



GWINNETT COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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AGENDA PACKET

TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
July 13, 2026

Tree Advisory Committee Meeting July 13, 2026

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**Tree Advisory Committee Meeting
July 13, 2026**

1. TAC July 13, 2026 Meeting Agenda



Gwinnett County Tree Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda **Monday, July 13, 2026, at 6:00pm**

Innovation Square
446 West Crogan Street, 1st floor, Conference Room 106
Lawrenceville, GA 30046

1. Call to Order
2. Determination of a Quorum (5 Members)
3. Announcements
4. Adoption of the Agenda
5. Approval of the Minutes
 - a. April 13, 2026
6. Old Business
7. New Business
 - a. Front Yard Tree Program
 - Spring Stats
 - Fall Planting Update
 - b. Subcommittee on Youth Tree Programs Update
 - c. Subcommittee on Tree Care Update
 - d. TAC-Gwinnett County Emails
8. Other Business
 - a. Staff Report
9. Adjournment

**Tree Advisory Committee Meeting
July 13, 2026**

2. TAC April 13, 2026 Unofficial Meeting Minutes

**Tree Advisory Committee Minutes
Monday, April 13, 2026, at 6:00pm**

Innovation Square
446 West Crogan Street, 1st floor, Conference Room 108
Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Present: Chris Adkins, David Argo, Patrick Carey, Farid Ghalili, Nicola McIntyre, Kate Pittman, Steve Sappington, Traci Leath

Absent: None

Staff: Rinda Grooms, Sharon Cook, James Hornbeck, Roxanne Raven

A. Call to Order

6:02pm

B. Determination of a quorum

A quorum was present.

C. Announcements

None

D. Adoption of the Agenda

{Motion to Approve: Chris Adkins; Second: Patrick Carey; Vote: 8-0: Chris Adkins-Yes; David Argo-Yes; Patrick Carey-Yes; Farid Ghalili-Yes; Nicola McIntyre-Yes; Kate Pittman-Yes; Steve Sappington-Yes; Traci Leath-Yes}

E. Approval of the Minutes – March 2, 2026

{Motion to Approve: Farid Ghalili; Second: Steve Sappington; Vote: 8-0: Chris Adkins-Yes; David Argo-Yes; Patrick Carey-Yes; Farid Ghalili-Yes; Nicola McIntyre-Yes; Kate Pittman-Yes; Steve Sappington-Yes; Traci Leath-Yes}

F. Old Business

None

G. New Business

a. Front Yard Tree Program – Roxanne Raven, Special Project Coordinator, shared an update on the Front Yard Tree Program. The first tree was planted on April 3, 2026, and the staff is working with the vendor to complete plantings by the end of April. There may be funds for a small fall planting.

b. Tree Ordinance Rewrite – Rinda Grooms, Development Division Director,

informed the committee that the Department's leadership was reviewing the most recent draft of the Tree Ordinance Rewrite.

- c. TAC Priorities for the Year – Roxanne asked the committee to revisit ideas for the committee's work this year that were discussed at the previous meeting. The committee agreed that developing education programs was their top priority, but distinguished between programs for students in partnership with Gwinnett County Public Schools and producing general tree-care maintenance trainings and resources. They formed two separate subcommittees on these topics.

{Motion to Form the Subcommittee on Youth Tree Programs: Farid Ghalili; Second: Chris Adkins; Vote: 8-0: Chris Adkins-Yes; David Argo-Yes; Patrick Carey-Yes; Farid Ghalili-Yes; Nicola McIntyre-Yes; Kate Pittman-Yes; Steve Sappington-Yes; Traci Leath-Yes}

{Motion to Form the Subcommittee on Tree Care: Chris Adkins; Second: Traci Leath; Vote: 8-0: Chris Adkins-Yes; David Argo-Yes; Patrick Carey-Yes; Farid Ghalili-Yes; Nicola McIntyre-Yes; Kate Pittman-Yes; Steve Sappington-Yes; Traci Leath-Yes}

Farid Ghalili will lead the Subcommittee on Youth Tree Programs, assisted by Chris Adkins. David Argo will lead the Subcommittee on Tree Care, assisted by Kate Pittman. Both subcommittees will meet before the next meeting to discuss initial ideas and report back to the group at the July meeting.

The discussion concluded on the topic of meeting cadence. The committee agreed to revert to its normal schedule of quarterly meetings.

- d. Gwinnett County Email Addresses – At the request of the TAC Chairman, Staff coordinated with the IT department to create official Gwinnett County email accounts to use for their TAC-related correspondence so that their personal emails would not be subject to open records requests. Staff will follow up with the email addresses, temporary passwords, and access instructions after the meeting.

H. Other Business

- a. Staff Report – Roxanne highlighted the new condensed format and new action items.
- b. July 2026 Meeting – The committee requested that the July 2026 meeting be moved from July 6 to July 13 to accommodate potential conflicts with the Independence Day weekend.

