

#2023-407A

City of
Gainesville

Urban Forestry Update &
Tree Mitigation Fund Use Revisions

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Department of Public Works, Operations Division, Urban Forestry Section

Proposed Code Revision

Expand Allowable Expenses from the Tree Mitigation Fund

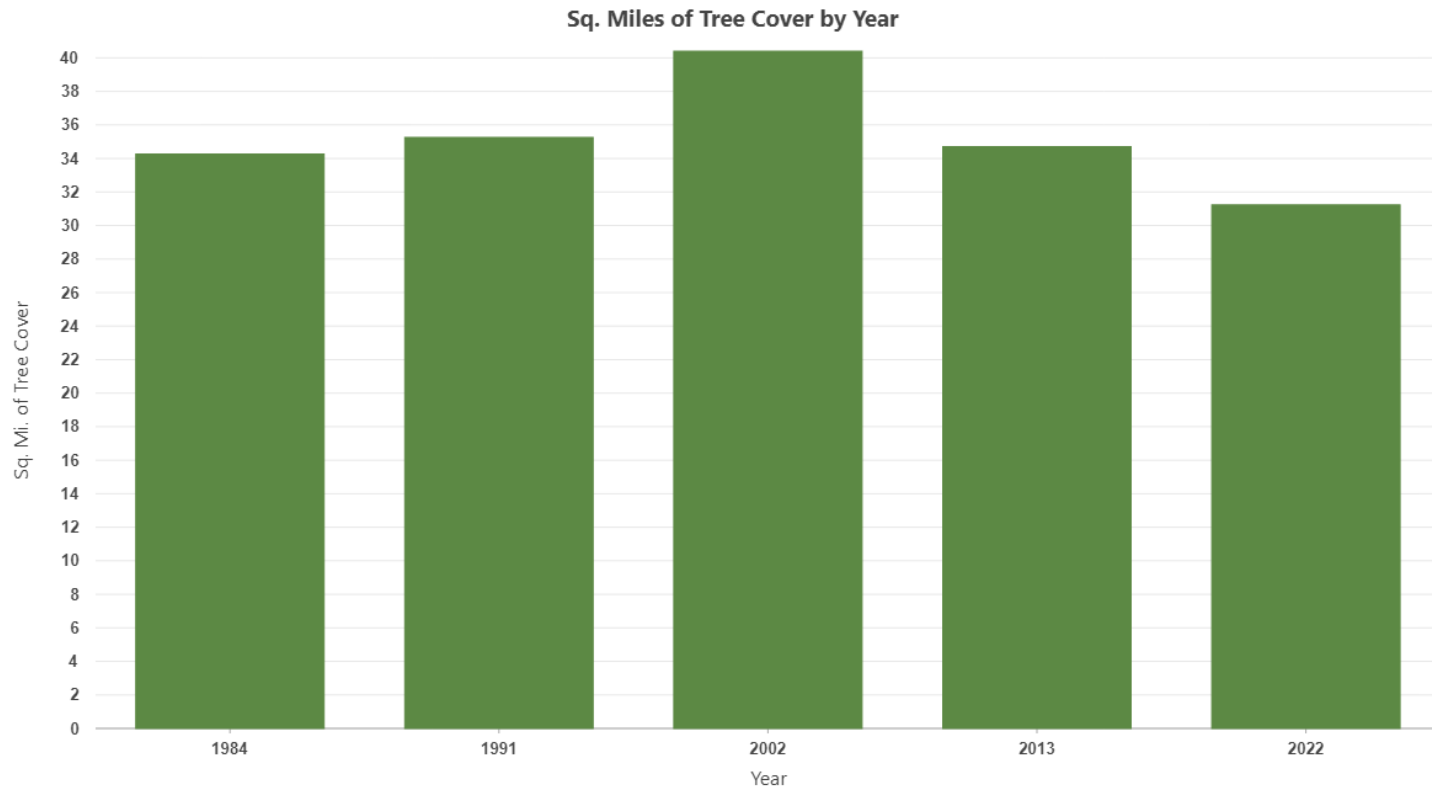
Purpose of Tree Mitigation Fund

The Tree Mitigation Fund (TMF) is designed to receive monies primarily from tree removals; and then expend monies to replace, improve and increase quality tree canopy

The Tree Mitigation Fund (TMF) Situation

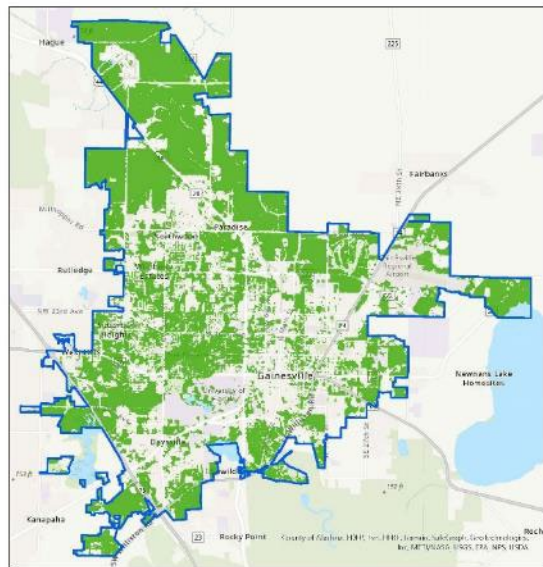
- Estimated fund balance at the end of FY22 was \$7.8M
- We want to be good stewards of fund expenditures, including a level of expenditure at least somewhat comparable to inputs.

