

Proposed Amendments to Urban Forestry Ordinance



Presentation Agenda



Background



**Project
Milestones**



**Applicability
&
Exemptions**



**Proposed
Changes**



Penalties



**Next Steps &
Future
Implementation**

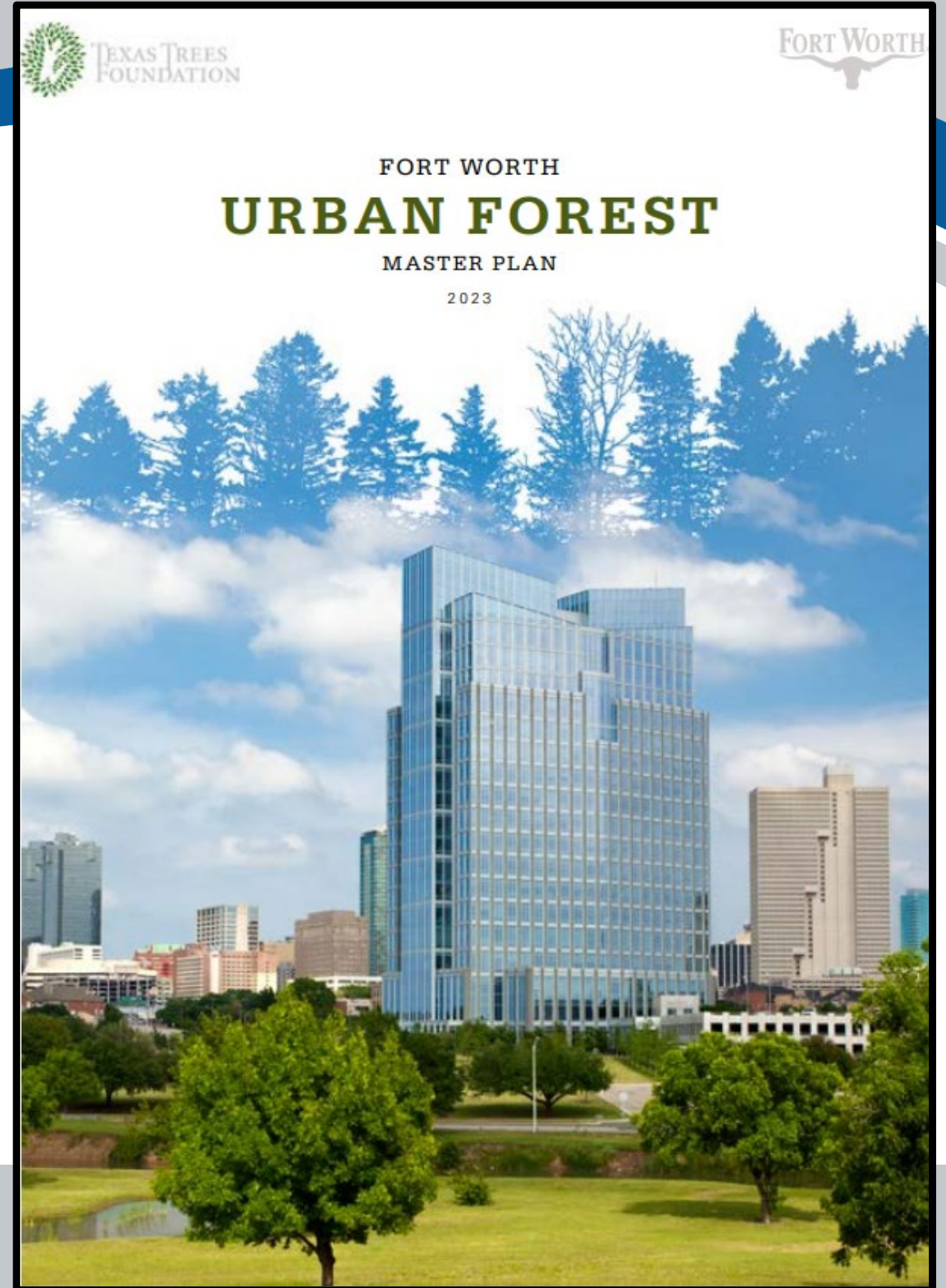
Urban Forestry History

- 1873** 1st Urban Forestry Ordinance
- 1926** Hired 1st City Forester
- 1997** 1st Urban Forest Master Plan Drafted (not adopted)
- 2007** Established 30% canopy goal
- 2009** Regs moved to Zoning Ord. & UDC takes over duties of UFB
- 2018** Increase in clearcutting
- 2021** Specifies responsibility for imposing fines
- 2024** Urban Forest Master Plan Adopted





