

## **Jacksonville Tree Commission**

### **TASK FORCE ON URBAN TREE PLANTING BEST PRACTICES**

**August 6, 2025 2:30 pm**

**Ed Ball Building, 10th Floor, Conference Room 5 and Zoom Webinar**

#### **Task Force Members:**

Susan Fraser, Tree Commission Member, Chair  
Nina Sickler Tree Commission Member, Vice-Chair  
Curtis Hart, Tree Commission Member  
William Burke, Tree Commission Member

#### **Non-Member attendees:**

Jeff Lucovsky, PDDS  
Jonathan Johnston, Parks  
Susan Grandin, Scenic Jax

#### **Advisors:**

Jonathan Colburn, Urban Forestry Manager  
Justin Gearhart, City Arborist  
Shannon MacGillis, Office of General Council

#### **Staff:**

Joe Rainey, Executive Assistant

## **AGENDA**

*Order of Agenda is Subject to Change*

- 1. Call to Order – Chair**
- 2. Roll Call and Verification of Quorum – Chair** Submittal of Speaker's cards
- 3. Public Comment: (up to 3 minutes, allotted at discretion of Chair)**
- 4. Submittal of Speaker's Cards – Chair**
  - a. A raised hand icon will be acknowledged by the Chair.**
  - b. For those attending in person, paper speakers' cards will be available.**

**5. Approval of Minutes of July 15, 2025 Task Force Meeting**

**6. Review draft Standards, Policies and Procedures of the Tree Commission for Planting in an Urban Environment**

a. Open Space/Cut Outs

- i. Proposed Development Project
- ii. Existing Conditions Project
- iii. Existing ROW Median
- iv. Staff Review – Inconsistency with Existing Standards, policies or procedures.
- v. Inspection Requirements

b. Required Planting Area

- i. Proposed Development Project
- ii. Existing Conditions Project
- iii. Existing ROW Median
- iv. Staff Review – Inconsistency with Existing Standards, policies or procedures.
- v. Inspection Requirements

c. Suitable Planting Environment within Planting Area

- i. Proposed Development Project
- ii. Existing Conditions Project
- iii. Existing ROW Median
- iv. Staff Review – Inconsistency with Existing Standards, policies or procedures.
- v. Inspection Requirements

d. Accelerated Shade Recommendations

**7. Amendments to the Approved Tree Planting List**

- a. Updates to reflect Canopy /Spread, Suitability as Street Trees and Notes

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**8. Future Meeting Dates for 2025**

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Task Force on Urban Tree Planting Best Practices

Minutes

Monday July 16, 2025, - 11:02am-12:43pm

Via Zoom Platform & In Person

[Recording of Meeting can be obtained by sending request to Joe Rainey JRainey@coj.net]

**Commissioners:**

Susan Fraser, Chair, Tree Commission Member  
Curtis Hart, Tree Commission Member  
William Burke, Tree Commission Member  
Nina Sickler, Director of Public Works

**Non-Member attendees:**

Joe Andreson JEA  
Nancy Powell, Scenic Jax  
Susan Grandin, Scenic Jax  
Susan Cavin, Scenic Jax

**Advisors:**

Justin Gearhart - City Arborist  
Shannon MacGillis - Office of General Counsel

**Staff:** Joe Rainey - Executive Assistant Mowing and Landscape

**1. Call to Order**

Conducted by Chair

**2. Roll Call and Verification of Quorum**

Conducted by Chair

Commissioners present:

Susan Fraser - present  
William Burke - present  
Nina Sickler - present

**Quorum present (3, in person): Yes**

**3. Call for Public Speakers (online & card): 1**

**4. Submittal of speaker cards:** Susan Grandin, Scenic Jax

## **5. Issue: Approval of Minutes of May 14, 2025 Task Force Meeting**

**Motion:** Approve, as Amended.

**Moved by:** William Burke

**Second:** Nina Sickler

**Vote: July 16, 2025 minutes approved, unanimous.**

### **Housekeeping items:**

Due to 1pm taskforce member(s) council obligations this meeting will be cut short, the date for next meeting requested be set. August 6 2:30pm to 5:30pm (pending availability verification).

## **6. Overview of Approach:**

### **a. Conformation of qualified Taskforce goals in preparation for upcoming Vote:**

There was a consensus, the Task Force will first complete its recommendations to the Tree Commission on the Standards, Policies and Procedures document. On the basis of that recommended document from the Task Force, the next steps, almost all in parallel, would be for the staff to develop a checklist it finds appropriate to facilitate an effective review of a project subject to the standards and then, almost concurrently, prepare the application forms necessary to support a complete application for projects subject to the standards.

### **b. Verifying, and resolving Taskforce findings aligning with City ordinance 656 standards:**

It was acknowledged that the proposed standards were inconsistent with at least one section of 656 (likely multiple) and the LDPM, likely to require an amendment to each. Because of the time involved in amending 656 and the deadline for amending the LDPM for its next update in January, it was the consensus that, to the extent possible, inconsistencies be identified by the end of August, allowing for the preparation of legislation and application for LDPM amendment in a timely manner.

ADJOURNMENT

END OF MEETING 12:51PM

## **Standards, Procedures and Policies of the Tree Commission for Filing an Application for Planting in an Urban Environment**

The Tree Commission has determined that all tree planting projects funded by the Tree Fund and all planting projects required as part of the Downtown Overlay shall be subject to the standards, procedures and policies herein to achieve a Suitable Tree Planting Environment and , as defined, for each tree planting location.

- 630- CITY
- Remove and Replace
- Level 2
- Level 3

Each Application must establish a Suitable Planting Environment as prescribed herein to mitigate each otherwise Unsuitable Planting Environment to be eligible for funding from the Tree Mitigation Funds unless the Tree Commission approves an alternative mitigation strategy to achieve a Suitable Planting Environment. Applications for projects determined to be subject to Urban Impacts to Tree Planting as defined herein shall also recognize the additional impacts posed by the larger urban environment and mitigate or eliminate applicable challenges. Evidence of compliance and all alternative standards proposed for Tree Commission approval shall be documented in the Staff Report to the Tree Commission. Applications and Remove and Replace plantings within an existing right of way that include Urban Planting Environment(s) are subject to the following procedures and standards.

