 - The *Critical Root Zone* (CRZ) shall be labeled for each tree.
 - The CRZ is the location of the primary roots of the tree, and the size of the CRZ is based on the diameter of the tree.
 - To calculate the CRZ for each tree, multiply every 1" diameter of the tree by 1.25'.
 - Example: 18" diameter x 1.25' = 22.5' CRZ radius (45' diameter circle around the center of the tree).
 - If construction activity impacts the CRZ of a tree by 25% or more, the tree is considered destroyed and cannot count towards the canopy coverage requirements. Replacement trees may be required.

What is A Tree Conservation Plan?

- A Tree Conservation Plan (TCP) is site plan that shows the following (cont.):
 - Trees proposed for removal should be represented with an X.
 - *All Boundary Trees* (neighboring trees 10" and greater) that have roots encroaching into the permitting property and their percentage levels of impact shall be shown at their location on a property.
 - The canopy coverage calculations shall be provided as a percent of the property.
 - **35% for residential**
 - **40% for commercial**
 - All trees proposed for Canopy Mitigation, Landmark Mitigation, Grading/Setback Mitigation and Front Yard Tree Requirements must shown at their proposed location on the property and identified by minimum caliper size, species and mitigation purpose.

What does a Tree Conservation Plan Look Like?



CANOPY REQUIREMENTS:

NET LOT AREA: 17,987.85 SF
REQUIRED: 6,296 SF (35%)
REMAINING: 10,250 SF (57%)

Canopy Coverage Calculations

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT CAUSE THE PROJECT SITE TO FALL BELOW MINIMUM CANOPY. REQUIREMENT SATISFIED

SIDE YARD GRADING MITIGATION TREE REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS:

RIGHT SIDE SETBACK: 1 TREE DESTROYED BY GRADING
LEFT SIDE SETBACK: NO GRADING PROPOSED & NO TREES DESTROYED

REPLACEMENT REQUIRED: 1 TREE PLANTED PER 1 TREE REMOVED OR PER 1,000 SF OF GRADED AREA = 1 TREES REQUIRED

1 TREES FOR SIDE SETBACK GRADING MITIGATION PROPOSED
REQUIREMENT SATISFIED

FRONT YARD TREE REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS:

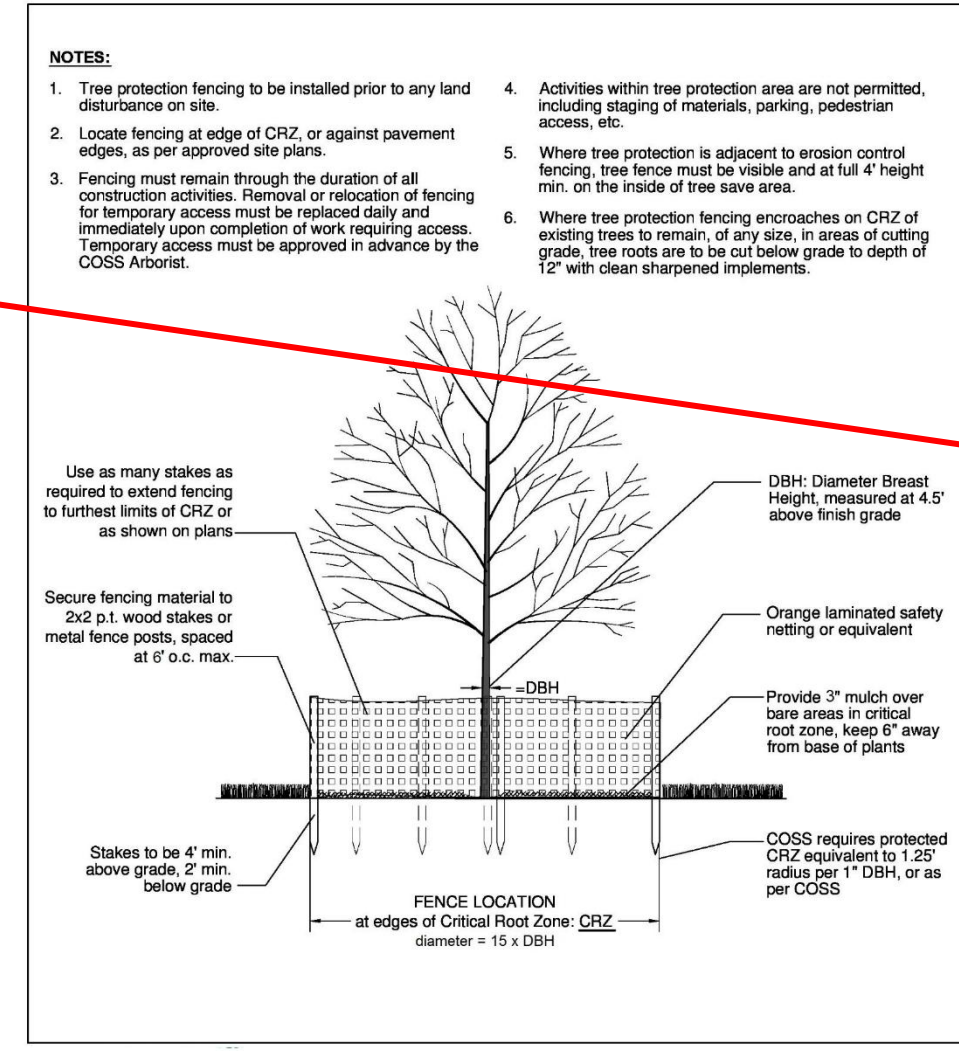
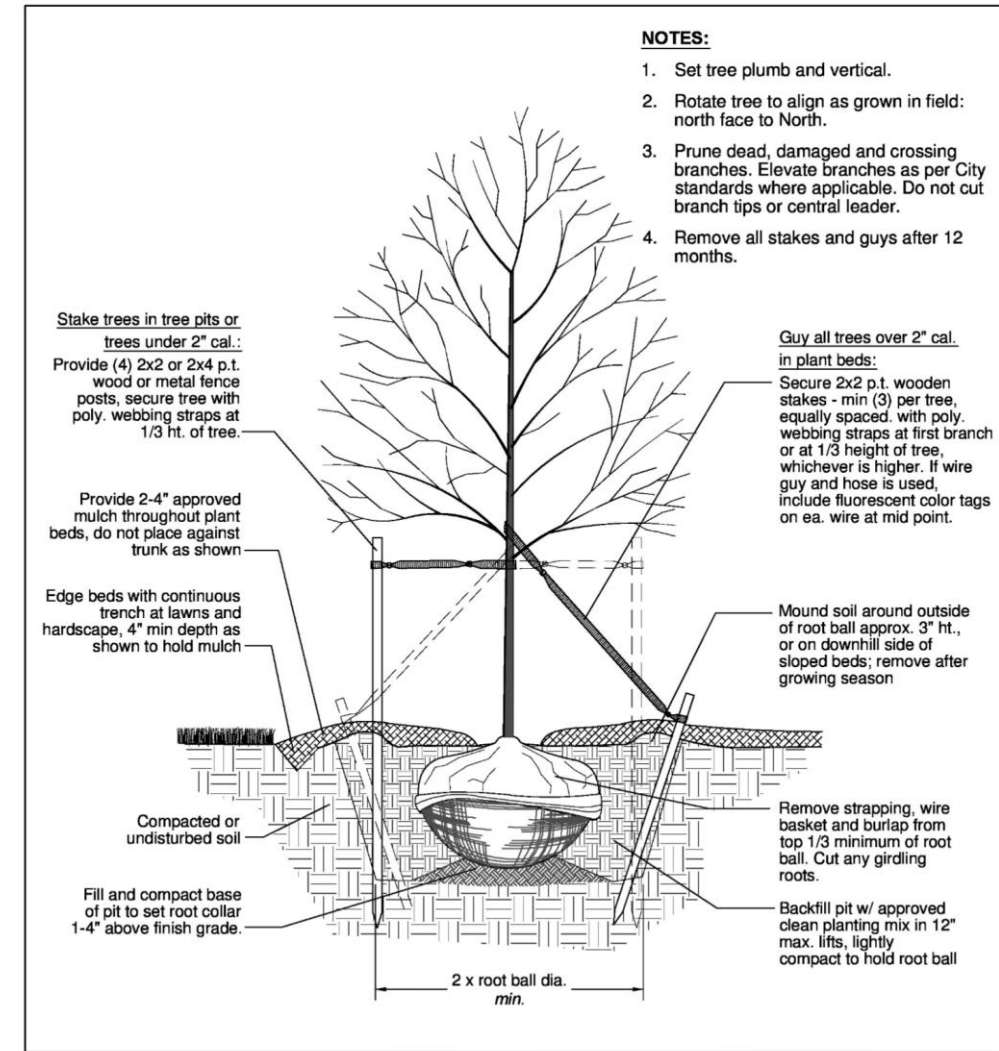
1 LARGE CANOPY TREE REQUIRED PER EVERY 40' OF STREET FRONTAGE
LOT CONTAINS 99.94' OF FRONTAGE
 $99.94 \div 40 = 2.5$ TREES REQUIRED