FORT WORTH
URBAN FOREST
MASTER PLAN
2023

**Implementation of
Urban Forest Master Plan –
Phase 1**

BACKGROUND



Engagement and data analysis for the Urban Forest Master Plan led to identification of the following goals for Fort Worth's urban forest:

-  **Goal 1.** Continue to manage the urban forest as an asset using industry standards and best practices and adequate resources for sustainable management.
-  **Goal 2.** Preserve and expand the urban forest to address tree equity, resiliency, urban heat, air quality, human health, and other challenges facing Fort Worth.
-  **Goal 3.** Strengthen urban forest programs through coordination, integration, professionalism, and funding to meet the needs of a growing city and urban forest.
-  **Goal 4.** Invigorate equitable engagement for a community-wide commitment to care for and grow Fort Worth's urban forest.

Prioritize the urban forest by preserving and protecting existing trees

Preservation and protection of existing trees was identified as a high priority. Existing mature trees have an outsized impact on sustainability, environmental justice, wildlife and ecosystems, and human health. Exploring changes to the Urban Forestry Ordinance was raised in most engagement activities and sessions.

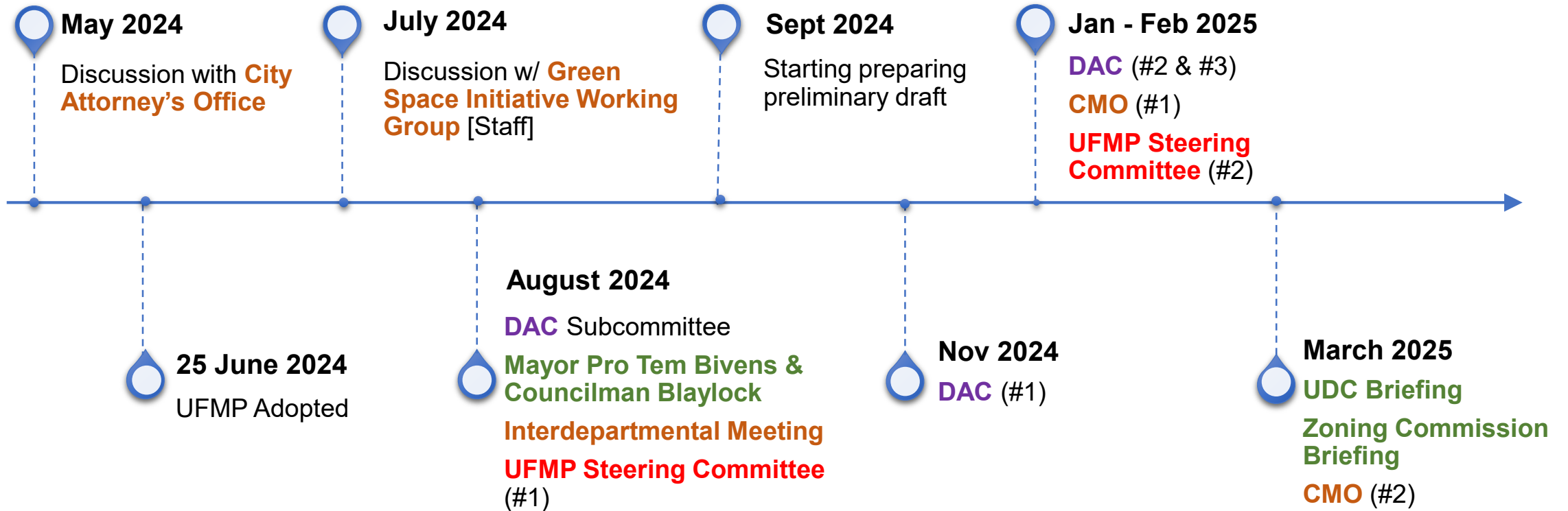
Preservation and planting requirements should be robust but not unduly burdensome to developers. They should also be tailored to the biome, e.g., different standards for natural prairies vs. Eastern Cross Timbers. Trees planted or protected should survive post-development and be replaced if they die.

RECOMMENDATION 2.

Develop and implement changes to tree regulations, standards, and best practices to support Fort Worth's tree canopy and sustainability goals.

Short-Term Target 2: Draft the changes to Urban Forestry Ordinance that do not require stakeholder involvement (e.g., updated terminology, definitions, authority, and alignment with other ordinances). Evaluate additional recommended changes and draft proposed ordinance language. Seek input from local arborists, community leaders involved with urban forestry, and professionals familiar with Fort Worth's permitting process.