These standards shall apply to all locations within a project determined to be Urban Planting Locations. These procedures and standards established by the Tree Commission are the minimum required to provide a Suitable Planting Environment at the time of planting. Subject to approval by the Tree Commission, an Applicant may propose alternative standards that provide an equal or superior tree planting environment than that created by application of the established standards or address unique site conditions. Approval of alternative standards by the Tree Commission shall be required under the Conceptual Plan procedures established for a Level 3 Project.

### **Suitable Planting Environment**

A Suitable Planting Environment is defined as one where, at the time of planting: 1) sufficient area is provided to accommodate mature trunk volume, flare and surface roots; 2) sufficient Soil Quantity (volume) is provided to support the tree mass (spread) proposed; and 3) a classification of Not Compacted is achieved within the Required Soil Volume at each planting location.

Determination that a Suitable Tree Planting Environment exists for each tree planting location shall be determined by the entity listed. When approval by the Tree Commission is otherwise required for the project funding, the determining entity shall make a recommendation to the Tree Commission as to the provision of Suitable Planting Environment(s) within the project which shall consider the recommendation and public comment in its determination of compliance. The Tree Commission shall be solely responsible for approving alternative standards after consideration of the Staff Report, applicant and public comment.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Entity</u>
630-CITY	City Arborist
Remove and Replace	City Arborist
Level 2	City Arborist recommendation; Tree Commission approval
Level 3	City Arborist recommendation; Tree Commission approval

Within each project a Level 2 or Level 3 Project, an Unsuitable Urban Planting Location is assumed to exist for a particular tree planting location if, without changes to the conditions that will exist at the time of tree planting, a Suitable Planting Environment would not be is not provided in that location at the time of tree planting. A project may include tree planting locations that are determined to be Urban Planting Locations and locations that are not.

### **Urban Impacts on Tree Planting**

In addition to a suitable tree planting environment, the larger urban environment can pose other challenges to the long term health and vitality of planted trees (Urban Impacts on Tree Planting):

- a. vertical obstructions may limit the desired tree canopy and impose additional maintenance requirements ( Section 4);
- b. drainage patterns over paved surfaces can direct excessive water toward or away from a planting location (Section 5);
- c. imported soils can include contaminants or be of a poor quality not supportive of tree health (Section 6);
- d. appropriate planting depth can become the critical factor when the planting location is constrained ; and
- e. maintenance beyond initial warranty periods is required to address the stress the urban environment places on the tree (Section 7); and,
- f. constrained planting areas can affect the ultimate canopy spread and growth rate of a tree located in such an environment, reducing the shade benefit of the tree selected such that a different tree species may achieve shade goals more effectively ( Section 8).

Each project application shall identify the presence or absence of each Urban Impact on the tree planting locations within the project limits and confirm compliance with the standards established in Sections 4 -7. When a goal of the tree panting location is to quickly provide shade, utilization of the tree recommended in Section 8 is encouraged.

The Tree Commission has determined that the following applications that include Urban Planting Environment(s) must establish a Suitable Planting Environment as prescribed herein to mitigate each otherwise Urban Planting Environment to be eligible for funding from the Tree Mitigation Funds unless the Tree Commission approves an alternative mitigation strategy to achieve a Suitable Planting Environment. Applications for projects determined to include Urban Planting Environments shall also recognize the additional challenges posed by the larger urban environment and mitigate or eliminate applicable challenges.

- Level 2 or Level 3 Project
- Tree planting under the Remove and Replace Program that occur within existing rights of way

## **Suitable Planting Environment is Provided at Each Tree Planting Location**

The Application shall demonstrate for each planting area:

### **1. Sufficient area is provided to accommodate mature trunk volume, flare and surface roots.**

To provide sufficient area to accommodate mature trunk volume, flare and surface roots, an open space without surface improvements shall be provided around the trunk of the tree; this area, when located in an area of surface improvement, shall be provided in the form of a cut out within the surface improvement.

The specified Minimum Open Space / Cut Out (OSCO) shall be provided for each tree location. If installed within an OSCO, tree grates must have an opening (symmetrical around the trunk) that is a minimum of 12" from the trunk at the time of planting and the long term maintenance agreement with the City must provide for annual tree grate inspection and replacement as required to maintain an opening that is a minimum of 6 inches from the trunk, measured at the time of inspection.

The Tree Commission's Approved Tree List classifies identifies each Approved Tree as small, medium or large. **Table 1.** identifies the minimum Open Space / Cut Out (OSCO) required for each tree planting location based on said classification.

For an Existing Conditions Project, if the standards in Table 1 cannot be met, the Tree Commission may approve the following alternative standards, in order of application:

1. The reduction of one dimension of the required OSCO Requirement is permitted provided the horizontal area of the applicable OSCO Requirement established by the required dimensions is not reduced and the minimum distance to an impervious surface is maintained.

Tree Grates specified in an Existing Conditions Project (~~Level 2 or Level 3 Application~~) for installation within an OSCO in order to provide the minimum sidewalk width for the adjacent sidewalk as defined in Section 654, Ordinance Code and the LDPM Volume 2. Design Standards (**Exhibit A**) shall be eligible for funding from the Tree Mitigation Funds.

### **2. Sufficient Soil Quantity (volume) is provided to support the tree mass (spread) proposed.**

The Tree Commission's Approved Tree List classifies each Approved Tree as small, medium or large. The planting area for each proposed tree shall meet the standards in **Table 2.**

**Table 2.** identifies the Required Soil Volume ( RSV) for each tree planting location. The area claimed as Required Soil Volume is calculated as the total depth x width x height minus the area of utilities or other encroachments (measured as the volume within the Required Soil Volume).

In the absence of hydric soils or vegetative indicators of a higher water table, the application of a depth of  $\leq$  3 feet to the calculation of the RSV is assumed to provide adequate drainage to obtain root growth in the soil. The application of a depth of  $>$  3 feet to the calculation of the

RSV requires additional testing to confirm the depth of the water table is lower than the depth applied in the calculation. Test results that indicate a water table at or above 3 feet will require the calculation of the RSV for those locations to utilize a depth above the identified water table.

