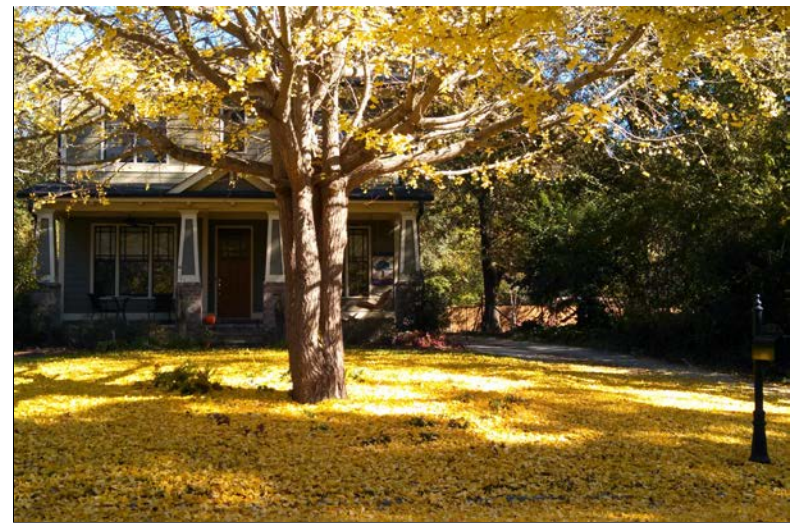


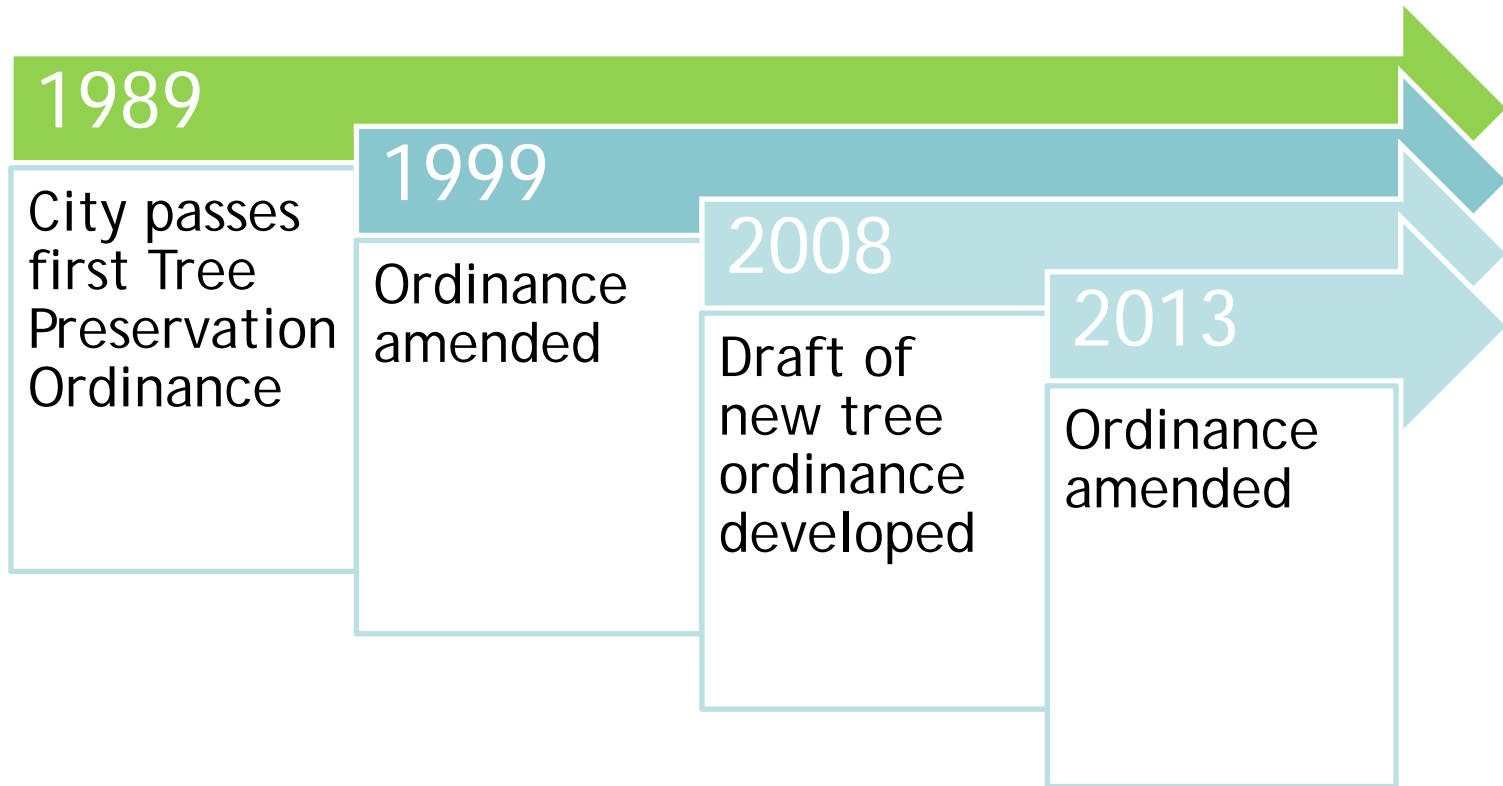
Trees!