Tree Canopy in Gainesville

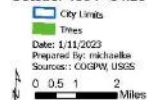


Tree Canopy in Gainesville

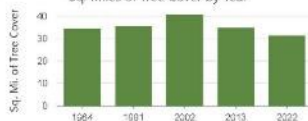
1984



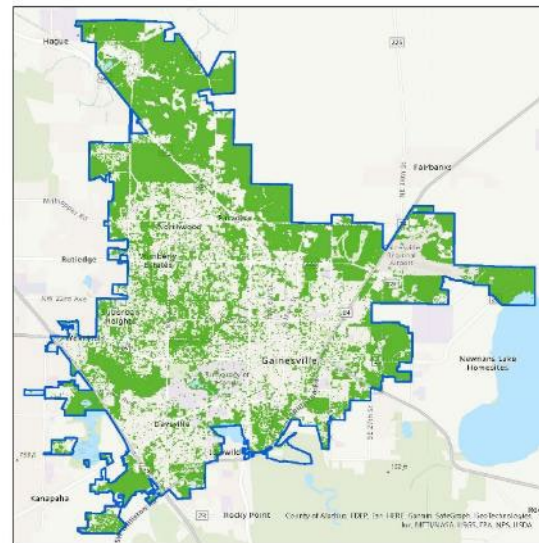
Gainesville, FL Area Tree Cover:
October 1984 - 34.26 Sq. Miles



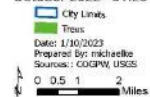
Sq. Miles of Tree Cover by Year



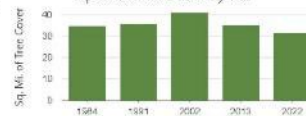
2022



Gainesville, FL Area Tree Cover:
October 2022 - 31.23 Sq. Miles



Sq. Miles of Tree Cover by Year



Adequately Spending the Tree Mitigation Fund

- Historically expenditures have not been proportional to revenues
- There is not enough space in the City's ROW or Parks to plant enough trees to expend the funding
- Land purchases could spend the fund adequately, but acquiring properties requires additional maintenance, which is not currently authorized under current Code language

Review of Proposed Revised Code Language

- The Tree Advisory Board and Staff worked on revised Code language for eight months
- The Tree Advisory Board voted unanimously to approve this revised Code language on January 11, 2023
- The City Plan Board voted unanimously to approve this language on February 27, 2023
- These Code changes, if approved, will be a paradigm shift – making a monumental difference and improvement in Gainesville’s Urban Forest.

Current Code

Relevant Language in the Land Development Code, ~~Sec~~7,30.2

Mitigation payment Mitigation payments received by the city shall be deposited in the city tree mitigation fund, which must be used in accordance with this subsection. This fund may be used for new tree plantings associated with public improvement projects or for the preservation of trees through the purchase of conservation lands, but shall not be used for tree maintenance or toward the installation of new trees that would already be required for a development. In addition, this fund may be used for an ecological assessment of the urban forest every five years, and for an update of the urban forest management plan every ten years.

Proposed Code Language Revisions

Land Development Code, Sec-30, C.2

2. *Mitigation payment* Mitigation payment shall be based on tree appraised value, or as otherwise specified in this code. Payment shall be made prior to the approval of a final development order, or prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy for any development requiring only building permits. Mitigation payments received by the city shall be deposited in the city tree mitigation fund, which must be used in accordance with this subsection. ~~This fund may be used for new tree plantings associated with public improvement projects or for the preservation of trees through the purchase of conservation lands, but shall not be used for tree maintenance or toward the installation of new trees that would already be required for a development. In addition, this fund may be used for an ecological assessment of the urban forest every five years, and for an update of the urban forest management plan every ten years.~~

b. *Use of tree mitigation funds* The intent of the tree mitigation fund is to directly support the expansion and improvement of a healthy and sustainable urban forest by planting and establishing high quality trees, as well as providing for the management and preservation of the city's urban forest.