Required Soil Volume Minimum planting areas may be combined to accommodate multiple trees; combined areas are eligible for a 25% reduction in the Required Soil Volume area otherwise required for an individual tree,<sup>5</sup> however the minimum distance to impervious surface established for the OSCO cannot be reduced.

**3. A classification of Not Compacted is achieved within the Required Soil Volume at each planting location.**

A Suitable Planting Environment requires the classification of NOT COMPACTED within each Required Soil Volume.

Applications that include an Unsuitable ~~than~~ Planting Environment shall meet the standards established in Table 3 to establish a Suitable Planting Environment within the Required Soil Volume.

**Table 3.** identifies the standards applicable to each Project Type, subject to the process and requirements below.

**A. Existing Conditions Project.** Defined as a proposed Level 3 Project without associated development/construction, or a Level 2 Project located within a Public Right of Way.

For a Level 3 Project, upon receipt of a Level 3 Project Scope Submittal, staff shall perform an initial site visit prior to the Project Scope Review Meeting to identify the Required Soil Volume associated with each potential planting area as “COMPACTED”, “NOT COMPACTED” or “POTENTIALLY COMPACTED”. Staff may rely on visual inspection, history of the site, on-site testing results (penetrometer) or order a bulk density test (BDT) to make a final determination of “COMPACTED” or “NOT COMPACTED” for each proposed planting location. If a BDT is performed, a Bulk Density Score of 109 lb /cubic foot or above shall be classified as COMPACTED. Compacted of 85% or greater shall be classified as COMPACTED.

Staff shall provide its determination for each planting location to the Applicant. The Applicant shall apply the determinations in its development of a project application. The Planting Plan and Cost Estimate shall be based on the assigned classification and include mitigation measures required to establish a Suitable Planting Environment.

i. Tree Planting within a Public Right of Way. Staff shall apply the following assumptions for a determination of COMPACTED or NOT COMPACTED for planting locations within an existing ROW median. These assumptions may be rebutted with on-site testing or BDT.

a. Required Soil Volume located within an existing median 12 feet in width or less (measured BOC to BOC) are assumed to be COMPACTED.

**b.** Planting locations located between the travel lane(s) and the right of way that are 8 feet in width or greater (exclusive of surface improvements including sidewalks) are assumed NOT COMPACTED; width less than 8 feet are assumed to be COMPACTED.

**B. Proposed Development Project.** Defined as tree planting proposed in conjunction with any development/construction, ~~within the proposed Level 2 or Level 3 Project.~~ When determined to be applicable to any Tree Commission Program other than a Level 3 Level 2 Project, the Level 2 Project, the project shall be subject to the Level 3 Application requirements.

Within a Proposed Development Project, the Tree Commission seeks to limit the creation of Unsuitable Urban Planting Environments through partnership with the project Applicant. A successful urban planting design balances the project goals with the impacts created by an urban environment on the health and long term viability of the desired urban tree canopy. A vibrant urban tree canopy can only be achieved by mitigating the constraints the urban environment places on trees through informed design decisions and management of construction practices. The standards established represent the minimum requirements for mitigation.

#### Design

To increase the quality of urban tree planting within a Proposed Development Project, an Applicant must first demonstrate that the design avoids the creation of Unsuitable Urban Planting Environments to the maximum extent possible.

The initial Project Scope meeting with Staff shall include the proposed planting locations and tree species proposed for each location. The plan shall apply the Suitable Planting Environment standards for a Proposed Development Project to each proposed planting location and summarize in table form the mitigation required by these standards and policies for each to provide a Suitable Planting Environment at each planting location.

#### Construction Practices

In addition to the proposed planting plan, the Level 3 Project Scope submittal shall include a plan depicting the limits of construction within the Proposed Development Project (Limits of Construction Plan). Limits of construction include areas for storage of equipment, laydown of materials or supplies, limits of work, construction access, construction parking and all areas that are or will be impervious. Areas within the project limits that have been previously developed or disturbed shall be included in the area identified as the limits of construction. Areas that are outside the limits of construction shall be delineated on the Limits of Construction Plan and protected as Soil Preservation Areas (SPAs).

#### Mitigation

In determining the mitigation required for a planting location, each planting location located within the limits of construction shall be classified as COMPACTED.

The Applicant shall demonstrate that the Proposed Development Plan employs the following design strategies to limit designation of COMPACTED to a Required Soil Volume:

- a. **For Required Soil Volumes located outside an SPA.** If Tree Mitigation Funding is requested for the installation of a Surface Pavement Support System (silvacell, etc.) the following design review is required to minimize planting within a Compacted Planting Environment that requires an SSS-PSS:
  - i. Tree locations have been evaluated to minimize or eliminate the need for installation of an SSS-PSS. *Staff may recommend the relocation of trees to achieve minimum need for an SSS-PSS.*
  - ii. Tree sizes (small, medium or large) have been evaluated to minimize the need for installation of an SSS-PSS. *Staff may recommend changes to tree size to reduce the volume of SSS-PSS.*
  - iii. Paved areas have been located so as to minimize the need for installation of an SSS-PSS. *Staff may recommend reduction or relocation of proposed paved areas to reduce the area of SSS-PSS.*

To facilitate the design review, the Application shall include, with the Conceptual Plan, a Compacted Environment Assessment Plan that overlays the location of each RSV on the Limits of Construction Plan. Each Required Soil Volume located within the Limits of Construction shall be classified as COMPACTED. Planting areas outside the Limits of Construction may be classified as COMPACTED if the creation of an Unsuitable Urban Planting Environment is anticipated to be created by other development activities/ factors. The Staff shall work with the Applicant to minimize the creation of Unsuitable Urban Planting Environments and shall document its recommendations. The Applicant shall incorporate Staff recommendations to the maximum extent possible into the Conceptual Plan to be considered by the Tree Commission.

The Submittal for Concept Plan approval to the Tree Commission shall include a Compacted Environment Assessment Plan (CEAP) that supports the Rough Estimate of Improvements for the Concept Plan. Based on the CEAP, the Concept Plan shall reflect mitigation required to provide a Suitable Planting Environment for each Required Soil Volume. The Rough Estimate of Improvements shall include the cost associated with the provision of mitigation proposed to achieve Suitable Planting Environments to the extent the mitigation is requested to be funded by Tree Mitigation Funds.