Crafting Decatur- Appropriate Regulations

Presented on:
January 6th, 2013



Background



Tree Conservation Activities

- Community Forest Management Plan
- A completed a tree canopy cover analysis (2010) and a street tree inventory (2013).
- Since 2004 Tree Bank has been used to plant approximately 380 trees, and support restoration projects in the Woodlands Garden and Decatur Cemetery.
- Plantings, maintenance, and invasive species removal throughout the City over the last 10 years.



Background



Unified Development Ordinance

- 12-month process to update land development regulations started in October 2013
- Due to resident concerns, the following actions were taken by the City Commission;
 1. 90 day moratorium on tree removal (Ends Jan 24)
 2. Review of Tree Ordinance was expedited



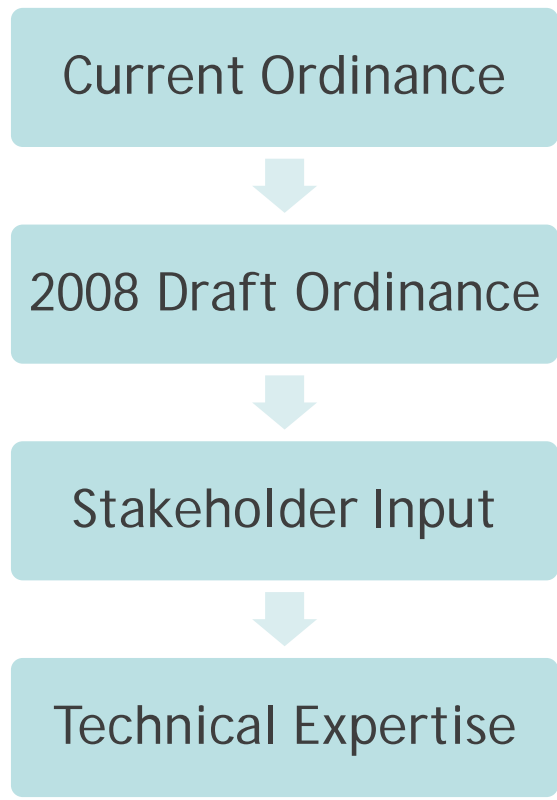
Reasons for Updating the Tree Ordinance



- Aging tree population
- Urban/human impacts to soil and trees
- Development pressures
- Majority of tree canopy is on private property
- New best management practices for tree conservation



Strategy



Final Recommendation
to City Commission:

Work Session: Jan 6

**Consideration for
Adoption: Jan 21**



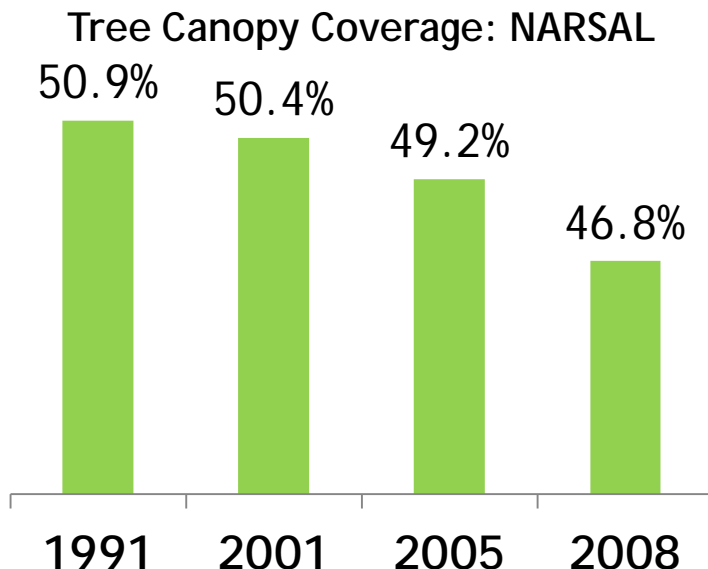
Decatur's Trees by the Numbers

Current canopy cover = approx. 45%

Trend → declining canopy coverage

University of Georgia's *Natural Resource Spatial Analysis Laboratory* (NARSAL)

- Canopy decreased 4.1% in last 27 years
- Trend = 1% canopy loss ever 6-7 years



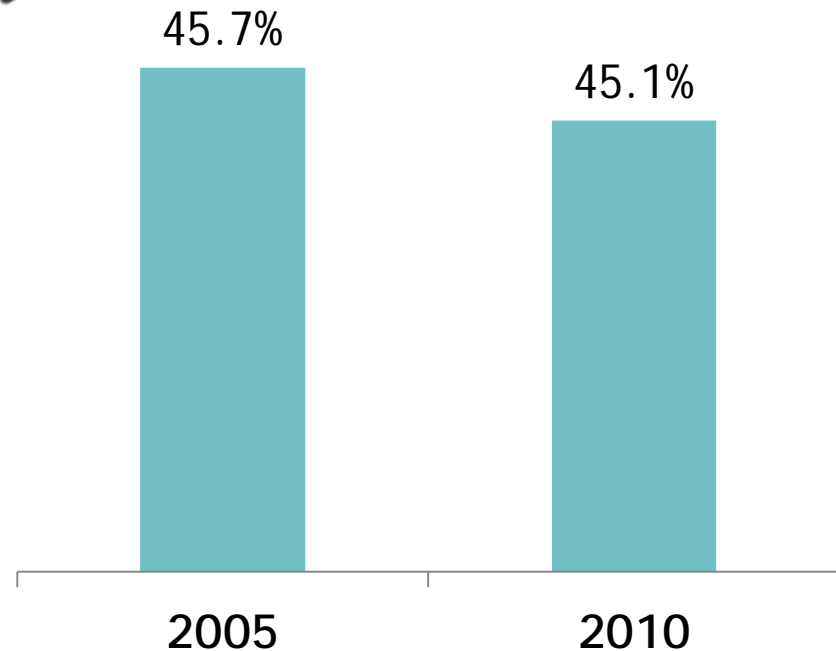
Decatur's Trees by the Numbers

2010 City of Decatur Study

- Analyzed tree canopy using aerial photographs.
- Provides more detail than NARSAL data.



Tree Canopy Coverage: Aerial Photos



Impact of Temporary Moratorium

- Created meaningful conversation with construction and professionals
- Provided opportunities to “test” certain elements that are proposed in ordinance
 - Created a single class of protected trees
 - Using certified arborists to prepare tree protection plans
- More focus on the impact of development on trees



Stakeholder Input

| December 11 th Input Sessions | Approx. Attendance |
|--|--------------------|
| Construction and Design Professionals | 30 |
| Real Estate Professionals | 10 |
| General Public | 40 |

- Comments have also been submitted through DecaturNEXT and direct email. (approx. 10)



Stakeholder Input- Highlights

Construction and Design Professionals

- Clearly outline the process and clarify what is required for small projects
- Streamline with permitting process
- Provide increased access to the expertise of city arborist
- Ensure that triggers for the ordinance have a reasonable connection to tree health and conservation
- Allow use of the tree bank and property owners discretion
- Tree ordinance should not be punitive
- Provide incentives for exceeding canopy goal
- Maintaining 45% coverage is good initial goal.



Stakeholder Input- Highlights

Real Estate Professionals

- Concerns about the accuracy of data being presented
- Increasing regulation on construction activities alone will likely not achieve canopy goals because only a small percentage of property in the City is developed or redeveloped annually
- Requirements need to be applied to institutions and utility companies as well
- Flexibility should be added for special circumstances; age, income, etc.
- 45% current canopy coverage is good for an urban community



Stakeholder Input- Highlights

General Input Session- 30 comment cards

Do you think the community should do more to conserve existing trees?