3 TREES PROPOSED IN FRONT YARD
REQUIREMENT SATISFIED

LANDMARK TREE REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS:

REMOVED: 3 TOTAL $\times$ 1,000 SF = 3,000 SF
REPLACEMENT REQUIRED: 3,000 SF $\times$ 1.5 = 4,500 SF (5 OVERSTORY TREES)

REPLACEMENT PROPOSED: 5 TOTAL $\times$ 1,000 SF = 5,000 SF
REQUIREMENT SATISFIED

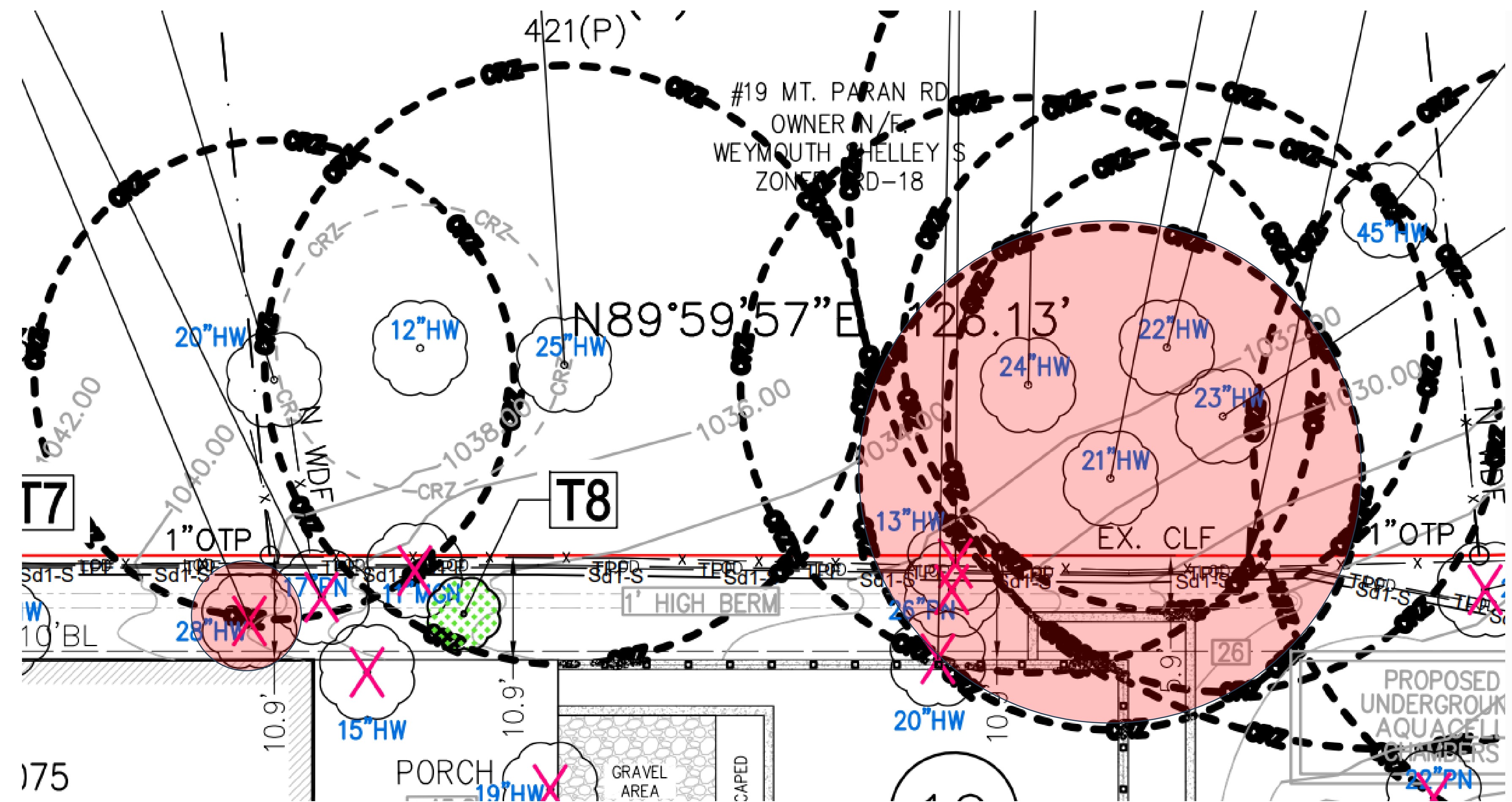


Tree Planting Details & Tree Save Fencing Details

Tree Impact Mitigation Requirements

Types of Mitigation

- **If Critical Root Zone impacts are 25% or more, mitigation may be required.**
- On-site tree impact mitigation
 - Canopy Mitigation
 - Landmark Tree Mitigation
 - Side Setback Tree Mitigation
- Off-site tree impact mitigation
 - Boundary Tree Mitigation
- **More than one type of mitigation may apply to a tree as the mitigation requirements are independent from each other.**



What is Canopy Coverage

- Canopy Coverage refers to the number of large trees shading a property.
 - Residential Properties have a required canopy coverage of 35% made up of 18" diameter or larger trees.
 - Commercial Properties have a required canopy coverage of 40% made up of 18" diameter or larger trees.
 - If you cannot maintain canopy coverage requirements, mitigation and recompense will apply.



Canopy Mitigation Requirements

- Mitigation: The replanting of trees to offset the removal of trees under canopy requirements.
 - Required for the removal of all trees 18" DBH or larger.
 - Must be mitigated with a tree of similar growing potential.
- Recompense: The payment into the Sandy Springs Tree Fund to compensate the loss of canopy.
 - Required for the removal of Protected Trees (18" diameter or larger) under canopy requirements at \$1,200 / tree.

Canopy Calculation Example

- 20,000 SF Residential Property
- Canopy Requirement: 35%
- $20,000 \text{ SF} \times 35\% = 7,000 \text{ SF}$ of Required Canopy
- One Existing Large Canopy Tree = 1,000 SF of Canopy Credit
- 7 Large Canopy Trees = 7,000 SF
- What happens if 2 trees are removed?
- $7,000 \text{ SF Required Canopy} - 2,000 \text{ SF Canopy Removed} = 5,000 \text{ SF Canopy Remaining}$ and 2,000 SF canopy deficit
- Mitigation and/or recompense would be required to make up the deficit.

