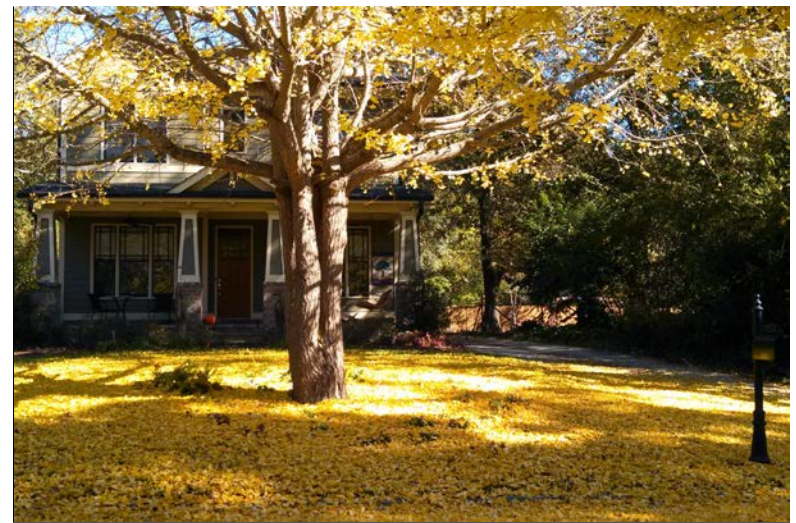


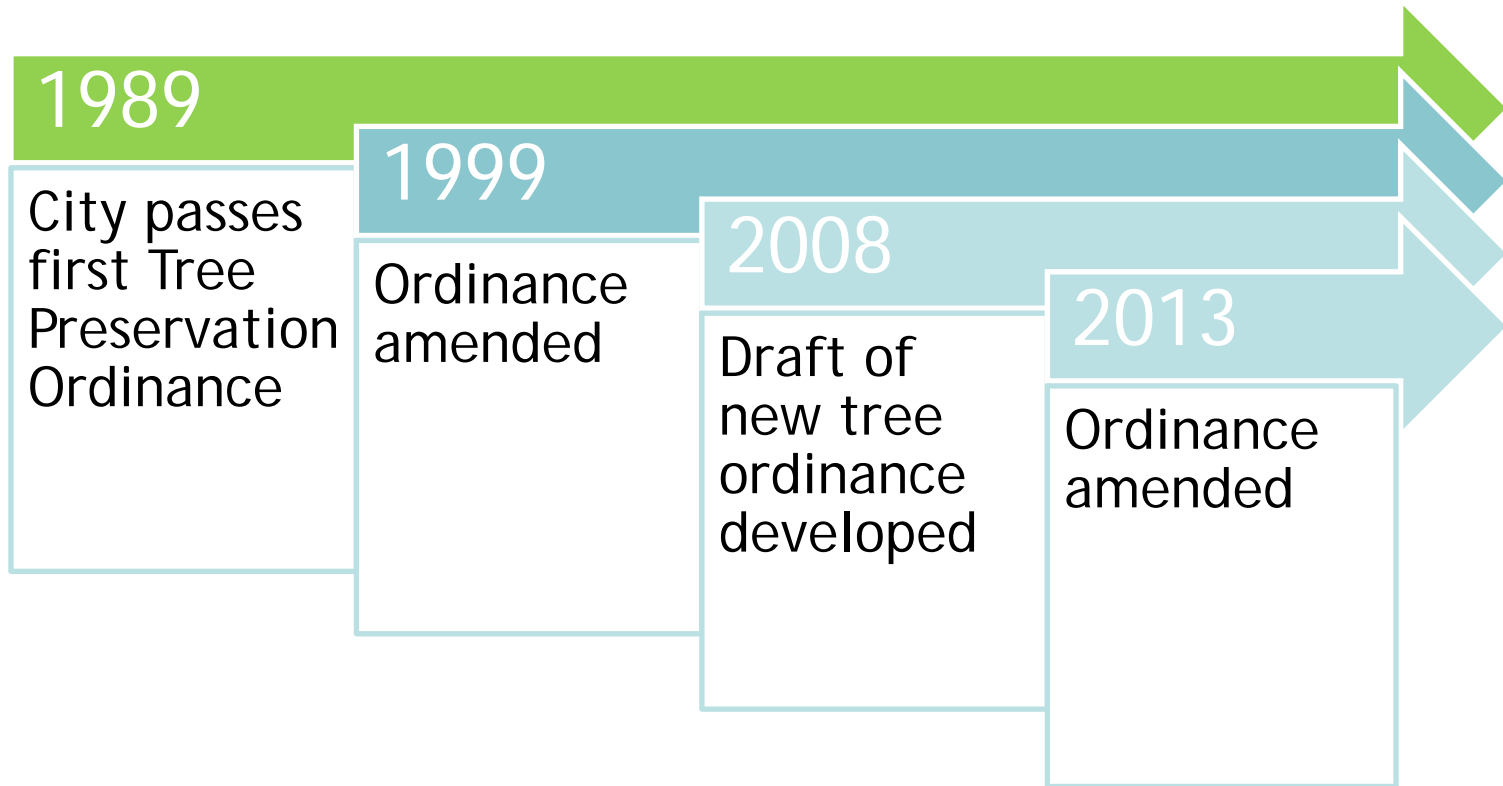
# Trees!