Yes-27

No- 0

Should the city establish a citywide tree canopy goal?

Yes- 28
No-2

19
respondents
answered 55%
or higher

Should the city require a tree removal permit when a homeowner wants to remove a healthy tree 12 inches diameter or greater on their property?

Yes- 24

No-2
Undecided-4



Stakeholder Input- Highlights

General Input Session- 30 comment cards

Should the city define boundary trees in the ordinance and require that they are protected during site disturbance?

Yes-28

No- 0
Undecided-2

Other ideas/comments:

- Tree bank payments should be used on private and commercial property
- Most important issue is close vigilant management for residential renovation and development
- Align stormwater code and tree protection to retain trees that would soak up stormwater
- Provide assistance to residents as to where to plant trees, what maintenance is necessary, and what species to select





Proposed Tree Ordinance



Giving Trees What They Need

- Good quality growing site with plenty of space for growth, above and below ground
- Proper planting and 3 years of post-planting maintenance to establish
- Ongoing, routine maintenance
- Protection of roots, trunk, and crown from time of planting through removal—throughout a tree's life
- Timely removal at end of useful service life



Key Concepts

1. Set a city-wide canopy goal & share responsibility equally for implementation of that goal
2. Create a single class of protected trees
3. Clearly define boundary trees
4. Establish a threshold for when a tree is being “impacted”
5. No net loss policy for reaching canopy goals



Key Operational Issues

1. Require input from a certified arborist in any situation when a tree is being impacted.
2. Require some level of protection for all trees impacted by project.
3. Establish clear and reasonable triggers depending on the circumstances of the project:
 - ◆ When is replanting required?
 - ◆ When does an entire site need to comply with tree canopy goal?



What would it take to increase the canopy in 25 years?

Current cover = 45%

Increasing the canopy requires one-for-one replacement of all removed or fallen trees