Canopy Calculation Example Mitigation Result

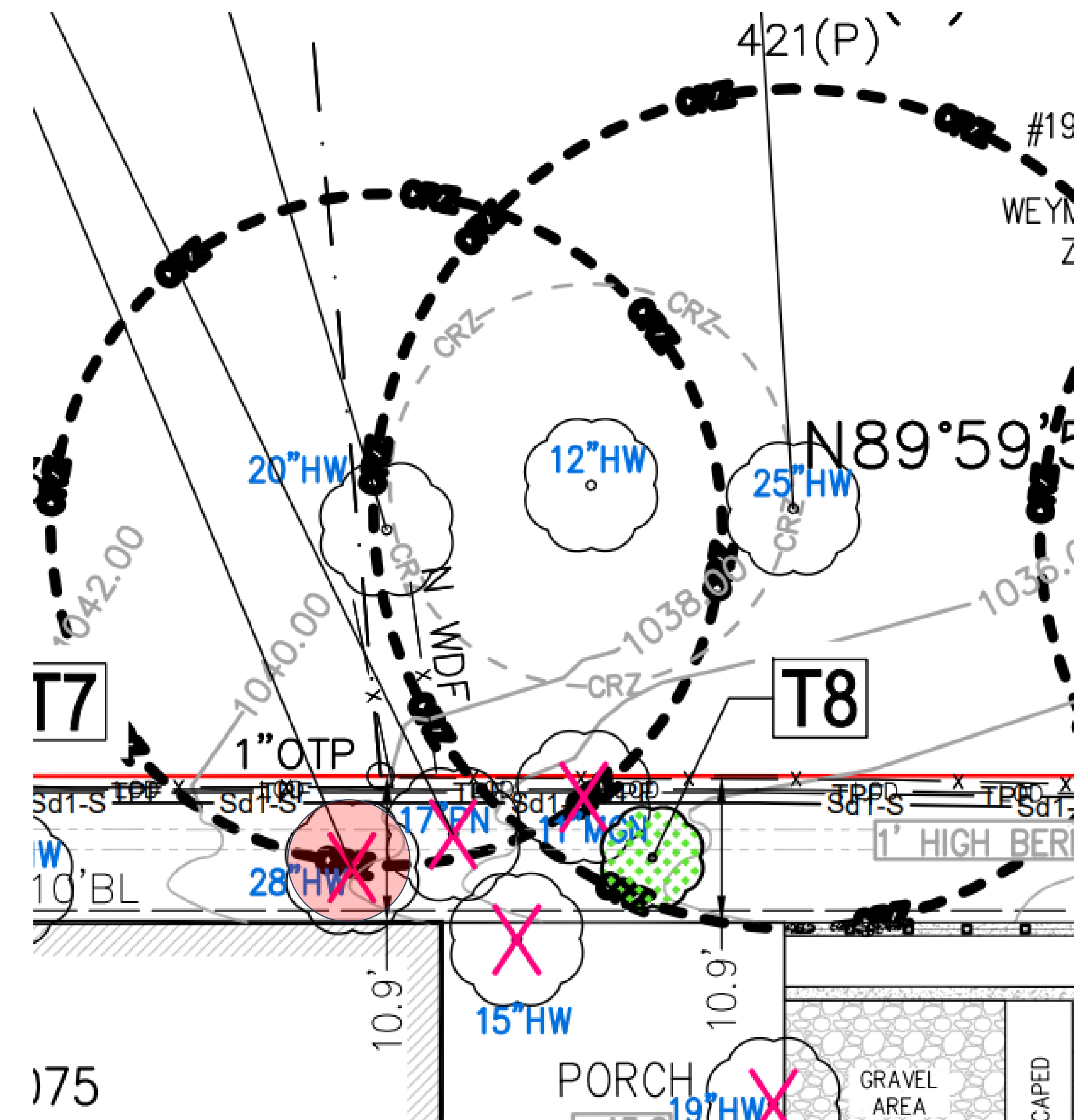
- Mitigation – One (1) 2.5" caliper, large-canopy shade trees required to be planted back on site, per every 1,000 SF deficit;

AND

- Recompanse - \$1,200 payment to the Sandy Springs Tree Bank
- In this example the property would be due two (2) 2.5" caliper large-canopy shade trees and a \$2,400 payment to the Sandy Springs Tree Bank

Landmark Mitigation

- **Section 9.3.6**
 - 27" DBH or larger Hardwood
 - 30" DBH or larger Pine/Evergreen
 - 10" DBH or larger Flowering Dogwood or Eastern Redbud
- **Mitigation**
 - Install one and a half (1.5) 2.5" caliper Large-Canopy Shade Trees for every Landmark Tree that is in Fair or better condition



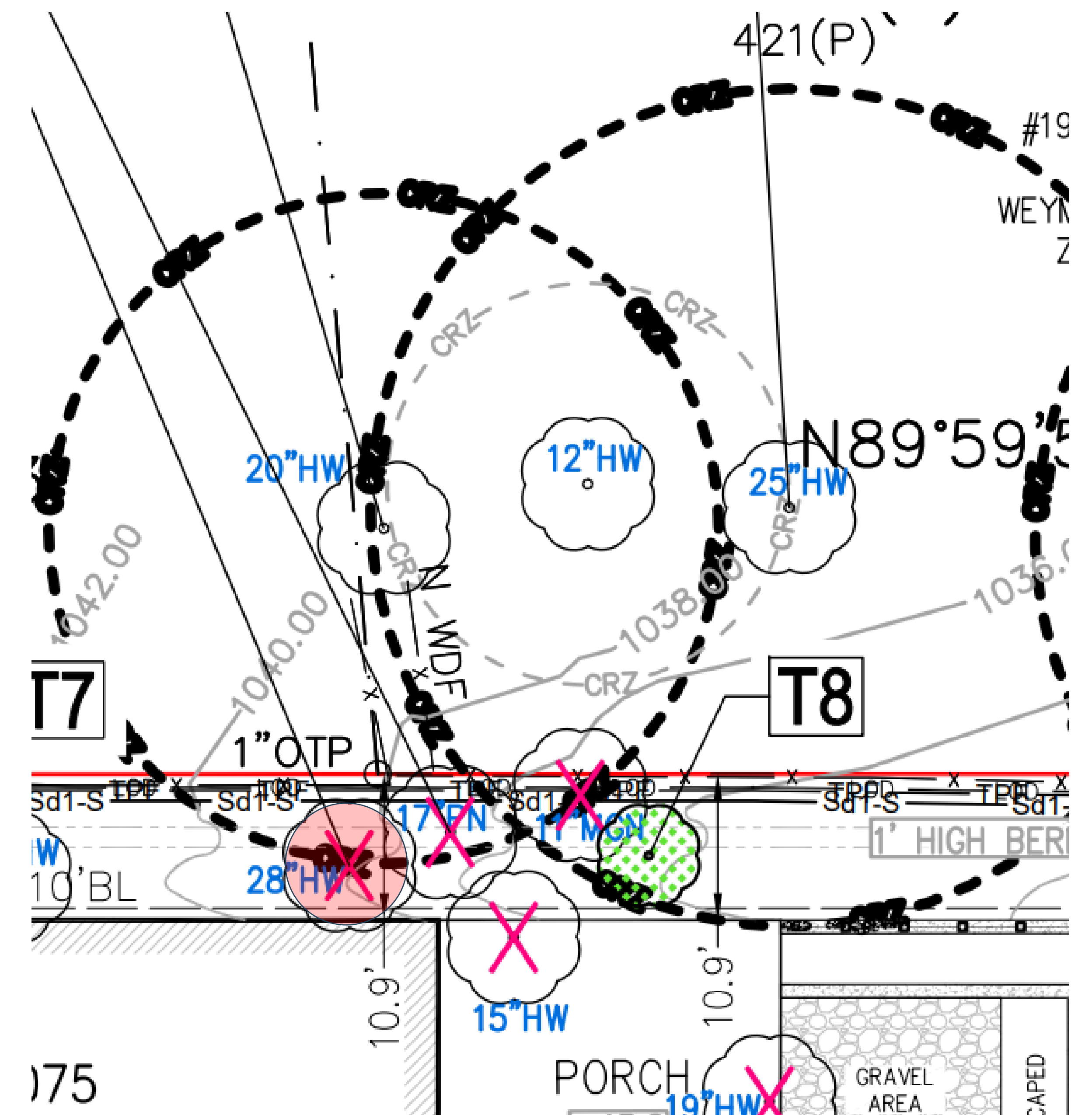
Side Setback Mitigation

- **Section 9.4.2.G**

- For every lost 10" DBH or larger side setback tree from grading impacts, or
- If no trees 10" DBH or larger are lost due to grading impacts, for every 1,000 sf of area disturbed in the side setback.

