

Syracuse Tree Ordinance Modernization

Draft Ordinance Changes to
Chapter 22 Municipal Trees and
Development Standards Article 4.5



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Syracuse Department of Parks, Recreation & Youth Programs
<https://www.syr.gov/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Tree-Services>

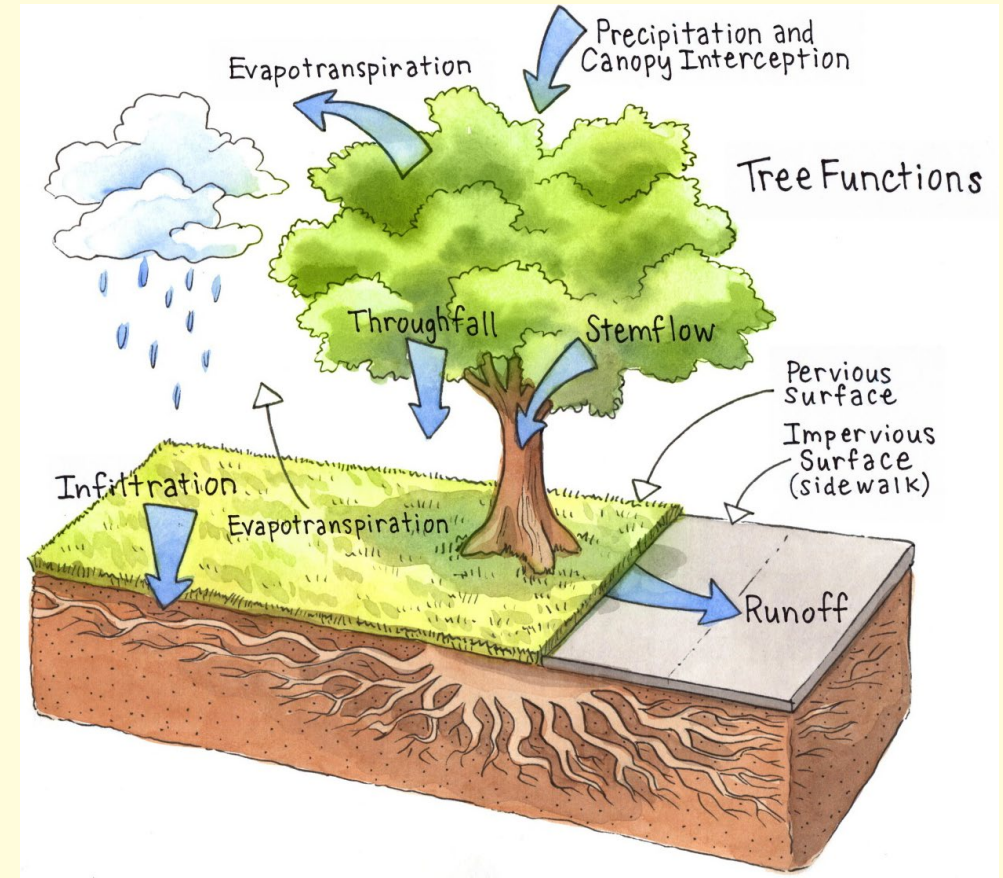


Project Consultants:
Karen Firehock, AICP and Lauren Doran, PLA
<https://gicinc.org/>

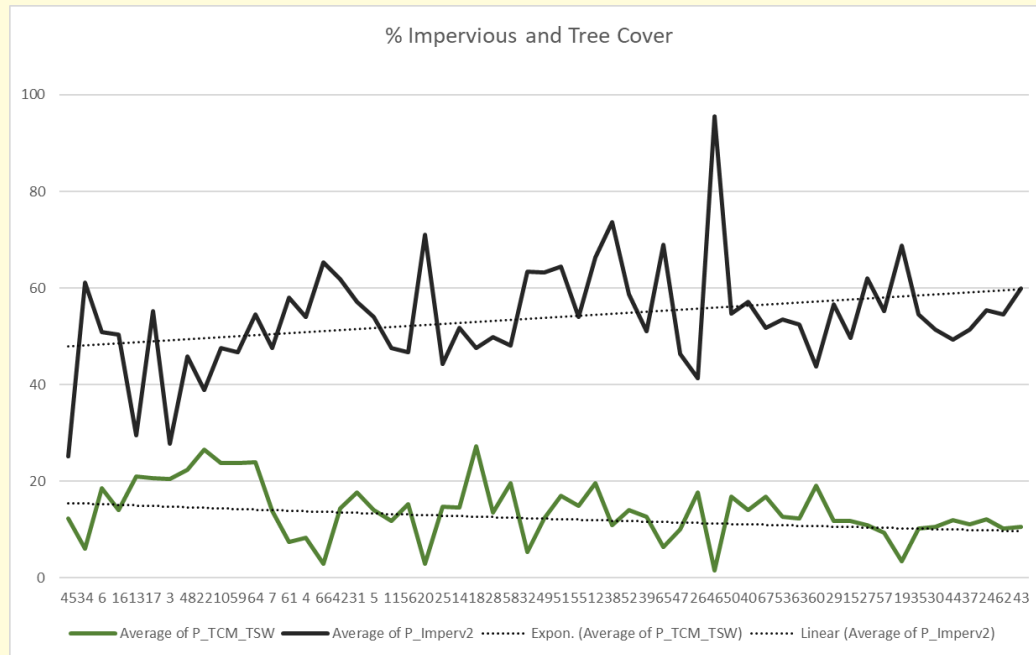
Why does the city need to better protect its trees?