BACKGROUND



PROJECT MILESTONES

1. Removal of trees 6" dbh and larger (diameter at breast height – 4.5' from ground)*
2. Construction requiring building permit
3. Expansions that increase footprint by 30%+ or 3,000 square feet
4. Clearing/grading including new parking lot
5. Subdivision of land greater than 1 acre for one- or two-family dwellings
6. Construction of manufactured home or recreational vehicle parks
7. MU-zoned properties
8. New agricultural development that requires tree removal
9. Public projects that will physically change the surface or will require tree removal

*Protected Species Only

APPLICABILITY

1. Structures that do not create or expand building square footage or temporary structures when no trees are removed
2. Single residential lot with a one- or two-family dwelling that is one acre or less
3. Change in use of an existing structure, unless the structure is expanded by 30%+ or 3,000 square feet
4. Any area within a design district that has Urban Forestry standards
 - Form based codes including Berry/University, Camp Bowie, Near Southside, Panther Island, Trinity Lakes, and Urban Residential
5. Construction or expansion in “H” central business district
6. Airport operating areas
7. Any tree deemed unsafe, in easement, or in conflict with other ordinances or Gas Well Sites

EXEMPTIONS



Post Oak
Quercus stellata

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Preservation

- Increase requirements for significant trees, Post Oaks and Blackjack Oaks
- Remove requirement for invasive species

Other Changes

- Unprotected Species Lists
- Amended Protected Species List
- Administrative relief to facilitate compliance

Enforcement

- Increase civil penalties and criminal fines

PROPOSED CHANGES

Preservation Requirements

Current

- **25%** canopy preservation for **all** species
- Mitigation for all species at **27"** dbh (significant)
- Post Oaks and Blackjack Oaks are significant at **18"** dbh east of I-35

Proposed

- **50%** canopy preservation for Post Oaks and Blackjack Oaks
- **25%** canopy preservation for other protected species
- **No Canopy Preservation or Credit** for unprotected species
- Increase # of protected species from **26** to **47**
- Decrease dbh from **27"** to **24"** for protected species with the exception of Post Oaks and Blackjack Oaks, which will remain at **18"** dbh

PROPOSED CHANGES

Protected Species List

Large Canopy		Medium Canopy		Small Canopy	
American elm	Pond cypress	Afghan pine*	Lacey Oak	American smoketree	Mexican plum
Baldcypress	Post oak	Arizona cypress*	Monterrey Oak	Carolina buckhorn	Possumhaw holly
Black walnut	Red oak	Blackjack oak	Shantung Maple	Cherry-laurel	Rough-leaf dogwood
Bur oak*		Bigtooth maple*	Shin Oak	Crapemyrtle*	Rusty blackhaw
Cedar elm*		'Caddo' maple*	Southern Magnolia	Desert willow*	Texas persimmon*
Chinquapin oak*		Chinese pistache*	Texas Red Oak	Eve's necklace*	Texas redbud
Lacebark elm		Eastern redcedar*	Trident Maple	Indian cherry	Vitex
Live oak*		Ginkgo	Western Soapberry	Japanese maple	Waxmyrtle
Pecan		Japanese Black Pine		Mexican buckeye	Yaupon holly*

* Drought tolerant species

PROPOSED CHANGES

Unprotected Species List

Ash	Mesquite
Ash juniper	Mimosa
Bradford pear	Mulberry
Chinaberry	Osage Orange/ Bois de'Arc (fruiting)
Chinese Tallow	Siberian elm
Cottonwood	Silver maple
Golden raintree	Tree of Heaven
Hackberry/ Sugarberry	Willow
Ligustrum	

Any species of tree, shrub, vine or grass listed in the Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forests, published by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service.

PROPOSED CHANGES

Administrative Relief to Preserve

Director may increase the **building height** up to an additional 14 feet above the height allowed for the following zoning districts. Building setbacks and bufferyards adjacent to applicable residential districts would still have to be observed.

1. CR – Low Density Multifamily
2. C – Medium Density Multifamily
3. CF – Community Facilities
4. ER – Restricted Neighborhood Commercial
5. E – Neighborhood Commercial

Director may decrease the **setbacks** by up to 50% for any zoning district.

Relief does not waive urban forestry requirements and fees.

PROPOSED CHANGES

Administrative Relief to Preserve

In granting relief, the Director shall determine:

- a) all or a part of the urban forestry regulations may deprive the applicant of economically viable use of the property;
- b) the proposed design has minimized the loss of trees and canopy to the extent possible;
- c) the relief requested will not injure the existing or permitted use of adjacent conforming property, will not make the property substantially different from properties within the same zoning category, has no adverse effects on adjacent properties, and would not result in an adverse effect on traffic circulation, drainage or utilities; and
- d) that tree preservation or mitigation unduly burdens the development of the property due to a unique physical circumstance on the property or by reducing the developable portion of the property to 25% of the property.