Approval of the Concept Plan by the Tree Commission is required prior to submittal of a Planting Plan to the Tree Commission. Planting Plans must clearly identify the limits of construction and SPAs. SPAs depicted on the Planting Plan shall be maintained as UNCOMPACTED throughout construction and final acceptance utilizing protection ~~ed~~ from all encroachment in the same manner as required for tree protection areas in Section 656.1207, Ordinance Code. Location of fencing shall be depicted on approved plans and maintained by the Applicant /Public Agency as depicted through final acceptance inspeetion.

To ensure compliance with SPA protection requirements, Staff may perform inspections at any time after approval of the project by the Tree Commission and enforce the maintenance of fencing through final acceptance. If a CEI is retained for the project, inspections shall be assigned to the CEI professional retained for the project. Failure to maintain required fencing and encroachments within the SPA shall cause the project to be subject to additional review by the Tree Commission.

Staff will work with the Applicant and Public Agency to develop a Conceptual Plan that meets the project goals and minimizes the need for Pavement Support System investment from the Tree Mitigation Fund.

The Staff Report to the Tree Commission for the Concept Plan for the Level 3 Project shall identify actions taken to reduce the creation of Urban Planting Environments and the need for Pavement Support Systems.

**Other Urban Impacts on Tree Planting are Addressed ~~of the Urban Environment~~**

**4. Vertical and Overhead Obstructions are Recognized in Tree Selection.**

Within the urban environment, vertical obstructions can limit the extent (spread) of the tree canopy in one or more directions. Vertical obstructions are typically adjacent buildings and traffic clearance requirements. Failure to recognize these obstructions when selecting a tree species for a particular location can limit the natural mature spread of the tree species and require additional inspection, maintenance and pruning.

When selecting a tree species for an urban location, the following standards apply to vertical clearance to adjacent structures. Additional limitations in tree selection may be applied by Staff to recognize overhead and other vertical obstructions applicable to the planting location. The following distance requirements shall apply when ***the planting location is*** adjacent to a vertical structure of two stories or greater (measured to the center of the trunk of the tree):

- A. **Shade trees other than Live Oaks.** Minimum of 12 feet from the vertical constraint (building façade).
- B. **Live Oaks.** Minimum of 20 feet from the vertical constraint (building façade).
- C. **Trees other than shade trees.** Minimum of 0.75 times the radius of the mature canopy of the tree as such is identified on the Tree Commission Approved Tree Planting List.

**5. Positive Drainage from the Planting Location is provided.**

The project plans and specifications require and specify positive site drainage away from planting areas.

**6. *Soil Quality within the Required Soil Volume is of sufficient quality to support tree growth and long term health.***

- A. Proposed Soil Replacement meets the adopted specifications for Soil Replacement. See ***Exhibit B***.
- B. If required, Proposed Soil Profile Rebuilding and specifications are consistent with adopted standards. See ***Exhibit C***.
- C. If imported soil/topsoil is proposed, soil analysis for imported soil/topsoil within each Required Soil Volume meets the adopted specifications for Soil Replacement. See ***Exhibit B***.
- D. Site History will be reviewed by Staff utilizing the City's GIS Ash Site and Brownfields Site Inventory. Based on historic site use, Staff may require additional soil testing or environmental assessment to address potential contamination that would adversely affect tree health.

**7. *Short and Long Term Maintenance is Provided.***

The long-term health and viability of a tree after planting can only be achieved with both short-term and long-term maintenance. Plantings funded from Tree Mitigation Funds are supported with short term maintenance for a period of one or two years under the applicable contract warranty period.

Additional long term maintenance is required beyond the short term maintenance period; within an urban environment this includes regular inspections and scheduled pruning and may include insect and pest control.

The Tree Commission will include in its approval of an Urban Planting Project a requirement for a binding post warranty period maintenance plan that addresses long-term maintenance, including but not limited to regular inspections, scheduled pruning and a plan for insect and disease control when required. If tree grates are installed, the long term maintenance plan shall provide for tree grate replacement at the Applicant or Public Agency's expense. The Long Term Maintenance Plan will include the requirement for submittal of a report to the Tree Commission upon each 5 year anniversary of the approval of the Urban Planting Project certifying compliance with the Long Term Maintenance Plan.

**8. *Canopy Goals are Considered***

When a goal of the tree planting installation is to quickly provide shade / cooling environment through the use of tree canopy to address existing or future urban conditions that affect human health and comfort, the following trees are recommended. Locations include but are not limited to transit stops, adjacent to sidewalks, parking areas, civic locations such as plazas and other urban gathering spaces.

<b>Medium Trees</b>		<b>Growth Rate</b>
Althaea Elm	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i> "Emer I"	moderate
Bosque Elm	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i> ' Bosque'	moderate
Drake Elm	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i> ' Drake'	moderate
River Birch	<i>Betula nigra</i>	rapid

Large Trees		
Allee Elm	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i> "Emer II"	moderate
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	moderate
Shumard Oak	<i>Quercus shumardii</i>	rapid
Sycamore	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	rapid
Tulip Poplar	<i>Liriodendrum tulipifera</i>	rapid

Source: Tree Commission Approved Tree List, June 2025

## Urban Planting Standards

### *Minimum Planting Area is Provided for each Proposed Tree*

Table 1

August 6, 2025 Task Force

- Sufficient area is provided to accommodate mature trunk volume, flare and surface roots.

min. distance to impervious (656.1211)	Open Space Cut Out Requirements*			
	Proposed Development Project	Existing Conditions		Existing Right of Way Median
		Project incl Existing	ROW	
Small Tree	2 feet	6' x 6' min OSCO (36 SF)	6' x 6' min OSCO	<u>8' x 8' 10'-x-10' OSCO</u>
Medium Tree	<u>4 3 feet</u>	8' x 8' min OSCO (64 SF)	8' x 8' min OSCO	10' x 10' OSCO
Large Tree				
Other Than Live Oak	4 feet	10' x 10' min OSCO (100 SF)	8' x 8' min OSCO	12' x 12' OSCO
Live Oak	6 feet	12' x 12' OSCO (144 SF)	12' x 12' in OSCO	12' x 12' OSCO

\*Reduction of to one dimension of the OSCO dimension up to the minimum distance to impervious shall be permitted provided the area of the OSCO is not reduced and the minimum distance to impervious surface is maintained.

