The third in a series of public meetings were held in three different locations on Dec 12, 2018. The morning meeting was held at Spaces Midtown East (23 people signed-in on the attendance sheet). The midday meeting was held at the C.A. Scott Recreation Center (18 people signed-in). The evening meeting was held at the MLK Natatorium (43 people signed-in).

The presentation was the same for all three meetings and focused on a brief presentation of data findings, followed by an ample amount of time for conversation, question and answer. Participants were invited to review the maps in more detail by visiting https://arcg.is/1ejPq1.

Key data shared were:

- Compared to other major cities, Atlanta is unique in its significant mature tree canopy. The "Legacy Nature" map indicates the natural resources in Atlanta that have had the least disturbance over time and some of our oldest trees and forest patches.
- A map of "Highest Biodiversity and Habitat" value shows areas across Atlanta with the most significant presence of functional ecosystems, both forest and streams, including presence of critical habitat and non-urban soils.
- The "Ecological Assets" map shows that significant areas of interior core and mature forest are found in Southwest and Southeast Atlanta, while critical stream habitat is found across the City. Larger areas in the urban core lack significant tree canopy, leading to higher urban heat island and air quality impacts.
- The "Comfort" map conveys the existing habitat connectivity and the opportunity for further strengthening and connecting habitat patches and areas along waterways. The term "Critter Corridors" introduced connections between interior forest habitat patches that provide potential regional movement for wildlife species from the Chattahoochee to the South River and along Peachtree Creek.
- The "Retreat & Adventure" map highlights bringing people into natural conditions via trails and waterways.
- The "Connections" map highlights the built infrastructure that intersects with creeks and streams. The concept recognizes that there are connections where we can be more intentional about urban design that complements ecological restoration. The City wants feedback on which public realm opportunities should be implemented first. Examples include Hollowell crosses Proctor Creek or Piedmont Road crosses Peachtree Creek.
- Regarding the TPO re-write, City staff is aware the existing ordinance doesn't prioritize tree protection. This project will soon be focusing on the TPO rewrite and the City wants to better understand what other outcomes people want from a very different, new TPO.

The public feedback is summarized below and includes both general concerns and ideas, as well as comments specific to the Tree Preservation Ordinance (TPO).

- **How can the City ensure that environmental improvements don't force displacement**? Connect community members to support services to address code violations, especially in vulnerable communities. Consider using the Tree Fund to fund tree health assessments and removal of nonnative invasive species for low income homeowners and offer job training opportunities. Or, perhaps the City could offer grants for nonnative invasive species removal

through job training. Consider waving code violation fees if a person takes education class. Need tax breaks for homeowners with high value trees. Housing affordability aligned with UEF, TPO and zoning updates.

- **Land acquisition and conservation** is a priority for preserving high value habitat and biodiversity, urban forest canopy.
- Much of the city's **tree canopy is on private land, lacking protection**. Consider creation of various scales of conservation easements or Tree Canopy Preservation/Protection Districts.
- **Maintenance needs and costs must be elevated and prioritized**, for public as well as private land. Volunteers to address nonnative invasive plant species on easements. Floodplains are often inaccessible for maintenance. Create access and then allow residents or nonprofits to assist with maintenance. Private sector (nurseries, homeowners, etc.) likely need further information about invasive plant species (specifications, removal) like Florida's 'Plant Native' campaign and a ban on selling the most problematic invasive species.
- **Education and messaging was a major theme** in all the meetings. Ranges from describing value and effects of trees (or lack thereof) to debunking myths and misperceptions. Message has to be concise, user friendly, and memorable. One repeated request was "Help the community help the City" by providing talking points that can be shared neighbor to neighbor. Share best practices of which trees are good for where. Highlight better maintenance practices.
    - Parks and Recreation Centers could serve as nodes for education.
    - Ban or limit other noxious actions and behaviors that adversely affect ecological health (e.g., pesticides [mosquito spray and rat poisons], herbicides, leaf blowers, invasive plant species)
- **Funding mechanisms are needed** to support acquisition of most valuable resources for protection, and for partnerships, neighborhood collaboration and education. Offer incentives for communities that are taking environmentally sensitive actions on their private lands (management and removal of invasive plants, planting native plants, replacing dead or dying trees, protecting or enhancing high value areas).
- **Tree loss due to development pressure**, especially on smaller lots, is affecting overall tree canopy. Further support of Growth areas in City Design, which relieves pressure on Conservation areas. Limit the growth in the parts of the City that don't have stormwater detention.
- Further **support of higher density and taller infill development** along urban growth corridors and urban core can further alleviate pressure on existing mature tree canopy. Large infill housing is more expensive, causes tree loss, and is not increasing net density of people. **Protection of smaller, older, more affordable houses** could be marketed or positioned as an ally to saving the tree canopy and reducing displacement of existing residents.
- In the Core areas of the City, **need a street tree addition and replacement strategy**, prioritized by areas most in need of canopy increase. Also a need for focus on diversity of species and age in older neighborhoods, where canopy is of a similar stand age.
- Multi-family zoning should include **minimum greenspace to level the playing field** with other zoning categories. Consider requirements for **publicly accessible open/green space or preserved tree canopy on new development** sites (with new tax incentives for developers).

Tree Protection Ordinance

- Create ways to value or create a "market" for tree protection.

- Impervious surface fee should be developed to support more sustainable footprint that focuses on tree preservation and limits impervious expansion.
- Impose significant fee, commensurate with property values, for loss of valuable trees/forest or damage.
- Require an early preconstruction meeting to address tree loss at the beginning of concept development process, as well as an earlier appeal process.
- Incorporate the Tree Value Matrix (TVM) to prioritize tree preservation; value forested areas, soils; etc. (species size, health as part of value for preservation); incorporates the appreciating value of trees through the increasing ecological benefits they contribute over time.
- Tiered TPO based on geography to encourage development in growth areas.
- Need design criteria for sustainable development footprint and grading plans.