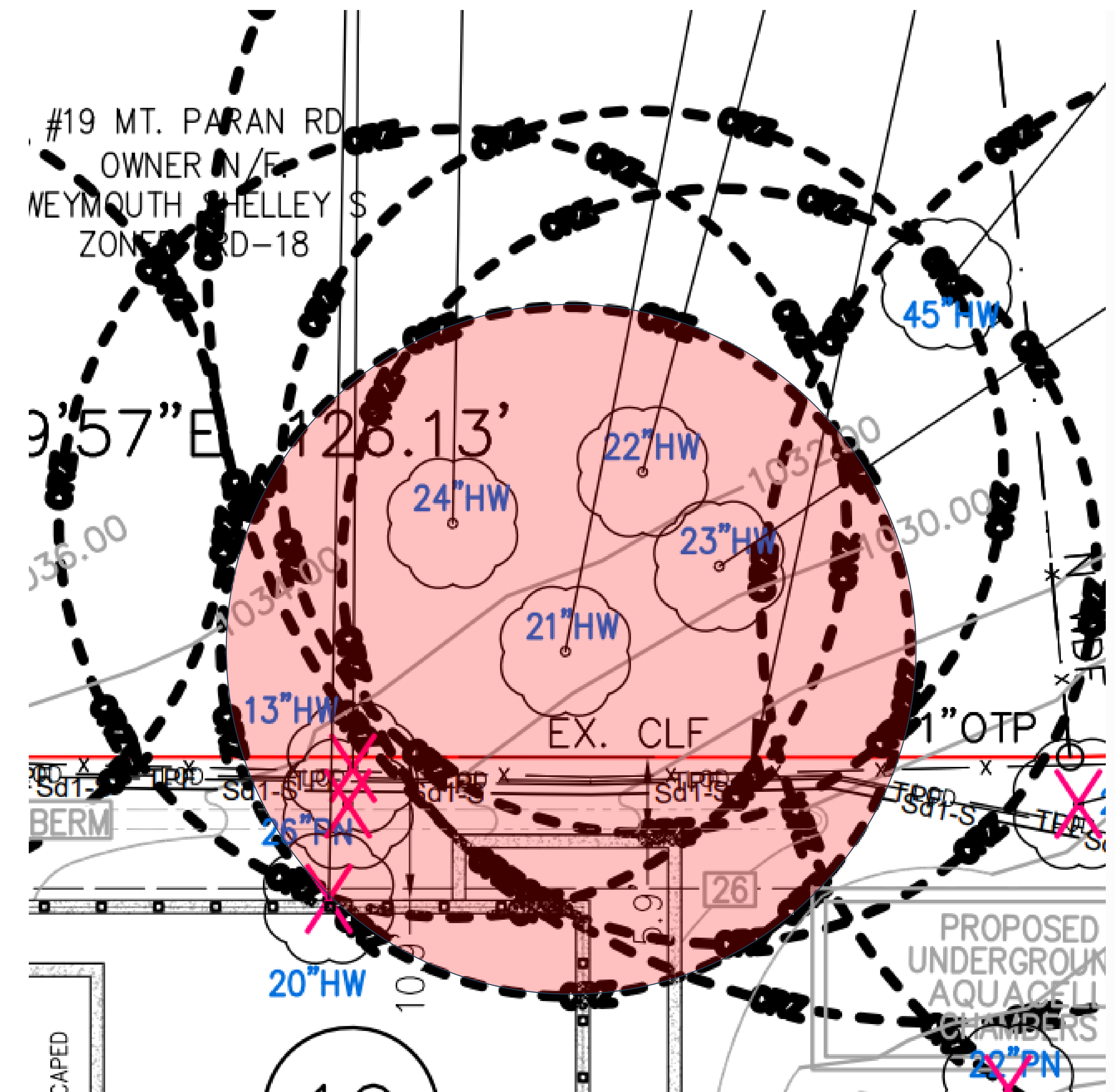
Mitigation

- Install one (1) 2.5" caliper in-kind replacement tree



Boundary Tree Mitigation

- **Section 9.3.4 and 9.3.8.E**
 - Applicable to all Boundary Trees impacted 25% or more to the critical root zone of the tree



Boundary Tree Mitigation Options

Option A – Tree Escrow Process	Option B – Tree Removal Permit
Provide two quotes on removal and replacement costs to set up escrow fund, notify Boundary Tree owner	Provide written consent from the Boundary Tree owner
Fund held for three years from C.O./C.C., fund is refunded if the tree is not dead or in irreversible decline after three years	Landmark and Canopy mitigation requirements are assessed, the tree is required to be removed

Residential Front Yard Trees

- **Section 8.3.3**

- Applicable to all new single-family construction
 - Required to have at least one (1) 2.5" caliper large canopy mitigation tree per 40 LF of lot frontage along a street; rounded up to nearest tree
- Existing, preserved trees count towards fulfilling this requirement



Questions?

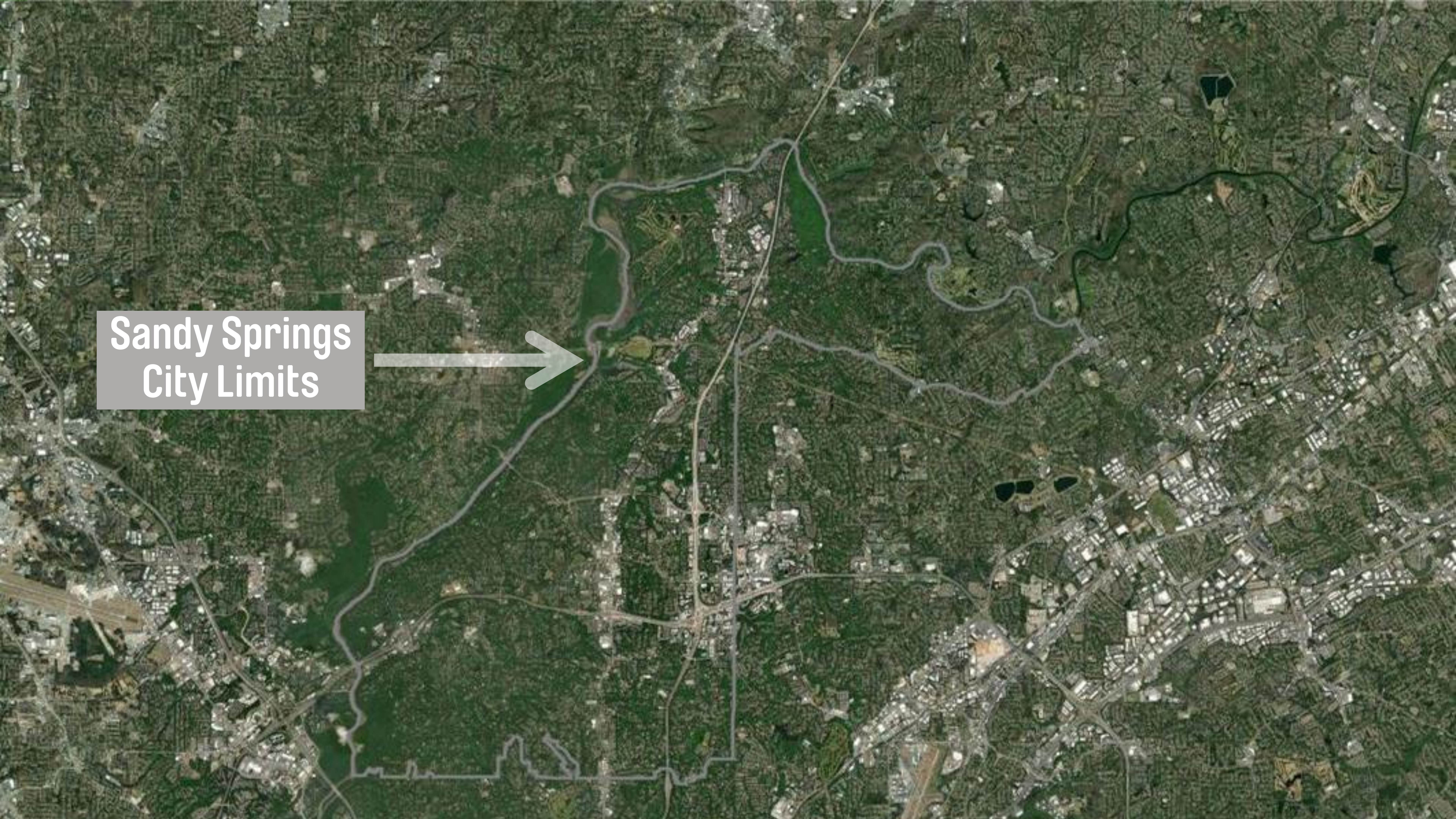
PART II – URBAN FORESTRY

An aerial photograph of a city center, likely Sandy Springs, Georgia. The image shows a mix of modern commercial and residential buildings. A large, multi-story building with a glass facade is prominent on the right. To its left, there's a large outdoor event space with a large crowd of people gathered. The area is surrounded by lush green trees and a winding road. In the foreground, there's a parking lot with many cars and a small building. The overall scene is vibrant and shows a well-developed urban area.

City of Sandy Springs

Urban Forestry Program
Recreation and Parks Department
Sustainability Division

**Sandy Springs
City Limits**



APPLICATION OF THE TREE FUND

Tree Fund - Overview

- The Sandy Springs Tree Fund was established as an 'in-lieu' compliance method for developers and landowners.
 - Funds the following projects
 - Capital Improvement Plantings
 - Invasive Removal (Plant)
 - Maintenance (ROW & Parks)
 - **Partnership with Trees Atlanta (Public-Private Partnership)**
 - Community Education & Ecosystem Stewardship Program
 - Urban Forest Coordinator Position
 - Funded in perpetuity through impact fees

Tree Fund – Establishment

Development Code, Sec. 9.3.8.C

C. Establishment of Tree Bank:

3. Funds maintained in the Sandy Springs Tree Bank are administered by the Director pursuant to the rules and regulations regarding the funds as established by the Sandy Springs City Council for the purposes of **replacing tree canopy or canopy preservation.**

Tree Fund – Funding

- **Section 9.3.8.D**

- If a mitigation tree cannot be installed on-site, the fee is \$5,000 / tree.
- If canopy mitigation is required, the fee is \$1,200 / tree.

