Urban Ecology Framework
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting
Vision and Goals / Analysis Methodology Workshop – 72 Marietta St
Monday, May 21, 2018

Committee Members in Attendance

David Zaparanick – COA Arboricultural Manager	Glen Behrend – COA, Watershed Management	Kathy Evans – COA Arborist Division
Erik Fyfe – Chattahoochee Riverkeeper	John Rains – Atlanta Tree Commission	Andrew White – Park Pride
David Pedrick – Southface Institute	Kevin Burke – Atl Beltline Inc.	Tony Giarrusso – GA Tech
Jenny Hoffner – American Rivers	Kathryn Kolb – EcoAddendum	John Skach – Urban Designer
Paula Randler – USFS	Adam Betuel – Atlanta Audubon	David Dechant – ArborGuard
Sara Gottlieb – The Nature Conservancy	Jasen Johns – COA, Parks & Recreation	Julie Owens – COA, Watershed Management
Chris Faulkner – Atlanta Regional Commission		

Project Team Members in Attendance

Heather Alhadeff, COA	Jennifer Dowdell, Biohabitats	Carlos Perez, PPD
Inga Kennedy, PEQ		

Meeting Summary

TAC members were given an overview of the project and the purpose and role of the TAC. This was followed by an overview of the project scope, tasks and deliverables. A detailed summary was provided about the data analysis process, including the ecological context of how national, regional and local impacts influence existing conditions. The committee was asked to help with any data source suggestions, especially related to invasive species, critical RTE habitat, and impaired streams. Following the methodology presentation, the TAC saw several maps that illustrated and defined Atlanta's ecological character and set the ecological context.

Following the presentations, attendees were asked to provide feedback, and the comments below were provided:

Review of data methodology and preliminary maps and data gaps:
1. It may be important to look at this from the canopy perspective - compare existing tree canopy to zoning; most of the City's trees are in areas that are zoned as residential areas. It is very important to think about those areas because there are a lot of trees in those areas and many are being lost when homes are torn down and larger homes are built in their place. Higher at-risk areas include residential and industrial zones.
2. Request for a vulnerability index for the time sensitive, most critical items that the City is currently losing.

3. Water quality – Chattahoochee Riverkeeper has Citizen Science water monitoring data dating back to 2009. Georgia Adopt-a-Stream also has data that is more volunteer based but would have areas outside the Chattahoochee River basin. (Erik F)
4. Look into Georgia Adopt-a Stream info.
5. The City will be updating the impervious GIS layer in October.
6. Greater Atlanta Pollinator is in a partnership with the Atlanta Botanical Gardens that has a voluntary pollinator reporting program that might have helpful pollinator information. Andrew White with Park Pride can provide the contact.
7. Krusak (SP?) of US Forest Service
8. Concrete Jungle has data about fruit trees throughout the City of Atlanta.
9. There was a study done in the City for regional parks and their recreational usage 6 or 7 years ago, and the conclusion of that study was that active recreation was saturated and passive recreation was deficient in the City. (K. Kolb)
10. Do we have an existing way to measure forest type? The City has high quality forest in the City but it is not differentiated and mapped. Need a litmus test of criteria for high value forest. EcoAddendum is developing a 4-step process and is in the process of doing that for Grove Park. Mapping these types of forests will be the backbone of the ecology of the City.
11. 15 sites have been identified in the Old Growth Forest Network.
12. Regarding Environmental Justice and Climate Justice, if you live near a greenspace you have a lot of benefits. The methodology currently has a negative column; we should have a positive column.
13. UGA Center of Invasive Species has data regarding invasive species - David Zaparanick has the website. Budwood.org EDDMAPS.org may have additional invasive species data.
14. Georgia Department of Natural Resources has precise RTE point location data. (Sara Gottlieb mentioned this.)
15. People with additional data that may be good for the TAC:
    - Angelou, Greening Youth Foundation
    - Darryl Haddock, West Side Watershed Alliance
    - Na'taki Osbourne Jelks
    - Crystal and Mark Mandica, Amphibian Foundation
16. Do we want an EPA representative for impaired waterways and air quality?
17. Social Justice portion of methodology may be light. There may be more to discover there. For example, Urban Heat Island, Floodplain?
18. EPA has a website that maps social justice vulnerability.
19. At the moment High and Low refers to High Potential/Low Potential. May have more values.
20. Other pressures to consider: Light pollution, noise pollution
21. Food chain value ecosystem services, as well as pollinator species (considered subset by some) within Ecosystem Services.
22. Blighted properties as a potential data set for social justice. Brownfield cleanup. Bio is in the process of exploring the data now as there appear to be some errors in the data.
23. Kwanza Hall might be able to help with blighted properties data.
24. The largest risk for the City at the moment are blighted industrial lands, most of which have been dormant for some 100 years and have large oaks and quality forests. (D. Dechant) These industrial lands have remained dormant because clearing all the trees would be very expensive. However, market conditions are now such that you have