## *Crafting Decatur- Appropriate Regulations*

Presented on:  
December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013



# Background



# Background



## Unified Development Ordinance

- 12-month process to update land development regulations started in October 2013
- Due to resident concerns, the following actions were taken by the City Commission;
  1. 90 day moratorium on tree removal (Ends Jan 24)
  2. Review of Tree Ordinance was expedited



# Strategy

Current Ordinance



2008 Draft Ordinance



Stakeholder Input



Technical Expertise



Final Recommendation  
to City Commission:

**Work Session: Jan 6**

**Consideration for  
Adoption: Jan 21**



# Reasons for Updating the Tree Ordinance



- Aging tree population
- Urban/human impacts to soil and trees
- Development pressures
- Majority of tree canopy is on private property
- New best management practices for tree conservation



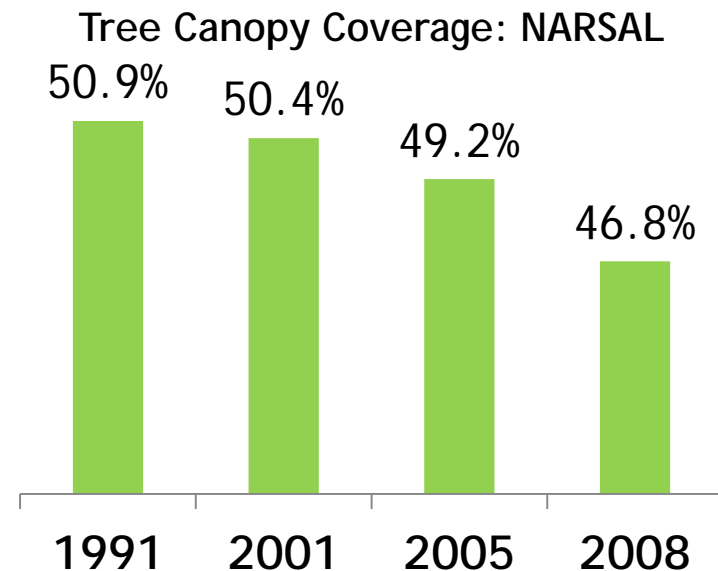
# Decatur's Trees by the Numbers

Current canopy cover = approx. 45%

Trend → declining canopy coverage

University of Georgia's *Natural Resource Spatial Analysis Laboratory* (NARSAL)