Trees are “green infrastructure.” They soak up stormwater!

- One tree can soak up 700 to 4000 gallons water annually depending on the age and species!
- They *also* provide habitat, reduce erosion, and beautify the city.



Trees not only combat heat, they add value to neighborhoods

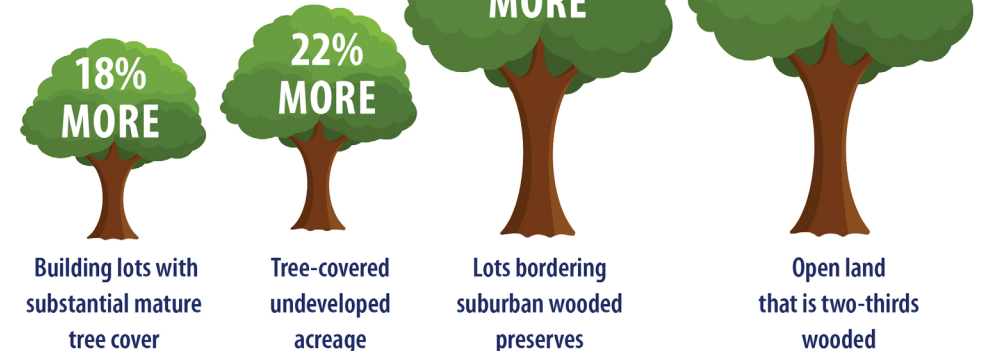


Decreases in tree canopy correlate to increased urban heating. Areas under trees are often 12 degrees cooler and neighborhoods are cooler too!

Trees add value to properties = improved real estate values, savings on air conditioning costs, lower heat island and carbon sequestration and storage!

Nature Sells—

Market prices for treed lots versus untreed lots:



Source: Kathleen Wolf, 2007, *City Trees and Property Values*.






Saving larger trees matters more!

USDA FS studies show that larger trees create the greatest benefits. So, retaining a mature, healthy tree, rather than removing it and replacing it with a smaller new tree = decades of increased ecosystem benefits for air quality, reducing urban heat, stormwater uptake and even increased property values.

The values at left are in 2004 dollars. Adjusting totals to 2025 \$ means a large tree is worth **\$7,411**

And a smaller tree is worth **\$450**

https://www.fs.usda.gov/psw/topics/urban_forestry/products/cufr476_large_tree_argument.pdf

	Large Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total benefits/year = \$55• Total costs/year = \$18• Net benefits/year = \$37• Life expectancy = 120 years• Lifetime benefits = \$6,600• Lifetime costs = \$2,160• Value to community = \$4,440
	Medium Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total benefits/year = \$33• Total costs/year = \$17• Net benefits/year = \$16• Life expectancy = 60 years• Lifetime benefits = \$1,980• Lifetime costs = \$1,020• Value to community = \$960
	Small Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total benefits/year = \$23• Total costs/year = \$14• Net benefits/year = \$9• Life expectancy = 30 years• Lifetime benefits = \$690• Lifetime costs = \$420• Value to community = \$270



Summary: Many Ecosystem Services Provided by the Urban Forest!