Proposed Code Language Revisions (Continued)

Tree mitigation funds may not be used to plant or establish trees required by the chapter for development or redevelopment and may not be used for routine landscape maintenance on public rights-of-ways. Tree mitigation funds may be used for the following:

- a) new tree and native landscape planting and establishment on city-owned property, including purchase of trees, irrigation supplies, mulch, equipment, staking materials, fertilizer, and innovative and/or engineered tree planting materials or techniques;
- b) structural pruning of trees on city-owned property in accordance with industry standards;
- c) preservation of tree canopy, with an emphasis on preserving high quality tree species, through the city's purchase of conservation lands, and associated acquisition costs including survey, fencing, appraisal, and invasive vegetation control;
- d) site preparation, planting, land management, invasive-vegetation control, and/or natural regeneration of the city's urban forests;

Proposed Code Language Changes (Continued)

- e) an ecological inventory or assessment of the urban forest every five years and updating the urban forest management plan every ten years;
- f) arboriculture, landscape architecture, engineering and other professional services directly related to the development of the city's urban forest;
- g) purchase and supply of trees for planting in the city, including private property, with a priority on replacement of invasive vegetation and establishment of high quality trees; and
- h) Reasonable miscellaneous cost necessary for or directly related to uses allowed herein or expanding, improving, preserving and managing a healthy sustainable urban forest.

Explanation and Reasoning Behind Items in the Proposed Revision

Explanation and Reasoning

a) new tree and native landscape planting and establishment on city-owned property, including purchase of trees, irrigation supplies, mulch, equipment, staking materials, fertilizer, and innovative and engineered tree planting materials or techniques;

- Added native landscaping, and specific, necessary costs associated with tree planting



Explanation and Reasoning

b) structural pruning of trees on city-owned property in accordance with industry standards;

- Structural Pruning of City-Owned Trees
- Not ROW Clearance Trimming
- Why?



Explanation and Reasoning

c) preservation of tree canopy, with an emphasis on preserving high quality tree species, through the city's purchase of conservation lands, and associated acquisition costs including survey, fencing, appraisal, and invasive vegetation control;

- Purchase of Conservation Lands
- Acquisition Costs Added
- Enables Purchases
- Value of Controlling Invasive Exotics

Explanation and Reasoning

d) site preparation, planting, land management, invasive-vegetation control, or natural regeneration of the city's urban forests;

- Planting and/or Natural Regeneration on Park Lands
- More Quality Trees = More Urban Canopy
- Prescribed Burning is Vital



Explanation and Reasoning

e) an ecological inventory or assessment of the urban forest every five years and for an update of the urban forest management plan every ten years;

- Ecological Assessment/ Inventory
- Proper Management Requires Knowing What You Are Managing

Explanation and Reasoning

f) arboriculture, landscape architecture, engineering and other professional services directly related to the development of the city's urban forest;

- Professional Services Related to Development of Urban Forestry Projects
- Promotes Urban Forestry Projects

Explanation and Reasoning

i) purchase and supply of trees for planting in the city, including on private property, with priority of replacement of invasive vegetation and establishment of high quality trees.

- Planting Trees on Private Property
- Public benefit of private trees
- Let property owners plant trees
- City provides guidance and tree materials
- Provide Free Trees
- Right Tree in the Right Place

Explanation and Reasoning

g) Reasonable miscellaneous costs necessary for or directly related to the uses allowed herein or expanding, improving, preserving and managing a health sustainable urban forest.

- Infrastructure Preventing Tree Planting or Requiring Tree Removal
- Staffing



Questions & Discussion RE: Code Revisions

Urban Forestry Update Follows...

Urban Forestry Section– Update– Current Status, Future Plans and Goals



Urban Forestry Section– Current Status

Protect, Plant, Maintain, Educate and Collaborate

Staffing

- GG has 10 FTEs dedicated to the Urban Forest
- Public Works
 - City Arborist
 - Horticulturist
 - Program Coordinator (Vacant)
 - Six Tree Surgeons (Two Vacant)
- Department of Sustainable Development
 - Urban Forestry Inspector

Tree Removal Permits

- We protect trees through the Permitting process
- 286 Service Requests for Tree Removal Permits in FY22



Tree Removal Permits

... for those 286 Service Requests:

- 988 Trees Were Assessed
- 536 Trees Were Approved for Removal
- 407 Trees Were Not Regulated
- 48 Trees Were Denied

Codes Cases

- We protect people by assessing trees possibly posing an unacceptable risk
- 122 Service Requests for Codes Investigations in FY22

Maintenance of City Trees

- The Tree Surgeon Crew prunes or removes trees as needed, including emergency response
- We cover the City Rights-of-Ways on a three-year tree trimming cycle
- 509 Maintenance Service Requests were handled in FY22



Streetlight Tree Trimming

- Designed to improve pedestrian and vehicle safety, aligning with the Vision Zero goal
- Streetlight Trimming Contract through Private Provider
- 1440 Streetlights Trimmed in FY22