## Urban Planting Standards

**Minimum Planting Area / Required Soil Volume is Provided for each Proposed Tree**

Table 2

July 15, 2025 Task Force

- Provide sufficient soil quantity to support the tree mass proposed.

depth range*	Required Soil Volume			
	Proposed Development Project**		Existing Conditions	Existing Right of Way
	Project incl Existing	ROW**	Median	
Small Tree	2' - 3'	300 CF	300 CF	300 CF
Medium Tree	2.5' - 4'	800 CF	600 CF	600 CF
Large Tree				
Other Than Live Oak	3' - 4'	1,000 CF	750 CF	750 CF
Live Oak	3' - 4'	1,000 CF	1,000 CF	1,000 CF

\* 4' depth requires water table confirmation

\*\* Planting Area may be reduced by up to 25% if planting area shared between trees.

Tree Size Calculator based on Required Soil Volume

Soil Volume	Ultimate Tree Size		
200 CF	4" DBH	14 foot spread	(150 SF canopy)
400 CF	8" DBH	21 foot spread	(350 SF canopy)
600 CF	9.6" DBH	21.2 foot spread	(440 SF canopy)
750 CF	12" DBH	26.5 foot spread	(550 SF canopy)
1,000 CF	16" DBH	32 foot spread	(800 SF canopy)
1,280 CF	20" DBH	36 foot spread	(1,000 SF canopy)
1,525 CF	24" DBH	39 foot spread	(1,200 SF canopy)

source: J. Urban, Alternatives to Structural Soil for Urban Trees and Rainwater

## ***Suitable Planting Environment is Provided***

Table 3

### **▪ A classification of NOT Compacted is Achieved within the Required Soil Volume**

*The Required Soil Volume is provided without encroachment by surface improvements.*

Test Required Soil Volume for compaction if site history indicates. If Required Soil Volume is:

**NOT COMPACTED**

Meet the standards of LDPM Section 601

**COMPACTED**

Mitigate compacted environment with Soil Replacement. Soil Profile Rebuilding may be appropriate.

**Existing ROW Median**

Replace Required Soil Volume if median is less than 12 ' in width (BOC) or testing confirms compacted environment within Required Soil Volume.

*The Required Soil Volume includes existing or proposed surface improvements.*

**Existing Improvements**

Assume Required Soil Volume is Compacted. Apply Existing Project standards.

Remove existing improvements within Minimum Planting Area(s) and mitigate compacted environment with Soil Replacement.

Install support for surface improvements as required if surface improvements are reconstructed/ replaced in a manner that creates a compacted environment within the Required Soil Volume.

**Proposed Improvements**

Design the surface improvements to limit compaction within Required Soil Volume.

Group tree planting areas, combine Required Soil Volumes, utilize tree grates, raised planters and locate trees strategically to provide largest OSCO (bump outs, planting within adjacent parking).

When compaction within the Required Soil Volume is not avoided, mitigate compacted environment created through Soil Replacement.

Install support for surface improvements as required to provide surface improvements are constructed in a manner that creates a compacted environment within the Required Soil Volume.

Protect Required Soil Volume from compaction during construction activities.

## *Exhibit A. Sidewalk Width Standards*

Applicable excerpts of Section 654, Ordinance Code and LDPM Volume 2. Design Standards.

### **Sec. 654.133. - Required improvements: streets; curbs and gutters; sidewalks; and bikeway requirements.**

(a) Streets and public ways shall be cleared and graded, including side slopes to the specified grade. If required to prevent erosion or excessive washing of the shoulders, protective measures shall be taken by the developer as required by the Director.

(b) Streets shall be paved and standard curb and gutter installed to meet the specifications of the Land Development Procedures Manual.

(c) Sidewalks shall be provided for all developments, including residential or non-residential infill lots, and along all new, reconstructed, and existing streets, to provide safe pedestrian travel. The Land Development Procedures Manual outlines general sidewalk requirements based upon the Development Area of the proposed development, and the impacted roadway type identified on the City of Jacksonville Context Classification map. Also, the following shall be observed:

(1) When standard sidewalk width cannot be attained due to demonstrated right-of-way constraints, provide the greatest sidewalk width possible, but not less than five feet.

## **Land Development Procedures Manual** **Volume 2. Design Guidelines** *Effective January 2025*

### **1.4 Pedestrian Considerations**

All new development and redevelopment projects are required to provide adequate pedestrian access via the construction or reconstruction of sidewalk infrastructure. The goal of this policy is to ensure that all modes of transportation are taken into consideration when designing any new project, whether residential, commercial, industrial or recreational. Furthermore, it is ensuring that a complete sidewalk network is provided throughout the city, while also recognizing that sidewalks may not be feasible in all circumstances due to unforeseen or uncontrollable situations.

#### **1.4.1 Sidewalk Design Requirements**

*City of Jacksonville Sec. 654.133, Ordinance Code*

Sidewalks shall be provided for all developments, including residential or non-residential infill lots, and along all new, reconstructed, and existing streets, to provide for safe pedestrian travel. Sidewalks shall be provided as indicated in Table 2.2-2 and shall be constructed in accordance with these Land Development Procedures Manual, the City Standard Details and the City Standard Specifications:

## **Sidewalk Width**

- Where buildings are located along-side of the right-of-way, minimum sidewalk width specified in Table 2.2-2 shall be increased by 3 feet.
- When the projected volume of pedestrians on a sidewalk is unusually high, the Transportation Planning Section may require an increase in sidewalk width.

## **Sidewalk Planting Strips and Clear Zones**

- To provide proper pedestrian/vehicle separation and adequate space for traffic signs, poles, utilities, etc., planting strips shall be located between the edge of pavement and sidewalk.
- For urban, suburban, and rural development areas, the minimum width of a planting strip shall be 5 feet, which measures from the back of the curb to the edge of the sidewalk.
- When trees will be located within the planting strip, the minimum width shall be increased to 8 feet.

## **Special Overlay Sidewalk Design Criteria**

Sidewalk construction must be consistent with design criteria established for special overlay zones. The following special overlay zones have been established with special sidewalk requirements.

