

Staff Report

Subject: Ordinance Revision – Tree Protection
Author: Chelsie Fernald, Planning Manager
Department: Development Services
Meeting Date: September 16, 2025
Item Description: Discussion of an amendment to the Code of Ordinances for a Tree Protection ordinance.

Summary Recommendation

Staff would like to discuss the Tree Protection Ordinance. This ordinance is designed to preserve the natural character of Effingham County while allowing for continued growth and development. By protecting significant trees and requiring thoughtful replacement when removal is necessary, the ordinance helps ensure that our neighborhoods remain green, attractive, and environmentally healthy.

Executive Summary/Background

- This ordinance will protect significant trees that contribute to community character and ecological health. It provides consistent and enforceable guidelines for tree removal, replacement, and preservation on development sites.
- This ordinance contains requirements for street trees when new development occurs, and the requirements for trees on public property and public rights-of-way.
- Supports long-term community goals for sustainability, stormwater management, and enhanced quality of life.
- Staff research included areas such as the City of Rincon, the City of Pooler, and Henry County, GA.
- The ordinance proposal is split into three separate sections, Tree Protection including definitions, Tree protection for Public Property and Public Rights-of Way, and Street Trees.
- This ordinance is in line with Chapter 3 – Community Vision and Goals of the Effingham County 2020-2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan, page 22 where it states the following:
“provide a plan for tree preservation resulting in the preservation of green space, natural habitats, and improvement of stormwater retention.”

Department Review: Development Services

FUNDING: N/A

Attachments: 1. Draft of the Tree Protection Ordinance