Tree Plantings

- 920 total trees planted in FY22
- 2,163 total trees planted since August, 2020
- Major projects include
 - Smokey Bear Park Edible Grove
 - Fred Cone Park Edible Grove
 - SW 40th Blvd Edible Grove (Bountiful Boulevard)
 - Depot Park Conservation Area
 - Downtown Empty Tree Wells
 - Evergreen Cemetery Arboretum

Edible Grove at Smokey Bear Park





Planting at Evergreen Cemetery



Tree Sponsor Program

We plant trees on the City right-of-way in front of neighbor's homes, for free, with the agreement that the neighbor will water the tree for six months

23 Service Requests fulfilled and closed out in FY22

Tree Giveaways

- 36 different species
- 1,385 trees



Partnering with Volunteer Groups



Education

- Presentations – Garden Clubs, UF, Community Groups, City of Gainesville Departments
- Urban Forestry Workshops
- Website Update

Collaboration

- Tree Advisory Board, City Departments (Public Works, Parks, GRU, GCRA, Gainesville Housing Authority), Alachua County, UF, State of Florida, Media, Master Gardeners, Community Volunteer Groups, Keep Alachua County Beautiful
- Bee City USA

Urban Forestry Section— Future Plans and Goals

Specialty Planting, Preserve and Improve Our Tree Canopy, Help Our Neighbors, Keep On Keeping On

ShepherdNew Opportunities with Funding from the Approved Code Revisions!

- How Are Our Future Goals Relevant to the Proposed Code Revisions?

Planting

- Continue with Tree Sponsor Program
- Waldo Road Greenway – Trees *and** Native Landscape – Bee City USA Pollinator Habitat!
- Planting Downtown and Elsewhere with Advanced Tree Wells and Tree Planting Techniques*
- Help Neighbors Plant Trees on Private Property*
- Continue Partnering with Volunteer Organizations
- Watering Contract



So Many Opportunities to Beautify Gainesville!

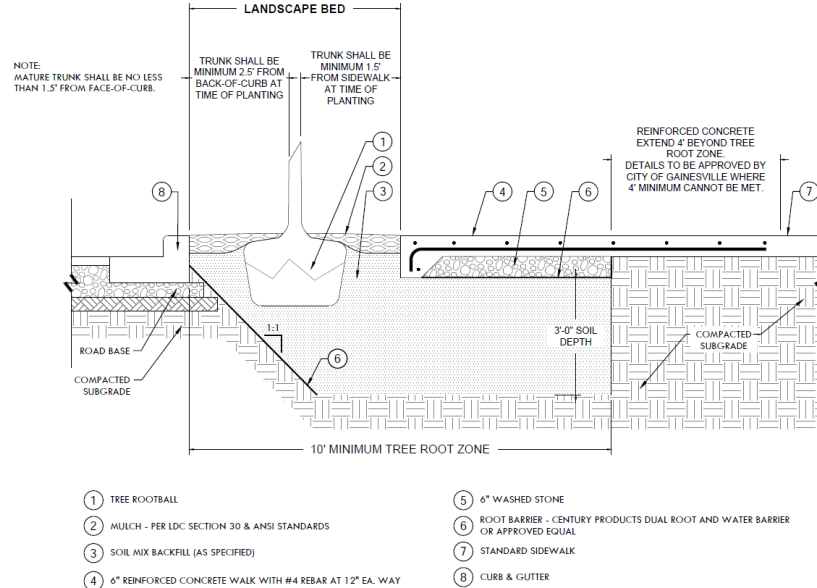


Preserve and Improve Our Tree Canopy

- Pursue enhanced opportunities to purchase conservation lands*
- The Urban Forestry Section and the Tree Advisory Board partner with Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs and the City Commission, to acquire appropriate properties, conserving and improving our tree canopy
- Carry out another Ecological Analysis, complete with a Tree Inventory*

Preserve and Improve Our Tree Canopy

- Engineered Tree Planting detail that provides healthy tree environment and minimizes impacts to infrastructure under development



Outreach to Our Neighbors

- Continue with Urban Forestry Workshops, Environmental Education, Presentations
- Outreach to ALL Neighbors, with Helpful, Targeted Information
- Continue Arbor Day Celebrations, Tree Giveaways
- Signage at Evergreen Cemetery Arboretum – Tree Walk, Kiosk, Signage at Each Tree
- Community Arborists Program

Outreach at City Services Fair



Keep On Keeping On

- Continue with Tree Removal Permits, Tree Investigations, Codes Investigations
- Streetlight Tree Trimming in FY23 should trim all street lights for the 1st cycle
- Continue updating and improving information on the City's Urban Forestry website
- Continue Bee City USA partnership with the Florida Wildflower Foundation
- Continue collaborating with all our partners
- Maintain Tree City USA recognition; first designated in 1983.

Questions...

... Thank You!