- Canopy decreased 4.1% in last 27 years
- Trend = 1% canopy loss ever 6-7 years



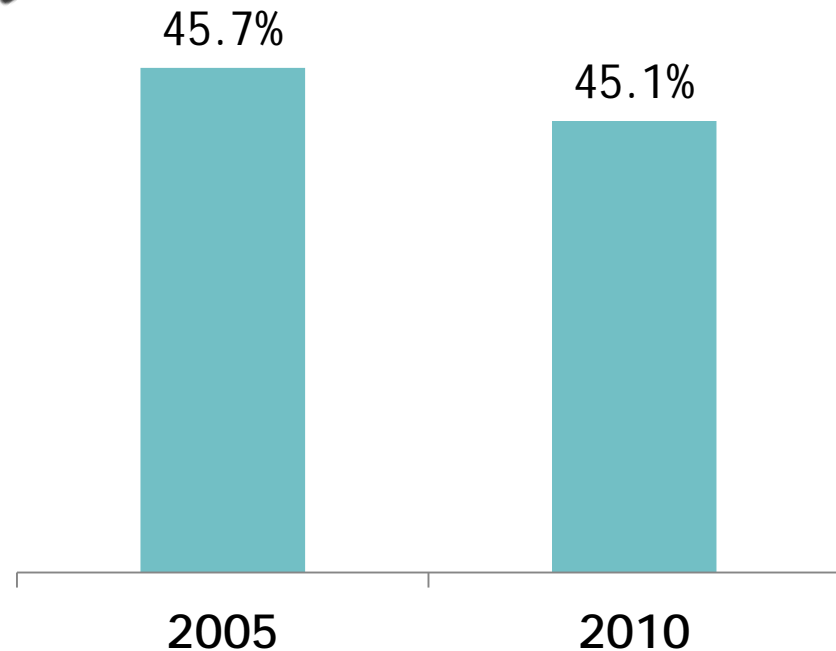
# Decatur's Trees by the Numbers

## 2010 City of Decatur Study

- Analyzed tree canopy using aerial photographs.
- Provides more detail than NARSAL data.



## Tree Canopy Coverage: Aerial Photos



# Urban/Human Impacts on Trees

- Restricted growing space
- Poor quality soils (compacted, no topsoil, low volume)
- Improper maintenance (mulching, pruning)
- Physical wounding (roots, trunk, crown)
- Environmental changes (soil, moisture, light, wind)
- Stress and insect and disease infestations





# Large, Canopy Trees are at Risk

- Healthy, large canopy trees are very valuable and should be conserved whenever possible
- Large canopy trees are at the greatest risk for damage and death; once gone, the replacement of their canopy will take 50 to 100 years
- Space is limited for the establishment of new large canopy trees; urban conditions and poor maintenance practices often make it difficult for trees to reach maturity



Development reduces soil quality (loss of topsoil, compaction) and can result in a loss of tree canopy cover. Trees planted on this property will struggle to survive due to poor soil conditions.



# What Trees Need

- Good quality growing site with plenty of space for growth, above and below ground
- Proper planting (handling, depth, size of planting hole) and 3 years of post-planting maintenance to establish (water, mulch, inspections, and removal of staking and straps if tree was staked)
- Ongoing, routine maintenance (mulch, pruning, inspection, pest management)
- Protection of roots, trunk, and crown from time of planting through removal—throughout a tree's life
- Timely removal at end of useful service life



# Tree Canopy Cover Goals

- Tree canopy cover is the ground area covered by the projection of the tree's canopy
- Tree canopies provide shade, cooling, oxygen, stormwater interception, and interception of pollutants including particulate matter
- A single mature canopy tree can provide 3,000 square feet or more of cover
- Tree root systems also provide uptake and filtration of water



# What would it take to increase the canopy in 25 years?

Current cover = 45%

Increasing the canopy requires one-for-one replacement of all removed or fallen trees