50%
Canopy

3,600
trees

55%
Canopy

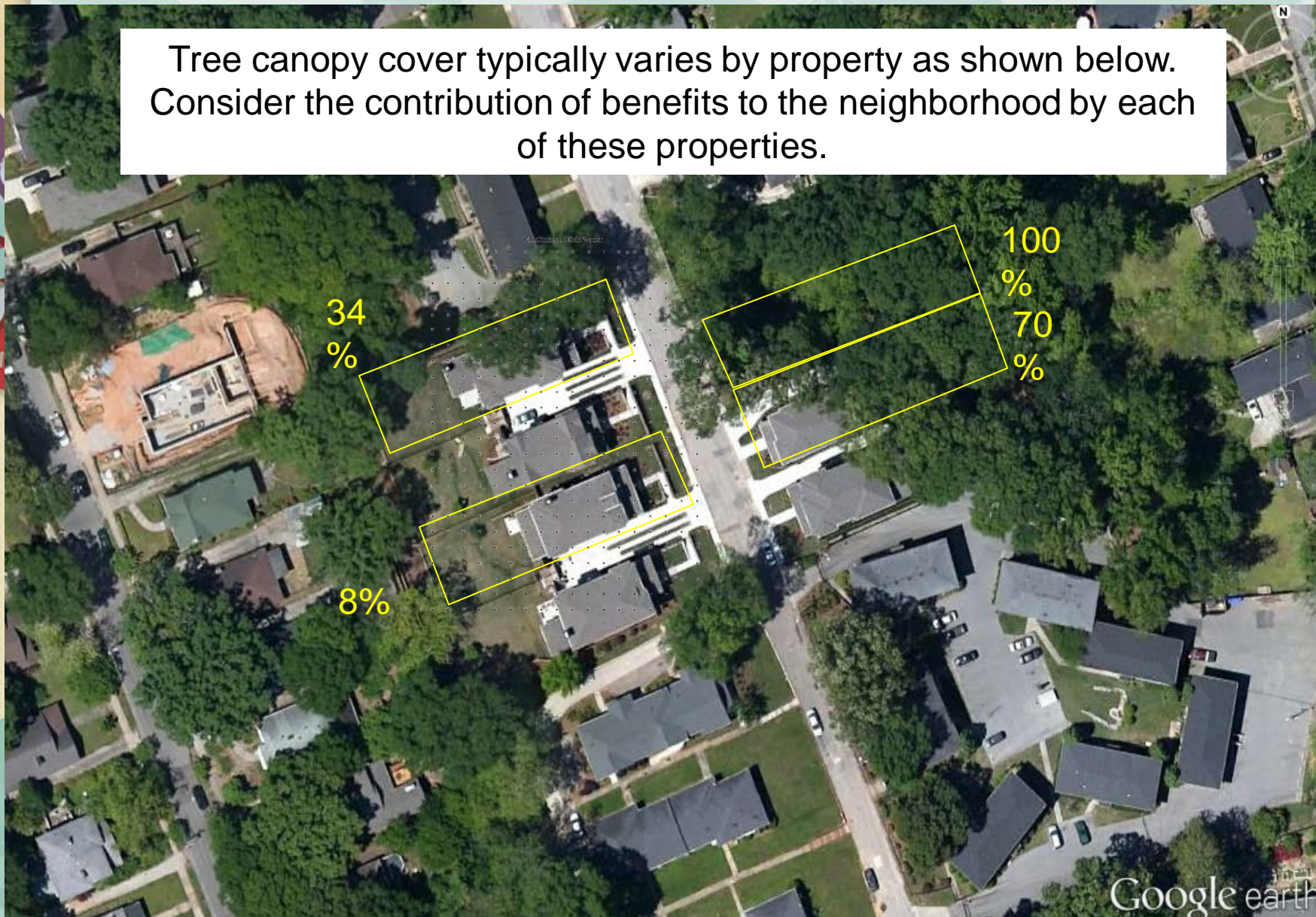
7,320
trees

60%
Canopy





10,980
trees



Tree canopy cover typically varies by property as shown below. Consider the contribution of benefits to the neighborhood by each of these properties.



Canopy goals in your backyard

| | 1/4 Acre Lot | 1/3 Acre Lot |
|--------------|--|---|
| 45% coverage | 3 large  | 4 large  |
| 55% coverage | 4 large  | 5 large  |



Protected Trees

- Any public tree, any tree of any size conserved or planted to meet tree ordinance requirements AND any tree 6 inches dbh or greater including boundary trees.
- Removal of a protected tree requires a Tree Removal Permit.
- If the lot does not meet the canopy coverage requirements, then replanting must occur according to a no net loss policy.



Boundary Trees

- A tree growing on a property boundary line between two lots resulting in joint ownership by the adjacent property owners or a tree where at least 20% of the critical root zone extends onto an adjoining property.
- If the boundary tree is a protected tree, then it must be included in the Tree Conservation Plan.
- 3 year escrow established for impacted boundary trees for cost of removal, replacement and value.



Appeals

Opportunity to Appeal Determination of the City Arborist

- Arborist - City Manager - ZBA
- Established Standards for Appeal



Application of Ordinance

For all residential and commercial projects:

If the trees involved are not in protected class

+

Less than 20% of critical root zone is impacted

=

No requirements for protection or replanting



Application of Ordinance- Commercial

Are either of the following increasing by more than 10%?

- Impervious surface of site-
- Floor area of existing structures-

No

CONSERVATION PLAN

- Protection for all impacted trees
- Removal permit required with onsite replacement for no net loss
- Tree bank not offered as option

Yes

CONSERVATION PLAN

- Protection for all impacted trees
- Entire site must be brought into compliance with canopy goal
- Tree bank can be used for up to 75% of requirement



Application of Ordinance- Residential

TREE REMOVAL PERMIT

Trees are being removed at the property owners request for purposes other than a project which requires a permit.

- Permit requires support narrative from a certified arborist.
- Narrative must detail the rationale for tree removal and provide an estimate of canopy cover on property after removal.
- If site's canopy coverage is below goal, replanting will be required.



Application of Ordinance- Residential

TREE DISTURBANCE PERMIT

Trees are being impacted or removed as part of another project which requires a permit.