Special Overlay Zone	References
Downtown Overlay Zone	City Ordinance Section 656.361 Downtown Design Guidelines Riverwalk Park Design Criteria
Riverside/Avondale Zoning Overlay	City Ordinance Section 656.399.28-30
Renew Arlington Community Redevelopment Agency Overlay	City Ordinance Section 656.399.62

### **1.4.3 Exemptions From Sidewalk Requirements**

Required sidewalk widths shall be provided within existing city or state road rights-of-way for all proposed development and re-development of property fronting along city or state road rights-of-way except as follows:

1. A sidewalk will not be required where a sidewalk already exists as long as it meets ADA Standards and General Sidewalk Requirements. ADA standard curb ramps, curb cuts, and detectable warnings are required at all intersections where one or more of the rights-of-way of the intersecting streets contain sidewalks.

### **2.1.3 Development Area**

Each roadway exists within a development area, which defines the desirable development characteristics to maintain community growth according to the City's Comprehensive Plan. Development Areas are established by the Planning and Development Department. The development area can be found on the City's Land Development Review Map using the Land Use - Zoning Layer Group, Development Areas and are defined in Table 2.1-3.

**Table 2.1-3 Development Area Descriptions**

Development Areas	Description
Downtown	This area encompasses Jacksonville's downtown urban core. Within this area, the City encourages revitalization and the use of existing infrastructure through redevelopment and infill development at high densities.
Urban Priority Area (UPA)	This area generally includes the historic core of the City and major connecting corridors. Within this area, the City encourages revitalization and the use of existing infrastructure through redevelopment and infill development at high densities. Development is expected to employ urban development characteristics.
Urban Area (UA)	This area generally corresponds with the densely developed portions of the City that have been in residential or employment generating uses since consolidation. It also includes major corridors which connect the other Development Areas. Similar to the UPA, the intent of the UA is to encourage revitalization and the use of existing infrastructure through redevelopment and infill development, but at moderate urban densities which are transit friendly. Also similar to the UPA, the UA is intended to support multimodal transportation and the reduction of per capita greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled.
Suburban Area (SA)	This area generally corresponds with the urbanizing portions of the City in areas that have usually been developed after consolidation. Development should generally continue at low densities with medium density development at major corridor intersections and transit stations. Development at these locations should promote a compact and interconnected land development form.
Rural Area (RA)	This area consists of all lands outside of the SA and corresponds with predominantly undeveloped portions of the City with land uses such as Agriculture, Recreation, Conservation, or Public Buildings Facilities. Development should occur at very low densities which create little demand for new infrastructure and community serving supporting uses, unless development occurs under the Multi-Use Category or as a Master Planned Community as defined in this element. Development may occur within the RA provided that it is consistent with Operational Provisions and the Land Use category descriptions. Otherwise, development beyond such boundaries is considered urban sprawl and is to be discouraged.

\*\* ITE *Manual of Transportation Engineering Studies* provides guidance in regard to travel speeds

**Table 2.2-1 Roadway Design Criteria**

For all Context Sensitive Design Classifications, Table 2.2-1 specifies the following sidewalk widths for the Development Areas described in Table 2.1-3 above:

Downtown	8 feet
Urban	6 feet
Urban Priority Area	8 feet
Suburban Area	6 feet
Rural Area	5 feet

*Exhibit B. Topsoil, Existing Soil and Soil Conditioning Standards*

**Land Development Procedures Manual**  
**Volume 4. Specifications Effective January 2025**

**Section 601. LANDSCAPING**

**2.3 TOPSOIL**

- A. Fine sand or loamy fine sand indigenous to the area suitable for plant growth that is free of weeds, roots, stumps, rocks larger than  $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter, organic muck, hard pan, toxic substances detrimental to plant growth, and construction debris such as limerock, concrete, and asphalt pieces. Deliver in a normally moist condition, neither muddy nor wet. Soil used for topsoil shall meet the following criteria measured in accordance with the appropriate AASHTO and ASTM standard:
  - 1. USDA Texture: Fine Sand, Loamy Fine Sand
  - 2. AASHTO Classification: A-3
  - 3. pH 5.0-7.5
  - 4. Deleterious Material 0-2% maximum by mass (rocks, roots, sod)
  - 5. Organic Matter Content 1-10% by mass
  - 6. Sand Content 80-96% by mass
  - 7. Silt & Clay Content 3-10% by mass
- B. Submit a one-quart sample of the topsoil to the Engineer before beginning planting and obtain approval. If requested by the Engineer, submit a soil test report from a commercial soil testing laboratory to verify compliance with the above criteria.

**2.4 EXISTING SOIL**

Use existing soil in plant pits if the soil complies with the standard for topsoil, unless the soil is contaminated with limerock, clay, brush, weeds, roots, stumps, stones larger than 1 1/2 inches in any dimension, litter and other extraneous or toxic matter harmful to plant growth. Remove contaminated soil and replace with acceptable stockpiled existing soil or new topsoil.

**2.6 SOIL CONDITIONER**

Provide 100% organic soil conditioner, free of limerock, clay, brush, weeds, roots, stumps, gravel, litter and other extraneous or toxic matter harmful to plant growth. Soil conditioner shall be one of the following:

- A. Pine Bark Fines. 100% pine bark fines screened from other pine bark products in accordance with standards of the Mulch & Soil Council (Web: [www.mulchandsoilcouncil.org](http://www.mulchandsoilcouncil.org)) with a maximum of 15% pine wood content and at least 90% of particle size 1/4" or less.

B. Compost: A commercially blended and ground mixture of yard waste, tree trimmings, manure, and other biodegradable materials composted at a temperature and for the time necessary for the biological decomposition of the material, which significantly reduces the viability of pathogens and weed seeds, stabilizes carbon, produces high fungal material to benefit plant growth. Compost shall meet the following US Compost Council STA/MECC criteria.