Tree Fund – External Funding

- The City of Sandy Springs pursues grants which allow for the funding of outdoor recreation, environmental management, and habitat restoration.
 - The use of these funds are primarily allocated for 'non-tree' expenses as all tree work is routed through the tree fund.
- No external funding for Urban Forestry was sought this grant season due to specific eligibility requirements.
- As the program matures, Sandy Springs seeks to apply for, and be awarded grants in the future.

SANDY SPRINGS CANOPY COVERAGE

Tree Canopy Studies

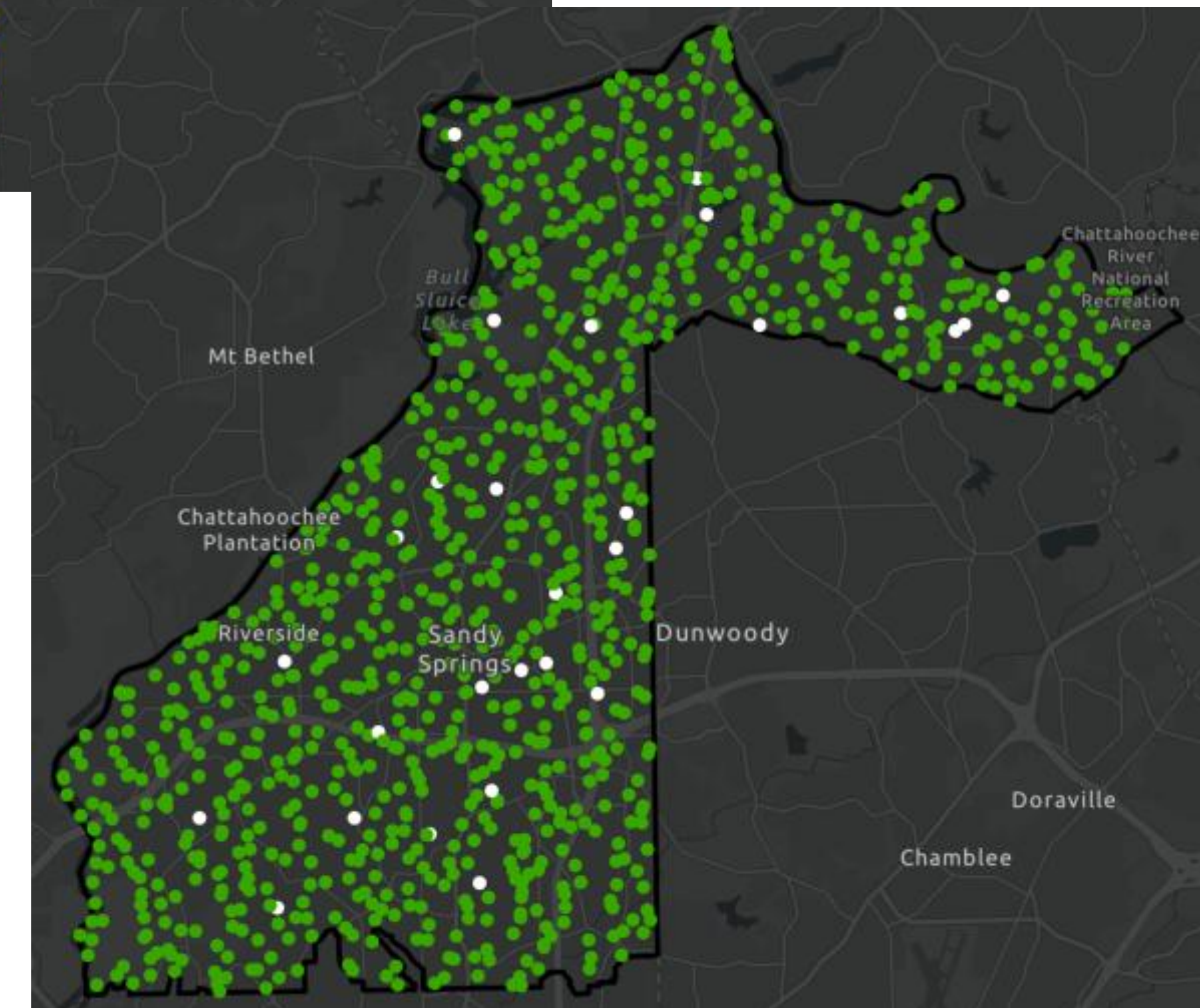
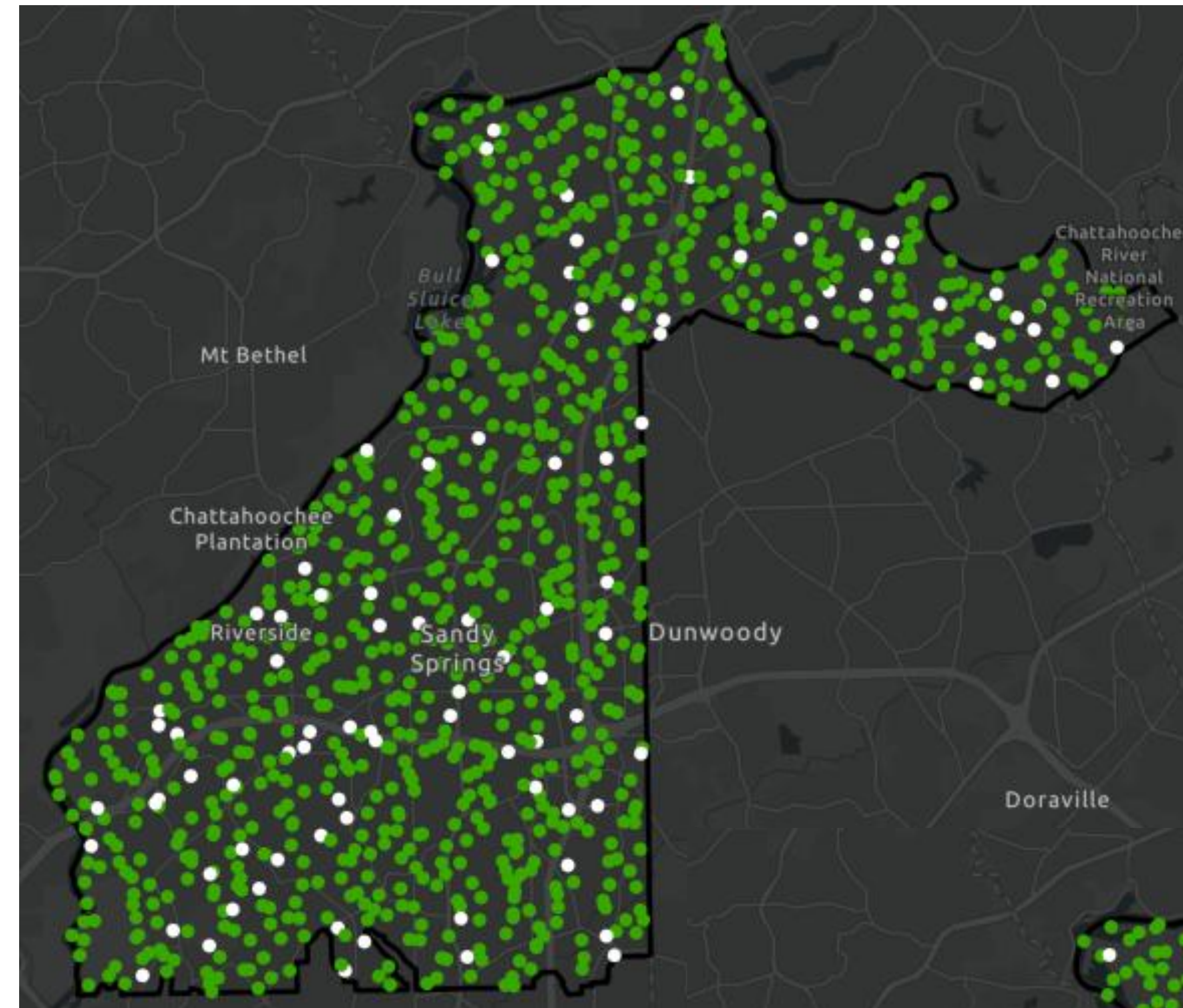
- 2008 Natural Resources Spatial Analysis Lab at UGA. Four band, 30 m Landsat 5 data
- 2010, 2013, 2015, 2017 National Agriculture Inventory Program. Four band, 1 m.
- 2019 – National Agriculture Inventory Program. Four band, 0.6 m.
- 2021 – Satellite imagery. Four band, 0.75 m and Nearmap AI Vegetation
- 2023 – Nearmap AI Vegetation (2017 comparison)
- 2025 – Nearmap AI Vegetation

