

Report for Council – July 25, 2016

Planning & Development Department Agenda Items:

Tree Code Modification UPDATED

Preservation Credits

At the July 11 Council meeting, Councilwoman McGregor requested staff look into assigning preservation credits based upon tree species and/or tree size. It is the Administration's recommendation that preservation credits be provided based upon tree size rather than on tree species. The Department has worked extensively with the City Arborist and Parks Department on this recommended preservation credit strategy.

The City Arborist recommends using tree size rather than tree species as the basis for the preservation credit because mature trees provide a greater benefit to the environment by improving air quality and reducing soil erosion. Although some species are more efficient than others, it is the size of the canopy that has the greatest impact. The average canopy size for a mature tree is 1,250 square feet.

Having an easy to implement and cost effective tree preservation incentive will greatly increase the probability of success for preserving targeted trees. Therefore, the Department proposes to award two credits per tree inch preserved for trees with a diameter at breast height (DBH) 12 inches and greater. Trees between six and 11 inches are awarded a one-for-one credit (same as previously proposed).

Tree Protection Measures

The Department added language in Section 914.05 that outlines tree protection measures to ensure Protected Trees are not impacted during the construction process.

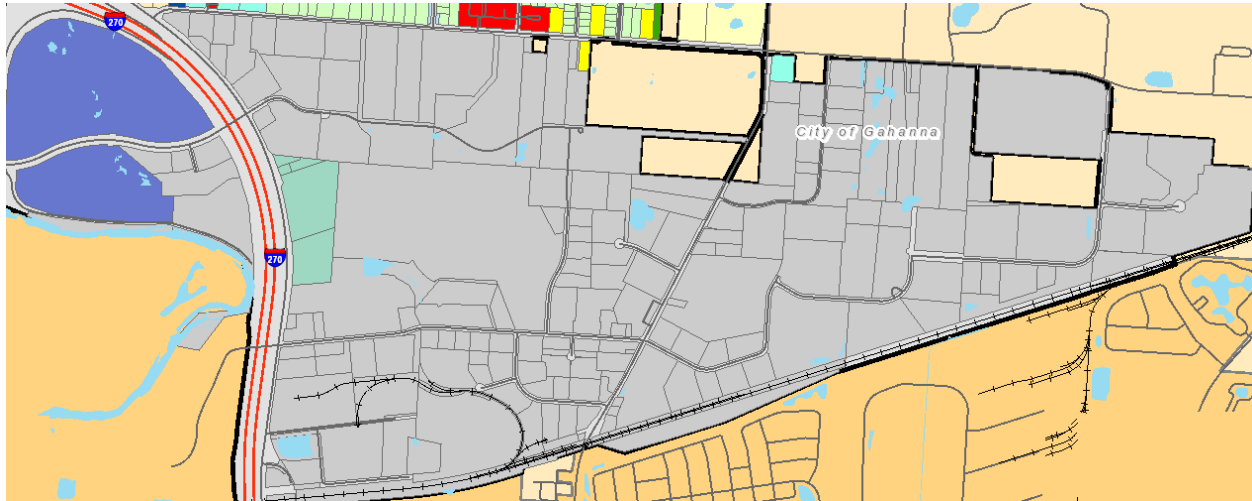
Additional Feedback from Gahanna Businesses

Staff has been approached by several property owners since the proposed tree code was first introduced to City Council. The majority of the property owners are located within the City's commercial/industrial area, shown on the map below. The commercial/industrial area is generally located south of Taylor Road and east of S. Hamilton Road. A summary of their feedback is shown below:

- Several of the property owners have expressed concerns that the proposed code increases the cost of development and would therefore restrict the potential development of land within industrial parks. Generally, industrial properties have a greater impervious area when compared to other properties due to such components as outside storage areas and larger amounts of pavement to accommodate large truck traffic. Although the use of properties vary from a 150,000 square foot office complex to a 20,000 square foot steel

manufacturing plant, their intensity of impervious surface required for these operations are similar. Since the proposed tree code bases the tree planning requirement on the impervious area of a site, the businesses contend that the nature of their development is unnecessarily restricted by limiting the areas that can be developed and by substantially increasing development costs.

- Several of the property owners believe that the commercial/industrial area is different in its character compared to the residential and retail corridors of the City. The geographical separation from the retail, residential and other more inhabited areas of the community should be taken into consideration and translate to a less restrictive tree planting requirement for the industrial area.



Based upon the feedback from these businesses, the Department is open to recommending a tree planting requirement based upon a different ratio of impervious surface. The existing code states that one caliper inch is required for every 1,000 square feet of impervious surface. The Department is open to recommending changing that requirement to one caliper inch of tree being required for every 5,000 square feet of impervious surface for properties zoned Office, Commerce, and Technology (OCT) or Select Commercial Planned District (SCPD). This modification would still incentivize tree preservation and require tree planting, but in a manner that is more conducive to the industrial and commercial nature of the surrounding environment.

Planning & Development Department Updates:

None at this time.

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

- *Olde Gahanna Community Partnership: A Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 27, 8:15am, at the Gahanna Historical Society Clark House, 101 S. High Street.*
- *Gahanna Area Chamber of Commerce: The July Empowering Women Breakfast will be held on Thursday, July 28, 7:30am – 9:00am, at the Mount Carmel East Hospital Siegel Center, 6001 E. Broad Street – Building #3, Columbus. The guest speaker will be Kara Rising who will present *The Story of Three Fences: Creating Well-Being Through Boundaries*. The cost*

is \$10 for members and \$15 for guests. Register online at www.gahannaareachamber.com or RSVP to Lisa Colosimo at (614) 471-0451 or lisa@gahannaareachamber.com.