PROPOSED CHANGES

Criminal Fines & Civil Penalties

Current

Criminal Fine

- \$500 per tree

Civil Penalties

Unauthorized Removal

- \$300/inch or \$7.50/sq ft

Unauthorized Significant Removal

- \$600/inch or \$15/sq ft

Proposed

Criminal Fine

- \$2,000 per tree

Civil Penalties for Protected Trees

Unauthorized Removal

- \$600/inch or \$15/sq ft

Unauthorized Significant Removal

- \$720/inch or \$18/sq ft

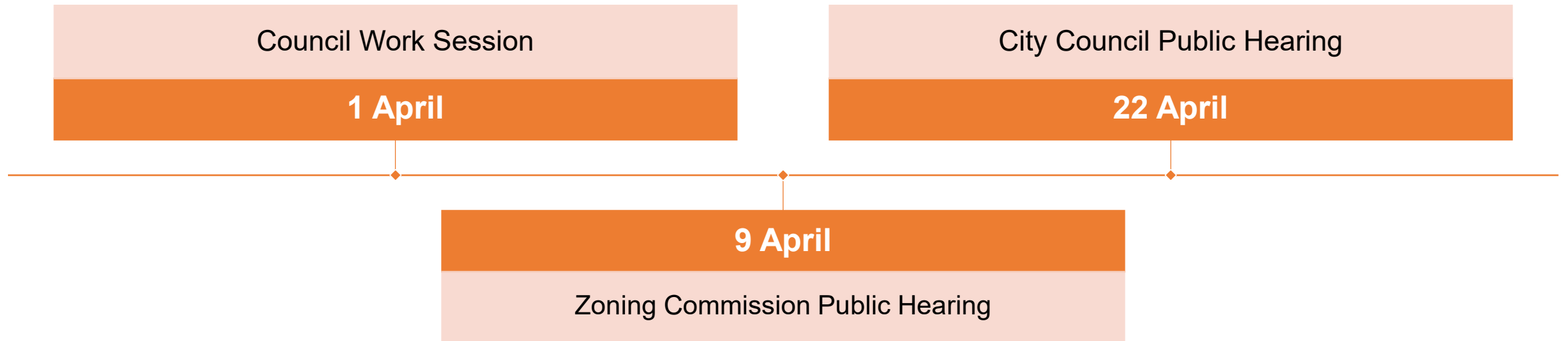
PROPOSED CHANGES

Texas Cities Survey – Criminal Fines

City	Criminal Citation
Arlington, Austin, Bedford, Benbrook, Colleyville, Dallas, Dripping Springs, Grand Prairie, Keller, McKinney, Nacogdoches, Plano, San Antonio, Southlake & Tyler	\$2,000/tree (state maximum)
Houston	\$500/day
Fort Worth – Current	\$500/tree
Fort Worth – Proposed	\$2,000/tree

Texas Cities Survey – Civil Remedies

City	Civil Remedy
Colleyville, Keller, Houston & Dripping Springs	Up to \$500/inch or \$500/day
Bedford, Dallas, Mansfield, McKinney	Replacement cost of tree as deemed by the administrator
Benbrook, Austin	Surety bond on the establishment of a replacement tree or prepaid tree maintenance plan
Austin, Bedford, Benbrook, Colleyville, Dripping Springs, Grand Prairie, Plano, Mansfield, McKinney & Nacogdoches	Planting replacement requirements from 1:1 up to 5:1 and 10:1 depending on species and size
Fort Worth – Current	\$300/inch or \$7.50/sq ft; \$600/inch or \$15/sq ft (Significant Trees)
Fort Worth – Proposed	Required Plantings + \$600/inch or \$15/sq ft; \$720/inch or \$18/sq ft (Significant Trees)



NEXT STEPS

Education & Outreach if Adopted



Dev101 Presentation –
April 31, 2025



Notice to all companies
who have pulled Grading
or UF permits in Accela



Pamphlet and posting
online for anyone pulling a
development permit



Notify tree companies in
area



Work with Communications
& Public Engagement to be
included on email bulletins

NEXT STEPS

- Simplify our math
- Add planting specifications and flexible planting window
- Combine Urban Forestry Ordinance and Landscape Ordinance to allow for more sustainable flexibility credits
- Work with other departments and divisions to integrate more sustainable practices
 - Water, TPW, Park & Recreation, etc.
- Add development incentives for preserving the riparian and open space priority areas

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Thank you

For any follow up questions please contact:

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