**Reduces
energy use**



**Raises real
estate value**



**Supports
recreation**



**Cleans
stormwater**



**Reduces
stress**



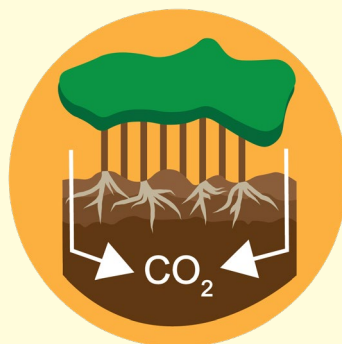
**Beautifies the
city**



**Decreases
crime**



Cleans the air



**Sequesters
carbon**



**Lowers city
temperatures**



**Regulates
flooding**



**Provides
wildlife
habitat**



**Increases
economic
revenue**



**Decreases car
accidents**



Why Update City Tree Codes?

City's 2020 Urban Forest Master Plan called for updating city codes to better protect and maintain city tree cover.

Two places in city code would be addressed by code changes:

- Chapter 22 Municipal Trees (*addresses public trees*)
- Zoning Ordinance, Article 4.5 Tree Preservation, Landscaping, Buffering, and Screening (*primarily new private development*)



Key Questions...



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Q: Does the ordinance affect private property rights? Will the city make you keep a tree in you yard or business?

A: The city hopes everyone will preserve healthy trees on their properties, but the new ordinance only affects trees affected by new or redevelopment.

Q: What size trees are gaining better protection under the new code?

A: Primarily, large specimen trees that have a diameter of 10 inches or greater.

Q: Are there new benefits to the public from these code updates?

A: Yes! Everyone benefits when the city has a healthy tree cover because city air is cleaner, neighborhoods are less hot in summer, and parks, streets and other public spaces are more beautiful, valuable, and safer. In addition, the new ordinance allows for adding zones where fruits or nuts could be harvested from public trees.

*For more answers to frequently asked questions, see the FAQ answers at:
<https://www.syr.gov/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Tree-Ordinance-Modernization>*



CH 22: Municipal Trees – What's changed?

- Added definitions
 - Added purpose section- green infrastructure
 - Tree Advisory Board*
 - Duties (public awareness and education, reviewing significant city planting projects, review planting lists)
 - 8 members
 - Quarterly meetings
- *meets Tree City USA*





Ch 22: Municipal Trees

- Added to Permit sections
(no invasives trees, follow Tree Design Standards Manual, ANSI Standards)
- Added to Prohibitions Against Damaging Public Trees Sec. (more specific prohibitions re: no soil compaction, added applies to utility work so as not to damage trees, no paving around trees)



City Design manual currently applies to tree work on public property. New code would establish planting and care standards to apply to new construction on private lands under Code Section 4.5



Ch 22: Municipal Trees

- New: Construction Activities permit:
 - Permit required from City Arborist for all construction activities within tree protection zone of any public tree.
 - Establishes standards for replacement requirements for public trees removed as 1:1 caliper inch replacement per current DBH inch or, if no room, replacement off site following mitigation measures in sec 22-18.
 - City projects must also replace trees removed for new sidewalks or other city construction or utility work.



Construction materials should not be stored under trees on top of roots.



Ch 22: Municipal Trees

- Added: Requiring tree removal or tree pruning on private property if public hazard (clarified what constitutes a hazard – e.g. impeding safe travel, blocking roadway safety signs...)
- New: Review and revocation of permit (explains actions required by permit must be followed)
- New: Permit exceptions (for emergency tree work for safety, allows foraging in designated areas)





Ch 22: Municipal Trees

- New: Penalties
 - Violations (increased fine from \$150 to \$1,000 capped at \$10,000)
 - Replacement tree costs-
 - Requires 1:1 DBH to caliper inch replacement including cost to procure, establish and maintain trees for one year. If willful misconduct is the reason for replacement, a 2:1 replacement is required (in addition to any civil fines)
 - Replace on site or close to site, or if not possible to replace, payment in lieu of replacement to proposed city tree bank fund



Ch 22: Municipal Trees

- New: **Tree Bank**
 - Physical location(s) designated to receive mitigation tree plantings
 - Requirements for hardy native tree stock
- New: **Tree Bank Fund \$**
 - Account for deposit of funds from penalties, tree replacement mitigation payment, or donations to cover public tree planting and establishment





