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Boundary Tree Standards for the City of Decatur

The City of Decatur tree ordinance addresses boundary trees and their protection during construction activity as such:

Definitions:

Boundary trees - a tree with a 20% or greater critical root zone (CRZ) extending across a property boundary into an adjacent property or a tree (trunk) that is growing on a boundary property line between two lots resulting in joint ownership

Critical root zone (CRZ) – the minimum area of the tree necessary to sustain the trees life; Decatur uses 1.25' per 1 inch DBH

Damage – harmful injury to tree or any of its parts, including roots, trunk, scaffold limbs, twigs, buds, or limbs; to cause such injury

Protected tree – any tree 6" DBH or larger that is healthy and structurally sound; and has been conserved or planted to meet the tree ordinance requirements

Tree disturbance – any land activity that has the potential to change the characteristics of soil, vegetation, growing space or environment within a tree protection zone OR any activity that has the potential to damage a trees roots trunk or crown

Tree impact – any disturbance that proposes or has the potential to affect 20% or more of the tree protection zone

Tree protection zone (TPZ) – the area encompassing the entirety of a protected tree, including the soil to a depth for 3 feet within the CRZ and the trees trunk and crown

Administrative Practices and Definitions:

Structural root plate (SRP)-means the zone of rapid root taper that provides the tree stability against wind throw. The radius of the root plate is proportional to the diameter (DBH) of a tree. Standard root plate measurements/calculations are below

STRUCTURAL ROOT PLATE TABLE:

DBH	8"	16"	32"	48"
SRP (radius')	5.5'	8'	10.5'	12'

Arboricultural prescription-means any type of site or tree instruction developed by an arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture or State Registered Forester that is aimed as preserving tree(s). It is required for trees with 20% or greater CRZ/SRP impact

Net CRZ/tree protection zone (TPZ) impact- the area of the CRZ that has been obstructed with barrier's from the urban environment, i.e. public roads, foundations. You must subtract the CRZ/TPZ /canopy area that overlaps the road or house from the original sf calculations. That is the number that will be used to evaluate if preservation is possible.

Boundary trees with;

2nd story additions or increase of building height must provide pruning plan with scope of work to be performed by qualified professional.

CRZ / TPZ 19% or less impact and protected by tree protection, no arboricultural prescription required

CRZ / TPZ 20%-33% impact but protected by tree protection (no structural root plate impact) provide arboricultural prescription with plan for review by city.

CRZ / TPZ 20%-33% impact and structural root plate has impact/not protected, tree removal required

- The builder/ developer/construction site property owner must submit a boundary tree agreement signed by tree owner/co-owner giving permission to/ for the tree with construction impact to be treated or removed. (the city does not have a standard form at this time)
- The minimum prescription length shall be a year. The receipt for the paid contract and the agreement will need to be submitted with the plans for review.
- The boundary tree bond or escrow account may be required based on the arboricultural prescription.
- The bond can be 125% of the cost of removal and replacement of the trees listed in the boundary tree agreement and will be held for three (3) years by the city.
- The plan can not be approved without the signed boundary tree agreement.
- NO more that 25% of the mature trees crown or 1/3 of a young trees canopy shall be removed in one season.
- Pruning of conserved trees should only be done by experienced professionals and the city recommends that pruning be supervised by an ISA certified arborist
- Trees in right of way can count for tree canopy credit
- Trees planted on adjacent properties can't count for canopy credit
- All existing healthy trees 4"DBH and greater can count for canopy credit