Accuracy Assessment

Overall Model Accuracy

2013	83.8%
2015	88.8%
2017	92.3%
2017 AI>95%	
2019	92.4%
2021	90.1%
2021 AI>95%	
2023 AI>95%	
2025 AI>95%	

Iso Accuracy



AI Accuracy

Current Canopy Coverage

- Derived from Nearmap AI
 - City Staff statistically validate these numbers to ensure accuracy
 - 2025
 - 56.3% Canopy Coverage

Year	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023	2025
ISO	58.7%	58.6%	60.3%	58.1%	58.1%		
AI			56.5%		55.0%	54.5%	56.3%

Canopy Coverage Trends (Tree Equity Score)



Tree Equity Score Location Insights Sandy Springs, GA

BACK TO MAP ↩ ➡

[Change location](#)

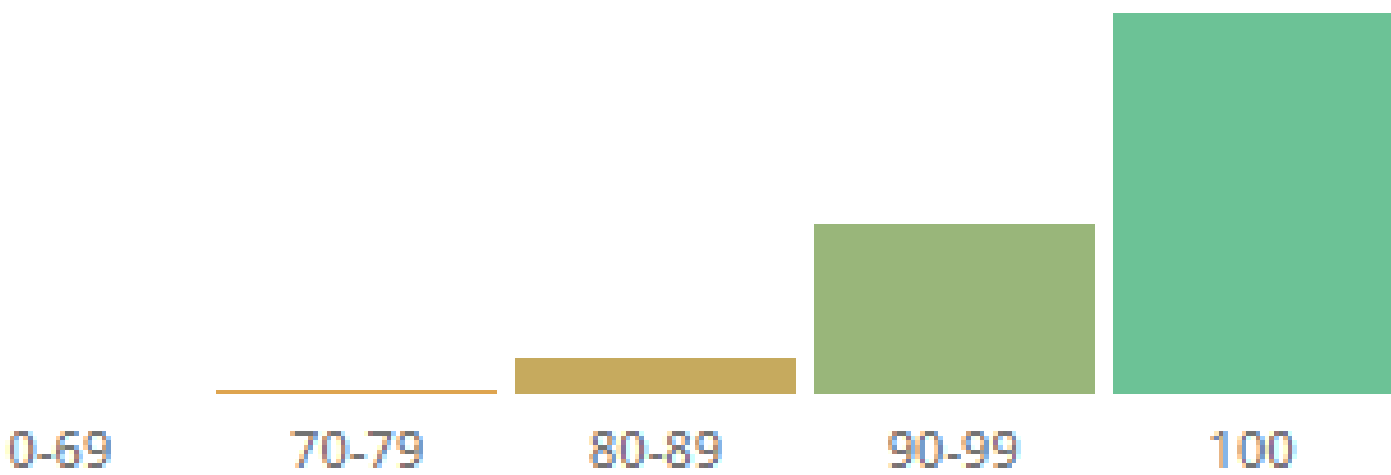
OVERVIEW

Achieving Tree Equity

Expanding the urban canopy by 0.5 square miles (roughly 22,343 trees) and maintaining the existing canopy would bring every urban neighborhood in Sandy Springs to a Tree Equity Score of 100.

Distribution of Scores

Composite Score: 95



Summary

Urban area population	107,034 ⓘ	Children (0-17)	19 % ⓘ
Tree canopy cover	60 % ⓘ	Seniors (65+)	13 % ⓘ
People in poverty	17 % ⓘ	Linguistic isolation	5 % ⓘ
People of color	42 % ⓘ	Average health burden index	22 ⓘ
Unemployment	4 % ⓘ	Neighborhoods below 100	32% ⓘ

START PLANNING

New canopy Existing canopy

Adjust the slider to expand or narrow your planning. Choose a Tree Equity Score target and estimate the impacts of new trees added.

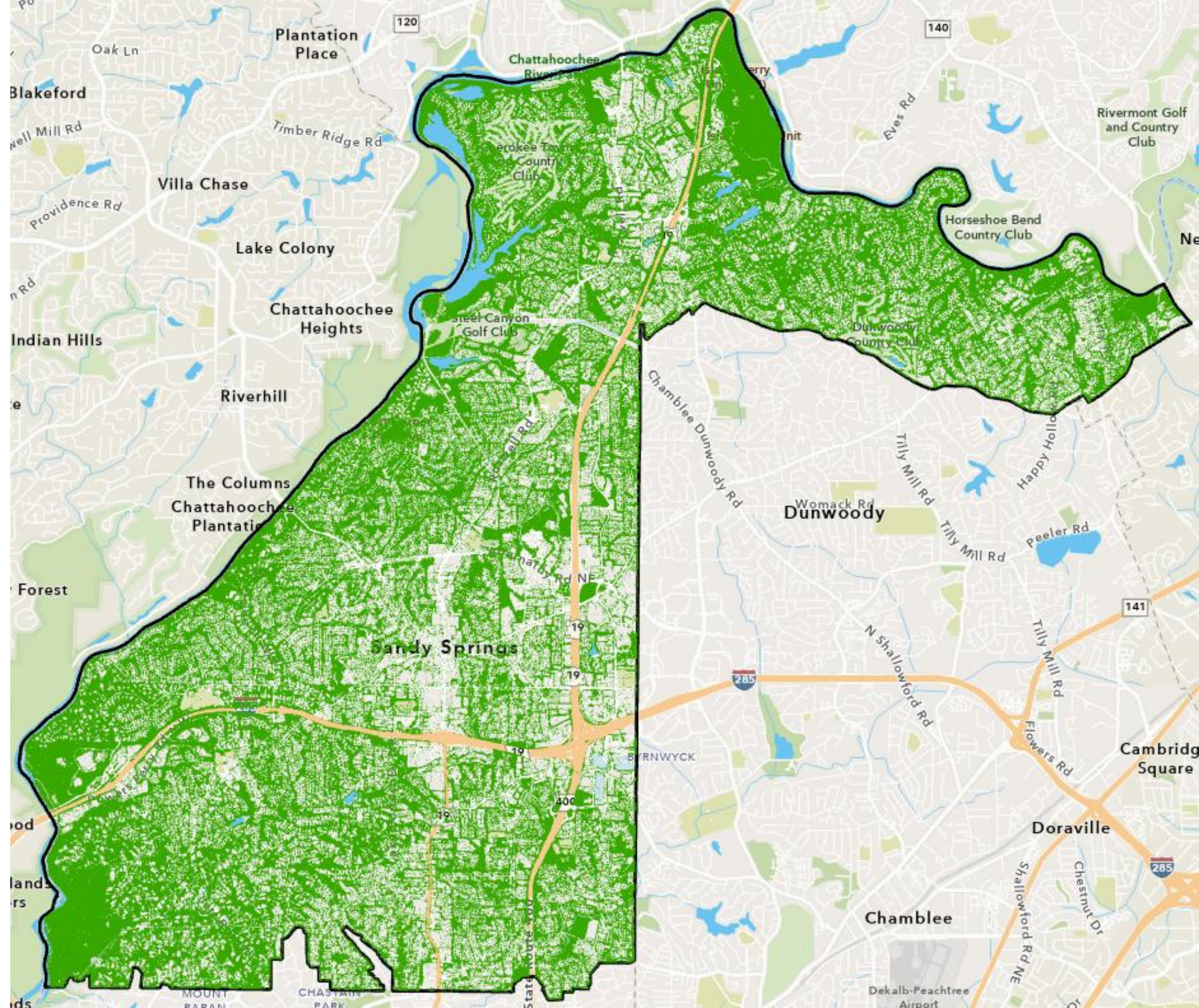
1 of 99 block groups have a Tree Equity Score below 75



Drag to adjust score

Sandy Springs Canopy Coverage 'Heat Map'

Green coloration
indicates canopy



Tree Canopy Comparison

City	Canopy	Year	City Size
Alpharetta	53%	2018	27 sq mi
Atlanta	45.7%	2023	136 sq mi
Brookhaven	48%	2021	12 sq mi
Chamblee	36%	2017	7.7 sq mi
Decatur	57%	2019	4.6 sq mi
Johns Creek*	57%		31 sq mi
Roswell	--	--	42 sq mi
Sandy Springs	56%	2025	38.5 sq mi

URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM

Urban Forestry Program – Goals

- Mitigate canopy loss through innovative programs and plantings.
 - Establish citywide minimum canopy cover at 50%.
 - Grow city's maintenance and tree healthcare program.
 - Expand tree protections on private land.
 - **1 Million Trees Initiative.**
-

- Incorporate silviculture practices for successional forest management.
- Develop a robust volunteer program.
- Collaborate with neighboring municipalities for regional impacts.