major residential developers coming in and absorbing the costs of removing the trees and clear cutting high-quality tree canopy areas for development projects.

25. When we start talking about patch connectivity - old and abandoned industrial areas that are becoming residential is what we are talking about. There is a concern that so much of what we are trying to preserve may be gone by the time this project is done. It may be important to develop a vulnerability index/factor – patch land that is owned by 50 different owners versus properties that are owned by one person.

26. Overlay property values and tax assessor information to identify lots of land that have valuable tree cover but may not cost a lot to purchase.

Verification of project vision and goals discussion:
The TAC was asked for feedback on refining the Vision and Goals statements. The suggestions below were given.

1. Need to have explicit hierarchy in the vision statement. Forests/tree canopy are the priority over greenspace.
2. Insert native in the vision statement so it reads "Development respects our **native** forest, watersheds."
3. Functional ecological systems, include native in the first statement
4. A past City goal was to make BeltLine parks accessible, but we should be prioritizing the protection of native soil and native vegetation.
5. Explore a goal for parks to become Sustainable Sites certified. Include an idea in the vision statement that suggests respecting and protecting our native soil, water, and vegetation, which are the three key factors. Without the soil and water, we don't have anything else.
6. Protecting the trees allows us to protect the soil and water. The trees have a guardian role. By protecting the trees, we protect soils and water. Unfortunately, the City does a horrible job of protecting that. Every time we clear trees for larger homes or clear industrial areas for residential, it's a problem.
7. Trees are an opportunity to get the public engaged. Removing trees and forestry from the vision statement can be detrimental. Explicit hierarchy is important and forestry should be at the top of the vision statement.
8. Is the second paragraph explicitly for development, because it reads that way?
   - "Growth" versus "development." "Growth" may be a little vague.
9. Ideally, the Urban Ecology Framework Plan would be completed before City Design. Is there space for talking about Urban Ecology unto itself without the transportation need component?
   - Should we remove transportation and focus on connectivity?
   - First step should be ecological connectivity.
   - It may be important to insert language about watersheds, since all of us live in the watershed and everything is a watershed. Take "transportation" out of the vision words. Include rivers, creeks in the vision statement (ex: waterways, waterbodies).
10. Atlanta needs to be in the vision statement instead of just saying "City," "Atlanta" grounds the vision statement.
11. We need to align positive economic incentives with respect to protecting our native forests, and establish targeted disincentives as, at the moment, it's cheaper for

developers to clear cut than to preserve. Inflationary index should be added to the impact fees.

   - Should that be part of the vision or goals?
      - It should be in the vision statement – "Development that 'economically' respects our forest resources"

12. We should also identify cost avoidance due to green infrastructure, health care, public health, etc.
13. Functional ecological systems should be first, as it's more important than accessible greenspaces.
14. The TAC members requested that the team send the proposed VISION changes as part of the notes to the TAC so they can provide comments.

- Updated Vision Statement to share with the committee:

Atlanta is grounded in its unique ecological character of native functional ecological systems and accessible greenspace, both verdant and vibrant. It is likewise grounded in a strong sense of community and culture bound in many ways to our natural resources.
This urban ecology framework will strategically guide the projected increase in Atlanta's population density such that urban expansion respects our native forest resources, waterways and waterbodies, soils, wildlife and public greenspace, promoting resilience, , livability and connectivity.

Committee members were encouraged to send additional comments if desired to the project e-mail and were invited to attend the Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting immediately following and the public workshop the next evening.

The meeting was adjourned.