Ch 22: Municipal Trees

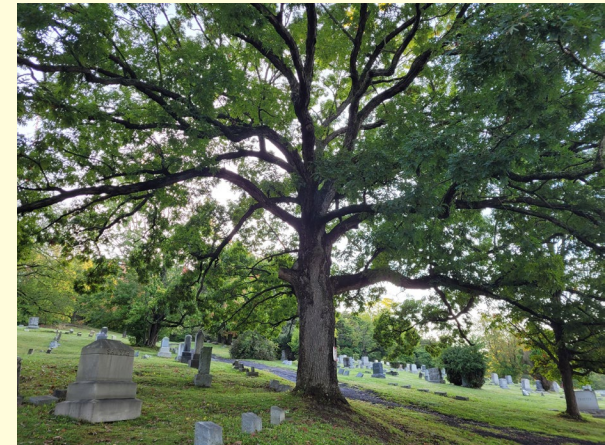
- New: Surplus Trees
 - Allows for sale or donation of surplus wood from storm-downed trees or trees removed during city construction projects (Urban Waste Wood program)
- New: Tree installation, care, & maintenance
 - Standards for public trees- ANSI, planting and care standards in City of Syracuse Tree Design Manual, methods/standards for root cutting.





Zoning Ordinance: Article 4.5 Development Standards

- Added to title (tree preservation), purpose, definitions
- New: **Preservation of existing landscape features**
 - Projects must demonstrate efforts to protect:
 - Specimen trees- 10" DBH or greater
 - Ornamental species of any size
 - Trees in setbacks and boundaries unless deemed necessary
 - Streams in their natural condition
 - Administrator discretion to preserve significant character landscape features





Article 4.5 Development Standards

- **New: Landscape Installation and Maintenance**
- **Installation of new vegetation**
 - Planting standards (native, drought tolerant etc.)
 - Stock quality
 - Species diversity
 - Planting area
- **Bonding**
 - Performance bond- if planted out of season
 - Maintenance bond- for 24 months to ensure required plantings remain alive





Article 4.5 Development Standards

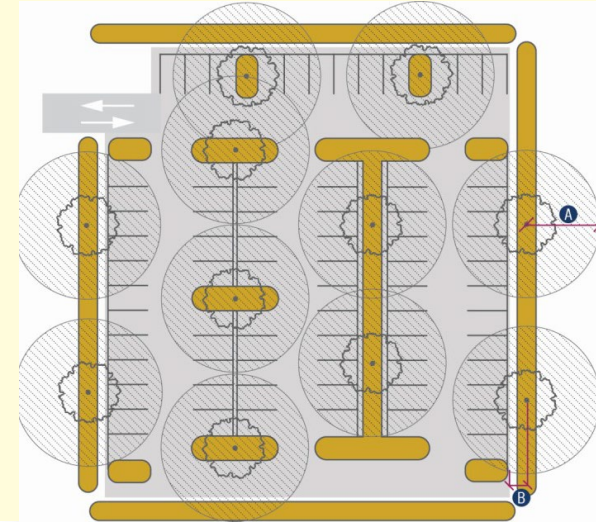
- New: **Minimum Tree Cover**
 - Requires 1 tree for every 400 sf of designated open space (e.g. if a development has a lawn then place a tree there.
- Added to Street Trees
 - Requires 1 street tree for every 30 linear feet of street frontage
 - Planted trees must meet City Tree Design Manual Standards





Article 4.5 Development Standards

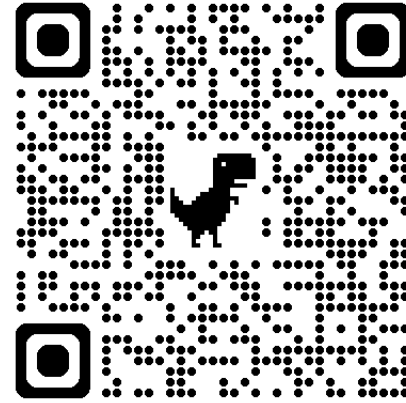
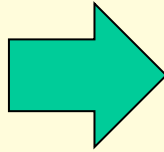
- Added to Parking Area Landscaping
 - All parking spaces to be within 60 ft of tree base
 - Performance standards
 - Full canopy coverage of parking lot at maturity
 - 300 sf minimum surface area per tree for adequate root growth





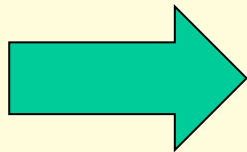
Community Engagement:

- To see the draft ordinance or upcoming meetings: visit:
<https://goto.syr.gov/Tree-Ordinance-Modernization>



- To comment online about the ordinance proposed changes:

Stay engaged and share
your comments here!





GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CENTER INC.



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