- Tree Conservation Plan prepared by a certified arborist.
- Assess the canopy and potential tree impact.
- If the site's canopy coverage is below the goal
 - <10% impervious surface increase = replanting required for no net loss
 - >10% impervious surface increase = entire site must be brought into compliance with goal

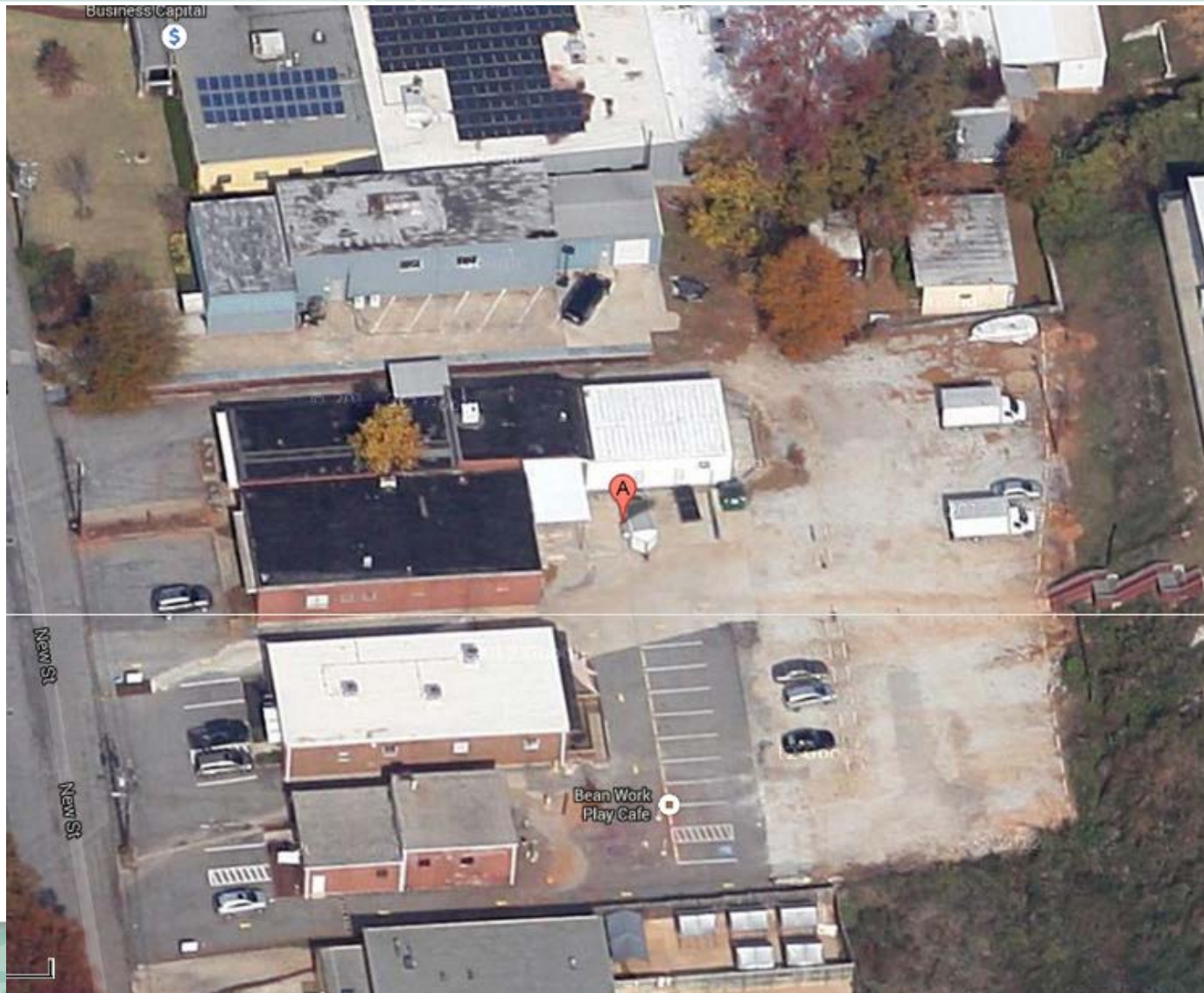


Key Differences Proposed vs. Current

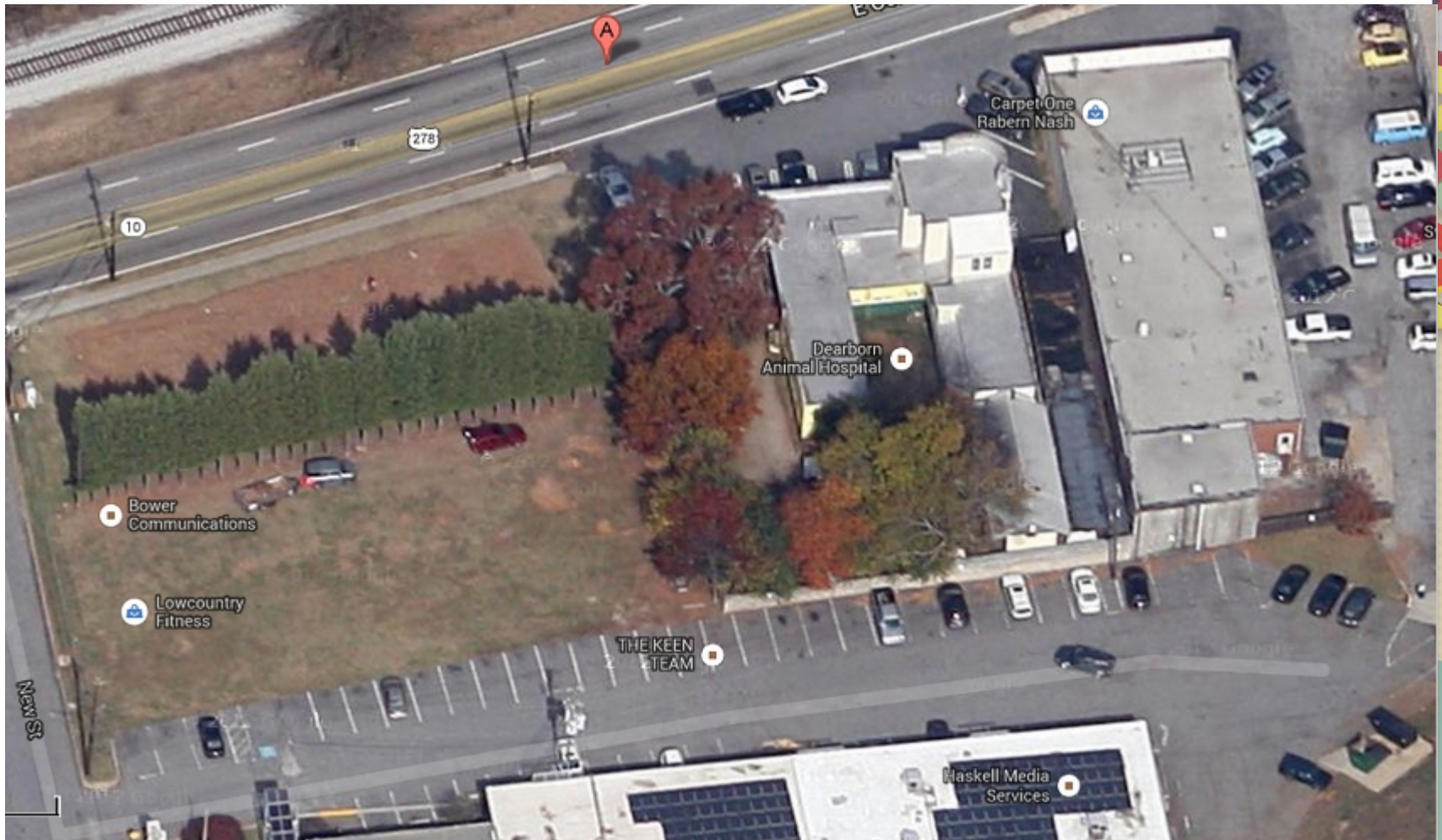
- City-wide canopy coverage goal set
- 1 class of protected trees
- Definition set for boundary trees
- Definition set for when a tree is being impacted
- Permit required for all protected tree removal
- Level of replanting determined by scope of work and existing canopy coverage
- Higher fee for using tree bank



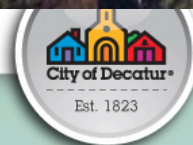
Example- 126 New Street



Example- 726 East College



Example- 131 Mt. Vernon



Example-209 Lamont Drive



Implementation Timeline

- Ordinance Adoption- January 21st
 - Pay class amendment for full-time Forest Manager position
- Prepare administrative forms, fees, and applications- February-April
- Proposed Effective Date- May 5th
- Adoption of Community Forest Management Plan- April, 2014