+

50%  
Canopy

3,600  
trees

55%  
Canopy

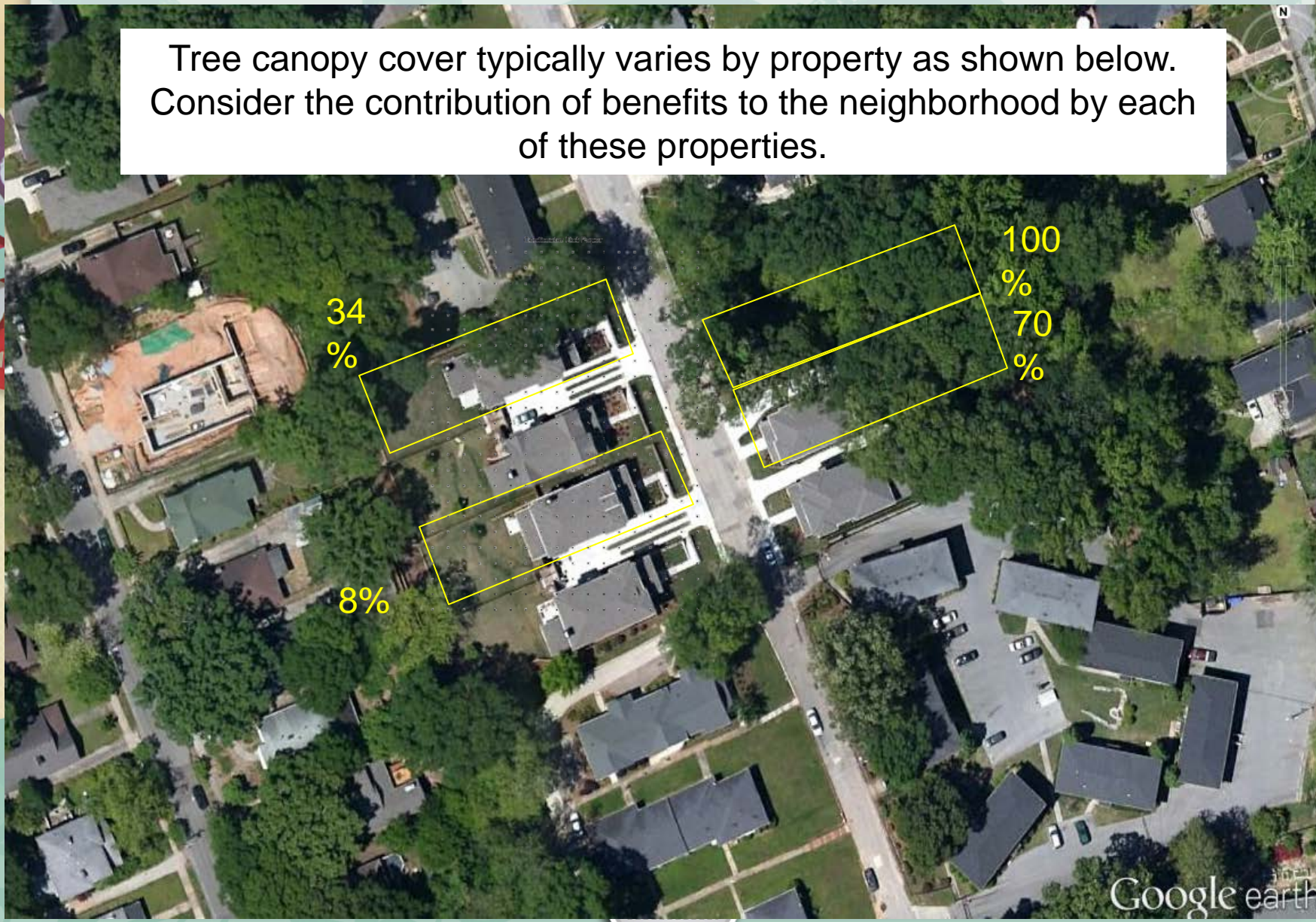
7,320  
trees

60%  
Canopy





10,980  
trees



Tree canopy cover typically varies by property as shown below. Consider the contribution of benefits to the neighborhood by each of these properties.



# Canopy goals in your backyard

	1/4 Acre Lot	1/3 Acre Lot
45% coverage	3 large 	4 large 
60% coverage	4 large 	4 large + 1 medium 



# Current Tree Ordinance

- All building and soil erosion control permits must be accompanied by a tree protection and replacement plan with the following *exclusions*:
  - Renovation projects on single-family and two-family homes
  - Construction and maintenance of public streets by government authorities
  - Diseased or dangerous trees
- Tree density is measured by using trunk diameter to calculate basal area (cross sectional area of trunk)
- City's tree consultant conducts plan review & inspection
- All plans must be prepared by a certified arborist, forester or landscape architect





# Current Tree Ordinance

- Projects must have 30 tree density units per acre (15 for single-family residential)
- A portion of the required tree density must be met on-site through protection of significant trees
- If the tree consultant determines that a project cannot meet the tree density requirement, payments for the balance are accepted by the City for the tree bank
- There is currently no protection for boundary trees



# Tree Conservation Recommendations

- Set community tree canopy cover goals
- Focus on maintaining and replacing tree canopy cover on a site, in a neighborhood, and across the community
- Focus on the placement of trees where their function is maximized
- Require compliance with standards for soil quality, planting, pruning, mulching, watering, and other arboricultural practices
- Require compliance with standards for tree protection during construction for trees that will be conserved
- Allow for flexibility in the achievement of tree canopy cover requirements
- Maintain an option for contributions to the Tree Bank in lieu of fully meeting tree canopy cover requirements



# Comments

- Posters located around the room
- Comment cards
- DecaturNEXT.com
- Final recommendation to City Commission:
  - Work Session: Jan 6
  - Consideration for Adoption: Jan 21