Stability:	≤2 mg CO <sub>2</sub> -C per G OM per day
Maturity:	90-100% seed emergence and vigor
Moisture Content:	35-60% wet weight Organic Matter Content 35-60% dry
weight Particle Size:	3/8"-1/2" screen size to pass through
pH:	6.0-7.5
Soluble Salts:	Max. 5 dS/m (mmhos/cm) dry weight basis
Physical Contaminants:	≤0.5% dry weight basis
Chemical Contaminants:	meet or exceed US EPA Class A standard, 40CFR §503.13 Tables 1 and 3
Biological Contaminants:	meet or exceed US EPA Class A standard 40CFR § 503.32(a)

### *Exhibit C. Soil Profile Rebuilding Standards*

Source:



*This project was made possible in part by a grant from the Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund.*

*Additional support was provided by the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Research.*

<https://sres.frec.vt.edu/>



# **Soil Profile Rebuilding**

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## **Specification for Restoration of Graded and Compacted Soils that will be Vegetated**

### **CSI Div 2**

### **CSICode-02910-Plant Preparation-Soil Preparation**

## **CONTENTS**

### **1. PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION**

### **2. PROCEDURE**

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

### **4. SUBMITTALS**

## **REFERENCES & PERMISSIONS**

### **1. PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION**

#### **1.1 Purpose**

Soil Profile Rebuilding is an appropriate soil restoration technique for sites where topsoil has been completely or partially removed and subsoil layers have been compacted (graded and/or trafficked by equipment). It may also be used with some modifications if topsoil is present. This is not an appropriate technique in sites with surface compaction only (6 inches or less), although this situation is rare on construction sites. This technique is not appropriate within the root zones of trees that are to be protected. Soil Profile Rebuilding can improve physical and biological characteristics of soil to allow for revegetation. Soil chemical problems, soil contamination from heavy metals, pathogens, or excessive debris or gravel shall be addressed separately.

#### **1.2 Description of Procedure**

The procedure includes a subsoiling procedure, addition of organic matter in the form of compost, replacement or addition of topsoil, and subsequent planting with woody plants. The soil preparation portion of Soil Profile Rebuilding puts the components in place for restoration to characteristics similar to undisturbed soils, however, the complete restoration process requires root activity and occurs over many years. This technique may be appropriate for restoration of disturbed soils as defined by SITES™.

#### **1.3 Expected Outcomes**

Soil Profile Rebuilding may improve vegetation establishment, increase tree growth rates, increase soil permeability, enhance formation of aggregates in the subsoil, and enhance long-term soil carbon storage.

## **2. PROCEDURE**

### **2.1 Location**

Profile Rebuilding shall occur on all soil areas that are to be vegetated that have been disturbed by trafficking or grading during construction or prior to construction. Soil areas that are not to be treated should be protected by permanent fencing during the construction period and all access to these areas prohibited. A soil map delineating protected areas and areas to be treated shall be approved by the owner, arborist, or landscape architect before grading or construction begins.

### **2.2 Sequencing**

Profile Rebuilding shall occur after site disturbance is complete, including all vehicle and equipment trafficking, but before replacement of topsoil. Once profile rebuilding is complete, all traffic and equipment or materials storage on treated areas is prohibited with the exception of foot traffic for the purposes of planting or mulching.

If topsoil is already present and is 4 inches or greater in depth, use the “modifications for pre-existing topsoil.”

### **2.3 Remove foreign materials**

Remove all foreign materials resulting from construction operations, including oil drippings, stone, gravel, and other construction materials from the existing soil surface.

### **2.4 Application of Compost**

Spread mature, stable compost (see Section 3. Definitions for definition of compost) to a 4 inch depth over compacted subsoil.

### **2.5 Subsoiling**

Subsoiling may be performed when soil is neither wet nor dry. If a shovel cannot be forced into the soil, it is too dry. If the surface is sticky or muddy, it is too wet. Use a backhoe rearbucket or similar equipment with a tined bucket to break up the compacted soil and incorporate the compost. Work backwards away from excavated soils so that treated soil is not trafficked by the equipment. Insert the bucket through the compost layer and into the subsoil to a depth of 24 inches and raise a bucket of soil at least 24 inches above the soil surface. Tip the bucket and allow soil to fall. Repeat this procedure until no clumps of compacted soil larger than 12 inches in diameter remain. The tines of the bucket can be used to break apart larger clumps if necessary. 50% of the soil shall be in clumps 6 inches or smaller. No clumps shall be greater than 18" in diameter. The subsoiling is not intended to homogenize the compost and soil, but rather loosen the soil to a 24-inch depth and create veins of compost down to that depth as well. To ensure that subsoiling reached the appropriate depth, a push tube soil sampler shall be used to verify compost is present at 24 inch depth.

## **2.6 Replacement of topsoil**

### *2.6.1 Standard procedure*

Stockpiled topsoil, or additional topsoil if none is available from the site, shall be returned to the site to a 4 inch minimum depth (see *Section 3.3 Definitions* for definition of topsoil). If soil was severely disturbed (see definitions), a 6-8 inch minimum shall be replaced.

### *2.6.2 Modification if significant topsoil is already present before Profile Rebuilding is initiated*

#### *Case 1:*

At least four inches of topsoil is present on the site after construction activities are completed AND soil **is not** severely disturbed (see *Section 3.3 Definitions* for description of severely disturbed).

#### *Case 2:*

Less than 4 inches of topsoil is present on site after construction activities were completed but before Profile Rebuilding is initiated, OR soil is severely disturbed (see *Section 3.3 Definitions* for description of severely disturbed).

**For Case 1:** A minimum of 3 inches additional topsoil shall be placed over the subsoiled layer before tilling.

**For Case 2:** Follow *Section 2.6.1 Standard procedure*, as if no topsoil had been present.

## **2.7 Tilling**

Rototill topsoil to a depth of 6-8 inches when soil is neither dry nor very moist. Rototilling depth should cross the interface with the subsoiled layer by a minimum of 1 inch and can be verified with a random sampling with a push tube soil sampler.

## **2.8 Planting**

Plant the site with woody plants, trees or shrubs, at a density that insure a minimum of 50% of the site will be occupied with roots within 10 years. Planting of at least one large stature tree (e.g., one that will mature at approximately 60-70 feet in height) or 20 medium stature shrubs per 5,000 sq. ft. shall be considered to achieve this.