Urban Forestry Program – Outcomes

- 1 park designated by the Old Growth Forest Network
 - John Ripley Forbes Big Trees Forest Preserve
 - An additional city parcel is under consideration for recognition
- 2000+ trees planted since 2018
- TCUSA 14yrs, TCWorld 4 yrs
- Inaugural Eco-Steward program
- **Supported Wildlife Index for Recommended Tree Species List**
- **Expanded Tree Fund Usage Policy**
- Consolidation of tree operations to increase oversight and transparency
- Canopy Coverage Reports
 - Now using Nearmap AI

How is the Urban Forestry Program Administered?

- Urban Forester
 - The Urban Forester & Sustainability Coordinator promotes the stewardship of the urban canopy by overseeing all activities supported by the Tree Fund, including the proactive maintenance of trees in public areas, and consulting on City projects. The successful candidate possesses a strong knowledge of community and urban forestry, and a desire to share it with the public.

How is the Urban Forestry Program Administered?

- Urban Forester (continued)
 - In Sandy Springs, this position is housed within the Recreation and Parks.
- The Tree Fund is budgeted as a 'Capital Project' to allow funds to carry over from fiscal year to fiscal year. (June – July)
 - This allows continuous funding to work through a single calendar year (Jan – Dec)

How is the Urban Forestry Program Administered?

- Urban Forestry Program projects and requests are presented to Mayor, City Council, and Management.
 - Tree Fund goes through separate budgeting process than departmental General Fund budgeting.
 - This is since the Tree Fund provides resources beyond R&P - extending to Facilities, Community Development, and Public Works.

Urban Forest Coordinator – Strategies

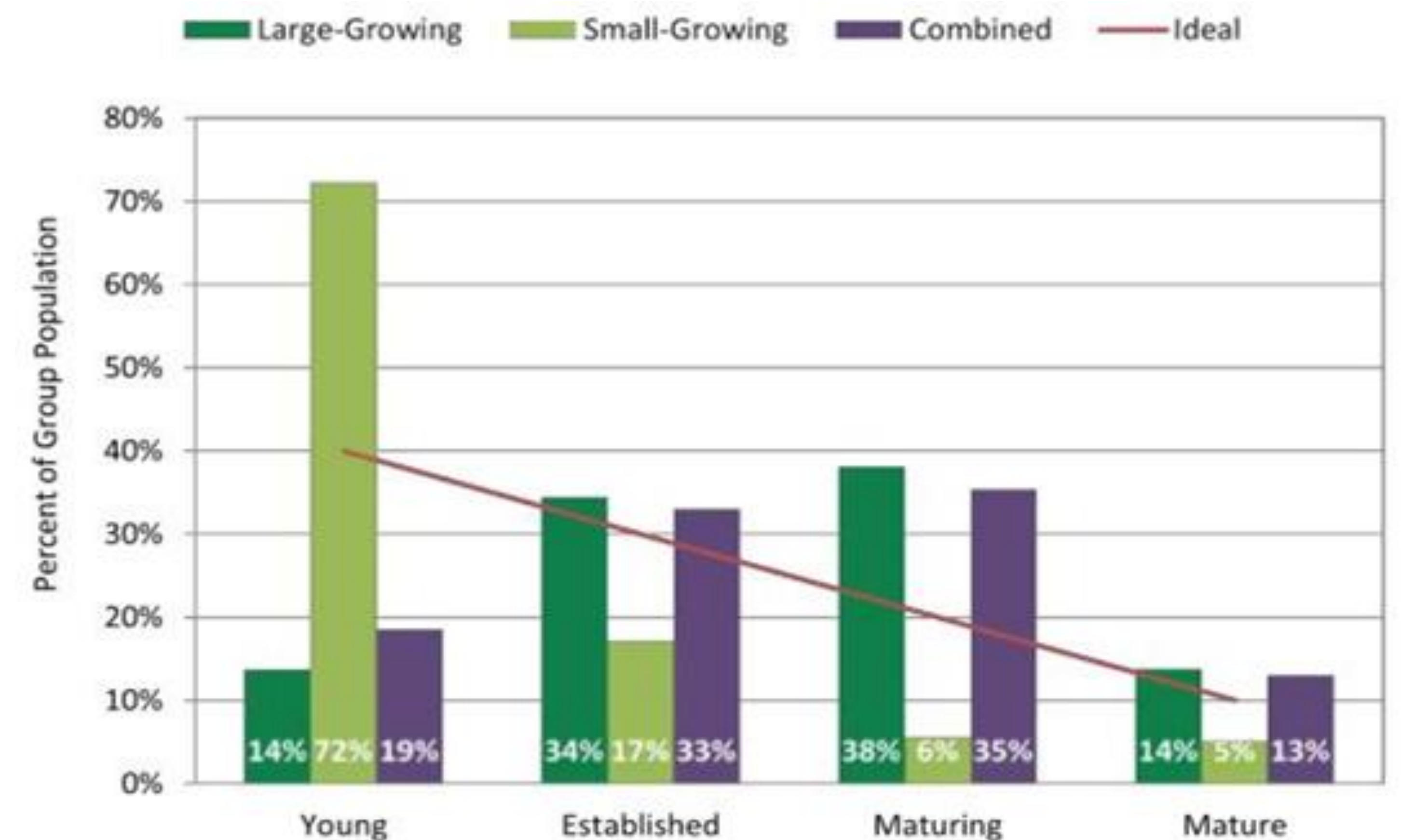
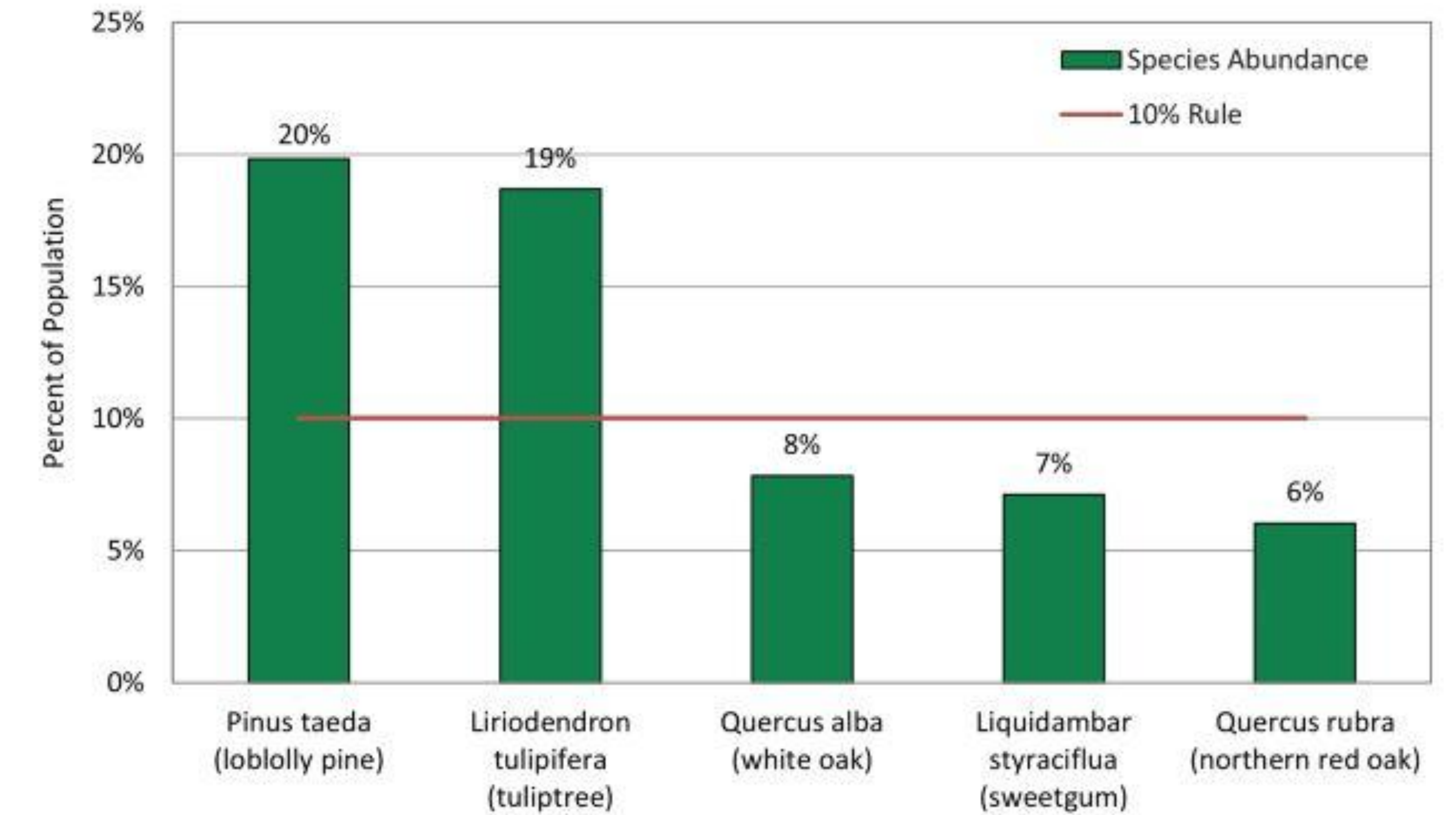
- Streamline and consolidate all municipal tree operations.
- Interdepartmental Collaboration
- Create & administer volunteer workforce to expand capacity for work. (**Sandy Springs Eco-Steward Program**)
 - Private-public partnership