I. Adjournment

6:58pm

{Motion to Approve: Farid Ghalili; Second: Patrick Carey; Vote: 6-0: Chris Adkins-Yes; David Argo-Yes; Patrick Carey-Yes; Farid Ghalili-Yes; Kate Pittman-Yes; Steve Sappington-Yes}

**Tree Advisory Committee Meeting
July 13, 2026**

3. TAC April 13, 2026 Meeting Notes

Gwinnett County Tree Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

April 13, 2026, at 6:02pm

Committee Members Present: Chris Adkins, David Argo, Patrick Carey, Farid Ghalili, Traci Leath, Kate Pittman, Nicola McIntyre, Steve Sappington

Committee Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Rinda Grooms, Sharon Cook, James Hornbeck, and Roxanne Raven

Announcements:

None

Old Business:

None

New Business

a. Front Yard Tree Program Update – Roxanne Raven

Roxanne gave an update on the Front Yard Tree Program, providing an overview of the applications, the first tree planting on April 3, 2026, and the next steps. Committee members asked questions about what factors led to the denial of a request. Roxanne also shared there is a potential for a fall planting.

b. Tree Ordinance Rewrite – Rinda Grooms

Rinda gave an update on the Tree ordinance rewrite, stating it was being reviewed by Leadership and would be shared with the TAC as soon as it was ready. Patrick asked about the findings of the canopy assessment. Staff shared the report found that the canopy grew 2.77% in the study period, likely due to the maturity of trees planted in subdivisions and the expansion of trees planted in parks.

c. TAC Priorities – The committee discussed multiple ideas, expressing interest in pursuing a Tree City USA designation, noting its potential benefits, including positive impacts on property values. Ultimately, opportunities for expanded community education were agreed on, including:

- Partnering with GCPS for youth engagement programs
- Developing pruning education tied to the Front Yard Tree Program
- Leveraging existing resources such as Trees Atlanta trainings and Master Gardener programs

The committee discussed structuring education efforts and agreed to move forward with subcommittees:

- Youth Tree Subcommittee (focused on school outreach and engagement)
 - Motion approved unanimously; Farid to lead, with Chris joining
- Tree Care Subcommittee (focused on technical education and maintenance)
 - Motion approved unanimously; David and Kate to participate

The committee also agreed to switch back to quarterly meetings.

- d. Official Gwinnett County Emails – At the request of the TAC Chairman, Staff coordinated with the IT department to create official Gwinnett County email accounts to use for their TAC-related correspondence so that their personal emails would not be subject to open records requests. Staff will follow up with the email addresses, temporary passwords, and access instructions after the meeting.

Other Business

- a. Staff Report
Roxanne presented the Staff Report.
- b. July 2026 Meeting
The Committee requested that the meeting be postponed one week from July 6, 2026 to July 13, 2026 to avoid conflicts with Independence Day Holiday travel schedules.

Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm.

Note: These meeting notes do not represent official meeting minutes of the TAC. They are for internal record keeping purposes only.

**Tree Advisory Committee Meeting
July 13, 2026**

4. TAC and GCPS Collaborative Proposal

Proposal for Partnership Between the Gwinnett County Tree Advisory Committee and Gwinnett County Public Schools

Investing in Students, Communities, and the Future of Gwinnett County

Introduction

The Gwinnett County Tree Advisory Committee respectfully seeks the partnership and support of Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) in developing a countywide student engagement initiative focused on tree planting, environmental stewardship, conservation, and community beautification.

The Committee's mission includes advising the Board of Commissioners on the preservation, replacement, and management of trees and landscaping throughout Gwinnett County while promoting educational programs that encourage proper care and maintenance of the county's natural resources. Through this partnership, we envision students becoming active participants in projects that enhance parks, schools, neighborhoods, and public spaces while gaining valuable educational and life experiences.

This initiative is not simply about planting trees. It is about planting the seeds of leadership, environmental responsibility, civic engagement, and career exploration in the next generation of Gwinnett County residents.

Why Student Participation Matters

Today's students will inherit the responsibility of addressing environmental, economic, and community challenges that will shape the future of our county and nation. By involving students in meaningful environmental projects, we provide opportunities for them to connect classroom learning with real-world experiences while making a lasting contribution to their communities.

Research consistently shows that students are more engaged when learning extends beyond the classroom and allows them to see the direct impact of their efforts. Tree planting and environmental stewardship projects provide exactly that opportunity.

Students who participate will gain a deeper understanding of environmental science, sustainability, conservation, and civic responsibility while developing critical leadership and teamwork skills that support their academic and personal growth.

Educational Benefits for Students

This initiative aligns naturally with many educational objectives already prioritized by Gwinnett County Public Schools.

Students can apply concepts learned in:

- Environmental Science
- Biology and Ecology
- Earth and Space Science
- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Mathematics and Data Analysis
- Engineering and Design
- Geography and Social Studies

Through hands-on activities, students can learn to:

- Identify and assess tree species
- Understand ecosystems and biodiversity
- Measure environmental impacts of trees
- Study soil, water, and air quality
- Collect and analyze environmental data
- Develop project planning and leadership skills
- Participate in service-learning experiences

These experiences reinforce classroom instruction while helping students develop problem-solving, collaboration, communication, and critical-thinking skills that are essential for success in college and careers.

