



GWINNETT COUNTY

Community Shade Coverage Requirements Policy

Gwinnett County administers a Buffer, Landscape and Tree Ordinance that contains provisions for shade coverage on developed sites. It is a stand alone ordinance that specifies planting requirements for parking lots, tree density units, tree canopy measurements, buffers, specimen trees, and landscape strips. The ordinance also provides parameters for monitoring and enforcement.

The Buffer, Landscape and Tree Ordinance contains the following requirements that affect shade and the method of tree coverage on a site:

1. For parking lots, one (1) canopy tree is required for every seven (7) parking spaces.
2. For parking lots, all parking spaces must be located within 60 feet of a canopy tree.
3. 200 square feet minimum planting area island is required for one (1) canopy tree with an additional 80 square feet required for each additional canopy tree within that island.
4. 100 square feet minimum planting area island is required for one (1) small tree with an additional 40 square feet required for each additional small tree within that island.
5. For single-family detached residential sites and commercial sites, sixteen (16) tree density units per acre are required which amounts to thirty-two (32) 2" caliper trees to be planted or thirty-two (32) 3" existing trees to be preserved per acre.
6. For commercial sites within an Activity Center Corridor Overlay District, twenty (20) tree density units per acre are required which amounts to forty (40) 2" caliper trees to be planted or forty (40) 3" existing trees to be preserved per acre.
7. For single-family detached residential lots, a minimum of 16 tree density units per acre is required including a minimum of 2 trees per lot which must be preserved or planted in addition to street trees (one tree per every 50 lineal feet of street length, both sides of the street).
8. A tree canopy calculation is required for every developed site which indicates the extent of site coverage at tree maturity in terms of percentage. The tree canopy calculation includes the square footage value of trees that are planted and the square footage value of trees that exist on the site. Trees that are planted on a site are assigned a square footage value to each tree that depicts the mature tree size. The existing trees are measured in terms of a closed polygon and the total square feet area of the polygon is then added to the overall site.
9. The developer is responsible for the planting and maintenance of trees for a full year after they are planted. A landscape warranty is posted by the developer to the Development Inspections staff of the Department of Planning and Development when the trees are planted.

10. Enforcement of tree planting and preservation requirements is provided by the Development Inspections staff which includes monitoring the health of trees on each job site. One (1) year after the trees are planted, the inspector records the quantity of trees that need to be replaced. The developer is responsible for replacing the trees that have died or are in poor condition.
11. The responsibility for monitoring and maintenance of the trees is transferred to the property owner or the property owner's association once the trees have been inspected and replaced (if needed) by the developer and the developer has sold all the homes in the subdivision or has completed the commercial building as applicable.
12. After the property owner or property owner's association becomes responsible for monitoring and maintenance of the trees, enforcement of the Buffer, Landscape and Tree Ordinance is provided by the Development Inspections staff of the Department of Planning and Development. Upon receipt of a complaint by the Department of Planning and Development, a development inspector visits the site to inspect and oversee the complaint until it is either resolved or handled by the court system.
13. Development Inspections staff is responsible for monitoring commercial property for the topping of trees while performing their daily inspections. A Notice to Comply is issued to the owner of each property which is confirmed to contain topped trees. Failure of the owner to replace the topped trees as required by the Notice results in issuance of a citation and subsequent disposition of the matter by the court system.

Documentation

- Gwinnett County, Georgia, established a Buffer, Landscape and Tree Ordinance in 1987. This ordinance can be found on the Gwinnett County website at [www.gwinnettcounty.com/Departments/Planning & Development/Documents and Regulations/Buffer, Landscape and Tree Ordinance](http://www.gwinnettcounty.com/Departments/Planning_&_Development/Documents_and_Regulations/Buffer,_Landscape_and_Tree_Ordinance).
- Example #1: Parking Lot
- Example #2: Activity Center Corridor Overlay
- Example #3: Single-family detached residential (currently there is no example, the ordinance was amended December 11, 2007 and the sites have not yet been developed)