Urban Forestry Program – Strategies

- Forest Restoration (Silviculture Practices)
 - Soil stabilization
 - Selective thinning
 - Wildfire analogues
 - Planting for vertical structure
 - Planting communities instead of “tree lines” allow for more aesthetic plantings while driving down total cost of ownership.
- Proactive Pest Insect Management
 - Treat sensitive trees for pest macroinvertebrates.
- Streambank Restoration (Live stakes and armoring)

Urban Forestry Program – Metrics for Success

- Sustained canopy levels
 - 2:1 planting to removal ratio
 - This year, 1.75:1 will be achieved (excluding CIP)
- Decrease in public tree mortality (<2.5%)
 - Plant healthcare program
 - Invasive removal
- Improve forest composition
 - Species diversity
 - Age diversity



Urban Forestry Program – Metrics for Success

- Tree City USA
 - Annual national recognition program designed to raise awareness of the value of community trees, set foundational standards for communities of all sizes, and celebrate community improvement.
- Tree City of the World (1 of 2 Cities in Georgia)
 - Launched in 2018 through a partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to inspire cities and towns to care for and celebrate their urban tree canopy.

Urban Forestry Program– Limitations

- Funding comes from removal of existing trees
 - There is no external funding source for the Tree Fund
- Running out of space for new plantings
- Desire for native plantings and management vs desire for 'manicured & ornamental look'
 - Different departments and stake holders have different values and opinions. Urban Forest Coordinator must be able to find compromise.
- Support for program leans on a friendly City Council and a dedicated funding source.
- **State of Georgia Gratuities Clause**
 - 95% of Sandy Springs' urban forest is on private land.

Gratuities Clause

The Sandy Springs interpretation of the state's gratuities clause - as it pertains to urban forestry - can be summarized as follows:

The city will not invest in forest and tree management on privately owned land.

With one exception...

Text of Gratuities Clause

The GC of the Georgia Constitution provides, in pertinent part, that except as otherwise provided:

The General Assembly shall not have the power to grant any donation or gratuity or to forgive any debt or obligation owing to the public, and – The General Assembly shall not grant or authorize extra compensation to any public officer, agent, or contractor after the service has been rendered or the contract entered into.

Ga. Const. Art. III, Sec. VI, Para VI.

TREES ATLANTA PROGRAM

Direct Contract/Agreement with Trees Atlanta

Meet the Metro Partners of the One Million Trees Initiative



Neighborhoods Program

- Front Yard Tree Program
 - Residents can request up to 3 free trees to be planted in their front yard.
 - . Oak species: white oak (*Quercus alba*), overcup oak (*Quercus lyrata*), willow oak (*Quercus phellos*)
 - . Tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
 - . River birch (*Betula nigra*)
 - Must be within ~ 15 feet of a public road to ensure 'public benefit'
- Planting in Parks & City Properties
 - Reforestation of FEMA lots in floodplain
 - Major plantings across all Sandy Springs Parks

One Million Trees Initiative - Year 5 Progress Report

2020 - 2030: A Collaborative Effort to Preserve Metro Atlanta's Tree Canopy



Year 5 Consolidated Tree Data

Metro Partner	New Planted with TA ¹	w/o TA ²	Planted Count	Conserved Count	Partners TOTAL	Partner Size Sq Miles	Population 1,000s ⁶	Planted & Conserved per Sq Mile 1,000 Pop.	Tree City USA?
Atlanta	4,965	0	4,965		4,965	136.8	499.3	36.3 9.9	Yes
Brookhaven	34	0	34		34	11.8	57.2	2.9 0.6	Yes
College Park	5	0	5		5	11.1	14.0	0.5 0.4	No
Decatur	691	0	691	129	820	4.5	24.5	182.2 33.5	Yes
Doraville	8	1	9		9	4.9	10.7	1.8 0.8	Yes
Dunwoody	253	38	291	1,545	1,836	13.3	51.6	138.0 35.6	Yes
East Point	204	0	204		204	14.7	38.1	13.9 5.4	No
Hapeville	0	8	8		8	2.4	6.6	3.3 1.2	Yes
Norcross	0	95	95		95	6.2	17.7	15.4 5.4	Yes
Sandy Springs	88	329	417		417	38.5	107.2	10.8 3.9	Yes
Smyrna	51	49	100		100	15.6	55.9	6.4 1.8	Yes
South Fulton	0	0	0	1,600	1,600	86.3	107.9	18.6 14.8	No
Uninc. DeKalb ³	542	0	542		542	158.2	472.0	3.4 1.1	-
Other Areas ⁴	0	0	0		0	-	-	- -	
Total	6,841	520	7,361	3,274	10,635	504.2	1,462.5	21.1 7.3	

Improved in Year 5 over Year 4

ECO STEWARDS

Sandy Springs Eco-Stewardship Program

- Led by master naturalist Kathryn Kolb of EcoAddendum, the program empowers participants to actively restore and protect local ecosystems while gaining valuable skills in urban forest management.
- Throughout the course, participants will engage in field-based learning focused on native plant identification, invasive species removal, forest restoration, and ecological management.

Sandy Springs Eco-Stewardship Program

- Upon completion, participants are expected and encouraged to take a leadership role, helping to organize and guide future volunteer events across the city. As Eco-Stewards, graduates become advocates and caretakers of our urban forest, playing an essential role in its long-term stewardship.
- <https://www.sandyspringsga.gov/sandy-springs-eco-stewardship-program>

INVASIVE SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

Invasive Species

- **Sec. 8.3.8. - Design and Installation**
- C.5: No plant materials listed as Category 1 or Category 1 Alert on the Georgia EPPC Invasive Plant List are permitted in required landscaping. Property owners are encouraged to avoid the entire list of invasive species when making decisions about plant materials for required or non-required landscaping.
 - **Georgia EPPC Invasive Plant List -**
<https://gainvasivespeciescouncil.org/list/>
 - **Georgia Forestry ' Dirty Dozen'**
 - Annual list of top 12 nonnative invasive plants – Data Driven, not colloquial
 - <https://gatrees.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2023-Dirty-Dozen-List.pdf>

Invasive Species

- **How to Identify?**
 - Field guides/Identification guides
 - UGA's Bugwood App – Highly rated and superior accuracy for our region
 - iNaturalist App – Universally used for plant identification (Native & Nonnative)
 - Consult with local experts
 - UGA Extension Field Office – North Fulton Annex
 - Gabrielle LaTora – ANR Agent
 - Gabrielle.latora@uga.edu

Invasive Species

- **How to Identify?**
- Georgia Forestry Commission – Urban and Community Forestry Program
 - Dave Long – Urban Forestry Specialist
 - Dlong@gfc.state.ga.us

UPCOMING SEMINARS

FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION: Navigating the Four Phases of Construction

PLANNING

(Develop Construction Documents)

02/03/26 Seminar:

Permit Smarter,
Not Harder:
The Ultimate
Pre-Permitting
Playbook

PERMITTING

(Application & Plan Reviews)

04/14/26 Seminar:

From Upload
to Approval:
The Easy Path to
Getting a Permit

CONSTRUCTION

(City Inspections)

06/30/26 Seminar:
08/25/26 Seminar:

Inspection
Ready!:
How To Pass
Your Inspections
the First Time

COMPLETION

(Certificate of
Occupancy/Completion)

09/29/26 Seminar:

The Road to
Occupancy:
A Guide to CO
Approval





Questions?

CITY STAFF – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Chief Environmental Compliance Officer

James Sanders

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770-687-5153

CITY STAFF – RECREATION AND PARKS

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