Career Readiness and Workforce Development

One of the most significant benefits of this partnership is exposure to growing career fields that many students may not otherwise encounter.

Students can explore careers in:

- Forestry
- Environmental Science
- Landscape Architecture
- Urban Planning
- Horticulture
- Agriculture
- Environmental Engineering
- Sustainability and Natural Resource Management

By connecting students with professionals, county departments, local businesses, and community organizations, the program can help students discover meaningful career pathways while supporting workforce development efforts throughout Gwinnett County.

Building Responsible Citizens and Future Leaders

Beyond academic benefits, participation fosters civic responsibility and leadership.

Students gain firsthand experience in:

- Community service
- Volunteerism
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Project management
- Environmental stewardship

When students help improve a local park, school campus, or community space, they develop a sense of ownership and pride in their community. They learn that positive change happens when individuals work together toward a common goal.

These lessons extend far beyond the classroom and help develop engaged citizens who understand the importance of contributing to their communities.

Environmental and Community Benefits

Trees provide significant environmental and economic benefits for communities.

Student-led planting and stewardship projects can help:

- Improve air quality
- Reduce urban heat island effects
- Increase shade and comfort in public spaces
- Improve stormwater management
- Reduce soil erosion
- Enhance wildlife habitats
- Beautify parks and neighborhoods
- Support county sustainability initiatives

At the same time, these projects create visible improvements that residents can appreciate for generations.

Each tree planted by a student becomes a living reminder of their contribution to the future of Gwinnett County.

Opportunities for Collaboration

Potential partnership opportunities include:

Youth Tree Ambassador Program

Students serve as environmental leaders within their schools by promoting conservation, organizing projects, and educating peers about the importance of trees and sustainability.

Annual Student Tree Planting Day

A countywide event where students participate in planting trees throughout parks, schools, and public spaces.

School Campus Beautification Projects

Collaborative efforts to enhance school grounds through tree planting and landscaping while creating outdoor learning environments.

Environmental Service-Learning Projects

Projects that combine academic learning with community service and environmental stewardship.

Student Research and Monitoring Programs

Students track tree growth, environmental impacts, and ecological outcomes through ongoing data collection and analysis.

Alignment with Gwinnett County Public Schools' Mission

This initiative supports many of the goals that are central to the mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools, including:

- Academic excellence
- Student engagement
- STEM education
- Career readiness
- Community partnerships
- Character development
- Civic responsibility
- Experiential learning

By participating in this initiative, students gain opportunities to learn, lead, serve, and make a meaningful difference in their communities.

Request for Partnership and Support

The Gwinnett County Tree Advisory Committee respectfully requests the support of the Superintendent and Board of Education in establishing a collaborative partnership with Gwinnett County Public Schools to engage students in environmental stewardship, tree planting, and community beautification projects throughout the county.

Together, we can create educational opportunities that enrich student learning, strengthen communities, and enhance the natural beauty of Gwinnett County.

The trees planted today will provide environmental benefits for decades to come. More importantly, the students who participate will develop the knowledge, leadership skills, and sense of civic responsibility needed to help shape a stronger future for our county.

We look forward to working together to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards and community leaders.

Respectfully Submitted,

Farid Ghalili

Vice Chair

Gwinnett County Tree Advisory Committee

**Tree Advisory Committee Meeting
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5. TAC April 13, 2026 Staff Report

Item No.	Topic	Status Date	Comments
1	Train New Board Members with TAC Orientation	6/26/2026	All committee members' trainings are up-to-date.
2	Front Yard Tree Program	2/1/2024 - 5/29/2026	Program initiated → subcommittee formed → strategy + TAC presentations → shifted from RFP to price agreement → coordination with GIS/IT/Comms → application developed, tested, and launched → vendor selected → Spring planting commenced and closed with 302 trees planted.
		6/26/2026	Application improvements are being made to support a second planting for November 2026. Staff are currently coordinating with GIS, IT, and Communications teams to begin preparing for the fall planting.
3	Rewrite Tree Ordinance sections of the UDO	10/1/2024 - 3/23/26	Public engagement + survey conducted → canopy assessment and research completed → stakeholder interviews and community events held → draft ordinance + species list developed and iterated → technical reviews ongoing → Final outreach pending. Draft is currently under review by P&D Upper Leadership.
4	Formation of the Subcommittee on Youth Tree Programs	4/13/2026	The TAC Voted to form a subcommittee to explore potential youth-oriented programs in partnership with GCPS. Farid Ghalili was nominated to lead the subcommittee, with support from Chair Chris Atkins.
5	Formation of the Subcommittee on Tree Care	4/13/2026	The TAC voted to form a subcommittee to explore providing tree care education opportunities to residents. David Argo was nominated to lead the subcommittee, with support from Kate Pittman.