# **3. DEFINITIONS**

## **3.1 Topsoil**

Soil can be considered topsoil if it originates from an A horizon of a natural soil or is a mineral soil with 3% or greater organic matter content and a NRCS textural class similar to pre-development A horizon soils for the site or as specified by the owner, arborist, or landscape architect. Blended soils shall not be used unless specified by the owner, arborist, or landscape architect. In addition topsoil shall:

1. Be friable and well drained

2. have a pH between 5.2 and 7.5 (a narrower range may be specified for particular plant material)
3. have an organic matter content not less than 3%
4. have low salinity as indicated by an electrical conductivity of less than 4.0 mmhos/cm
5. be free of debris, stones, gravel, trash, large sticks, heavy metals, and other deleterious contaminants, (if screening is used to remove debris, screen size must be  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch or larger).
6. have a nutrient profile such that it is able to support plant growth
7. be free of noxious weed seeds

### **3.2 Compost**

Compost feedstock shall be leaves, yardwaste, or foodwaste. Biosolid-based composts shall not be used. A compost sample with analysis shall be submitted for approval to the client before application.

Stability refers to the rate of biological breakdown, measured by carbon dioxide release. Maturity refers to completeness of the aerobic composting process and suitability (lack of plant toxicity) as a plant growth media, often measured by ammonia release and by plant growth tests. Compost manufacturers that subscribe to the US Composting Council's testing program may document stability as compost testing 7 or below in accordance with TMECC 05.08-B, "Carbon Dioxide Evolution Rate". Maturity (suitability for plant growth) may be documented as compost testing greater than 80% in accordance with TMECC 05.05-A, "Germination and Vigor". Compost is considered mature and stable if it tests at 6.0 or higher on the Solvita Compost Maturity Index Rating, which is a combination of Carbon Dioxide and Ammonia Maturity Tests (test information and equipment available at [www.solvita.com](http://www.solvita.com)).

Compost shall also:

1. Free of weed seeds
2. Free of heavy metals or other deleterious contaminants
3. Have an EC of less than 4.0 mmhos/cm

### **3.3 Severely Disturbed Soil**

Soil shall be considered *severely disturbed* if grade was lowered more than 14 inches OR soil was compacted in lifts regardless of the final grade.

## **4. SUBMITTALS**

### **4.1 Soil Map**

A soil map indicating soil areas to be protected and those to be restored via Soil Profile Rebuilding shall be submitted by the contractor for approval by the owner, arborist, or landscape architect before construction begins.

### **4.2 Compost**

A compost sample with analysis certifying it is stable, mature, from acceptable feedstocks and free of contaminants and weed seeds shall be submitted for approval to the landscape architect or owner before compost is applied to the soil.

### **4.3 Topsoil**

A topsoil sample with analysis from a certified testing laboratory and verification of source shall be submitted for approval to the landscape architect or owner before application. Separate documentation is required for each 100 cubic yards of topsoil unless otherwise approved by the landscape architect or owner.

## **REFERENCES & PERMISSIONS**

Use of this specification has been documented to increase tree canopy and soil carbon stores compared with typical practices. See [www.urbanforestry.frec.vt.edu/SRES](http://www.urbanforestry.frec.vt.edu/SRES) for more information.

Soil Profile Rebuilding Specification by Susan Day et al. is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 United States License. It may be used freely as is, or modified. However use of the term “Soil Profile Rebuilding” should only be used when soil restoration is performed as described in this specification. See [www.urbanforestry.frec.vt.edu/SRES/specification.html](http://www.urbanforestry.frec.vt.edu/SRES/specification.html) for full details.

Task Force on Urban Tree Planting Best Practices

Minutes

Monday August 6, 2025, - 2:33pm - 4:31pm

Via Zoom Platform & In Person

[Recording of Meeting can be obtained by sending request to Joe Rainey JRainey@coj.net]

**Commissioners:**

Susan Fraser, Chair, Tree Commission Member

Curtis Hart, Tree Commission Member

William Burke, Tree Commission Member

Nina Sickler, Director of Public Works

**Non-Member attendees:**

Joe Andeson JEA

Nancy Powell, Scenic Jax

Susan Grandin, Scenic Jax

**Advisors:**

Justin Gearhart - City Arborist

Shannon MacGillis - Office of General Counsel

Jon Colburn - Urban Forestry Manager

**Staff:** Joe Rainey - Executive Assistant Mowing and Landscape

**1. Call to Order**

Conducted by Chair

**2. Roll Call and Verification of Quorum**

Conducted by Chair

Commissioners present:

Susan Fraser - present

William Burke - present

Nina Sickler - present until 3:55 due to other commitments

**Quorum present** (3, in person): Yes until 3:55

**3. Call for Public Speakers (online & card):**

**Submittal of speaker cards:**

#### **4. Issue: Approval of Minutes of May 14, 2025 Task Force Meeting**

**Motion:** Approve, as Amended.

**Moved by:** William Burke

**Second:** Nina Sickler

**Vote:** August 6, 2025 minutes approved as amended, unanimous.

#### **5. Overview of Approach:**

##### **a. Conformation of qualified Taskforce goals in preparation for upcoming Vote:**

There was consensus, the Task Force will first complete its recommendations to the Tree Commission on the Standards, Policies and Procedures document. On the basis of that recommended document from the Task Force, the next steps, almost all in parallel, would be for the staff to develop a checklist it finds appropriate to facilitate an effective review of a project subject to the standards and then, almost concurrently, prepare the application forms necessary to support a complete application for projects subject to the standards.

##### **b. Verifying, and resolving Taskforce findings aligning with City ordinance 656 standards:**

It was acknowledged that the proposed standards were inconsistent with at least one section of 656 (likely multiple) and the LDPM, likely to require an amendment to each. Because of the time involved in amending 656 and the deadline for amending the LDPM for its next update in January, it was the consensus that, to the extent possible, inconsistencies be identified by the end of August, allowing for the preparation of legislation and application for LDPM amendment in a timely manner.

**Detailed notes provided as a supplemental document by Chair**

#### **6. Discussion ended on the following items**

- a. Review of Section 3 A classification of Not Compacted is achieved within the Required Soil Volume at each planting location. Proposed Development Project is deferred until October.
- b. Discussion continues Section 4. Vertical and Overhead Obstructions are Recognized in Tree Selection. Under Urban Impacts on Tree Planting until the meeting adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

END OF MEETING 4:31pm

APPROVED