

Public Hearing: YES  NO

Department: Planning & Sustainability

**SUBJECT:**

**COMMISSION DISTRICT(S):** All Districts

**Application of the Director of Planning & Sustainability for a text amendment to the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance, Section 5.4.4 (Site and Parking Area Landscaping), to address parking lot landscaping requirements. This text amendment is County-wide.**

**PETITION NO:** N14-2022-2550 TA-23-1246200

**PROPOSED USE:** To address parking lot landscaping requirements.

**LOCATION:** N/A

**PARCEL NO. :** N/A

**INFO. CONTACT:** Brandon White, Planning Manager

**PHONE NUMBER:** 404-371-2155

**PURPOSE:**

Application of the Director of Planning & Sustainability for a text amendment to the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance, Section 5.4.4 (Site and Parking Area Landscaping), to address parking lot landscaping requirements. This text amendment is County-wide.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** CC-1: Approval; CC-2: Approval w/condition; CC-3: Approval; CC-4: Approval; CC-5: Approval.

**PLANNING COMMISSION:** Approval with a condition.

**PLANNING STAFF:** Approval.

**STAFF ANALYSIS:** See attached staff report.

**PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE:** Approval with a condition 9-0-0. Jan Costello moved, April Atkins seconded for Approval, per Staff recommendation, with the condition that language the following language be added: "Not only should trees be planted, but also maintained."

**COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOTE/RECOMMENDATION:** CC-1: Approval 8-0-0; CC-2: Approval w/condition: Maintenance and native species be addressed; CC-3: Approval 9-0-0; CC-4: Approval 7-0-1; CC-5: Approval 6-0-0.



**DeKalb County Department of Planning & Sustainability**

**178 Sams Street  
Decatur, GA 30030**

**(404) 371-2155 / plandev@dekalbcountyga.gov**

**Planning Commission Hearing Date: January 5, 2023  
Board of Commissioners Hearing Date: January 26, 2023**

**TEXT AMENDMENT ANALYSIS**

**AGENDA NO:** 2022-2550      **ZONING CASE NO.:** TA-23-1246200      **COMMISSION DISTRICTS:** ALL

**APPLICANT:** Department of Planning & Sustainability

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**SECTIONS OF ZONING ORDINANCE AFFECTED BY AMENDMENTS:** CHAPTER 27-ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 5.4.4 (SITE AND PARKING AREA LANDSCAPING), TO ADDRESS PARKING LOT LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS.

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**REASON FOR REQUEST:**

Page 5 of the *Green Communities Manual* states, “The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) developed the Green Communities Program to assist local governments in reducing their overall environmental impact. The program identifies specific measures that local governments can implement for their communities to become more sustainable. Local governments who achieve certification receive region wide recognition for their leadership on environmental sustainability. Local governments can achieve certification with a minimum of 175 points across ten categories.

- |                                       |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Green Building                     | 6. Transportation                |
| 2. Energy Efficiency                  | 7. Recycling and Waste Reduction |
| 3. Green Power                        | 8. Land Use                      |
| 4. Water Use Reduction and Efficiency | 9. Education                     |
| 5. Trees and Greenspace               | 10. Innovation”                  |

With the implementation of various measures or best practices, in the categories above, the County seeks to improve from bronze status to silver or gold status by Spring 2023. Ultimately, the goal is to achieve platinum status in the near future.

The proposed overstory tree and parking distance limitation are recognized contributions that mitigate adverse environmental impacts by providing additional shade, which lessens “heat island effects” or increased heat and pollution as exposed asphalt areas absorb direct sunlight. More trees and larger trees help improve air quality by absorbing carbon dioxide; contribute to corridor and site aesthetics; and aid with mitigation of stormwater runoff and soil erosion. As county and privately owned properties retain and/or plant trees, the aggregate effect will produce benefits for the entire region over time. The City of Suwanee, City of Woodstock, Gwinnett County, and Douglas County have adopted similar standards to support this initiative in their jurisdictions.

Staff recommends approval.

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**AN ORDINANCE**  
**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND**  
**CHAPTER 27 OF THE CODE OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA, AS REVISED 1988,**  
**AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**WHEREAS**, the Governing Authority of DeKalb County is tasked with the protection of the County's health, safety, and general welfare, and the Board of Commissioners is authorized to exercise zoning powers;

**WHEREAS**, The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) developed the *Green Communities Program* to assist local governments in reducing their overall environmental impact. The program identifies specific measures that local governments can implement for their communities to become more sustainable, including adopting local ordinances to ensure adequate tree canopy coverage in parking lots;

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners seeks to participate in the *Green Communities Program* by amending the zoning code to ensure adequate tree canopy coverage in newly constructed and redeveloped parking lots in DeKalb County; and

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners that Chapter 27 of the Code of DeKalb County, as Revised in 1988, is hereby amended as follows:

**PART I. ENACTMENT**

*By amending Section 5.4.4 D of Chapter 27, Article 5, Division 4, of the Code of DeKalb County, as Revised 1988, to as follows:*

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**Sec. 5.4.4. - Site and parking area landscaping**

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D. *Parking area landscaping.* All surface parking lots that contain a total of fifteen (15) or more parking spaces that are constructed or redeveloped subsequent to the effective date of this chapter shall comply with the following requirements:

4. Tree and island quantity. A minimum of one (1) **overstory** tree per eight (8) parking spaces, and one (1) island per ten (10) parking spaces, shall be provided **and maintained**. **No parking space shall be more than forty (40) feet from a tree.**

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## **PART II. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This ordinance shall become effective immediately on the date of adoption by the board of commissioners and approval by the chief executive officer.

## **PART III. SEVERABILITY**

Should any section or provision of this ordinance be declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole nor any part thereof other than the part so declared to be invalid or unconstitutional. All ordinances or resolutions, or parts thereof, in conflict with this ordinance are repealed.

**ADOPTED** by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**ROBERT J. PATRICK**  
Presiding Officer  
Board of Commissioners DeKalb County, Georgia

**APPROVED** by the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_

January 17, 2023

**MICHAEL L. THURMOND**  
Chief Executive Officer  
DeKalb County, Georgia

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
BARBARA SANDERS-NORWOOD, CCC  
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and  
Chief Executive Officer  
DeKalb County, Georgia

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

**APPROVED AS TO SUBSTANCE:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
VIVIANE H. ERNSTES  
County Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_  
CEDRIC HUDSON  
Planning & Sustainability Director (Interim)



Atlanta  
Regional  
Commission  
(ARC)  
Green  
Communities  
Program

- AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA, AS REVISED 1988, CHAPTER 27, ARTICLE 5, DIVISION 4 TO MODIFY SECTION 5.4.4.
  - Receive credit in Green Communities Program – Community Parking Lot Canopy Requirements
  - Increase tree canopy coverage over impervious surfaces
  - Increase DeKalb’s collective Green Infrastructure; which increases in value over time

# Benefits of Parking Lot Canopy Cover

- ✓ Air quality improvement
- ✓ Wildlife habitat
- ✓ Stormwater retention
- ✓ Aesthetics
- ✓ Windbreakers
- ✓ Inhibit soil erosion
- ✓ Increase property values
- ✓ Provide shading & cooling
- ✓ Heating & cooling cost savings
- ✓ Mitigate air pollution, climate change, & urban heat island

