



P.O. Box 450749
Atlanta, GA 31145
770-938-9900
770-934-8363 Fax

The Housing Center
1484 Brockett Road
Tucker, GA 30084
www.atlantahomebuilders.com

Policy: Tree Protection and Replacement

As one of the most important environmental issues in metro Atlanta and the nation, tree preservation touches on issues such as global warming, storm water runoff, water quality and air quality. Trees enhance a community's image and the value of real estate; improve energy efficiency through home shading and cooling; filter air; buffer noise and wind; and provide wildlife habitat. The building and development industry has traditionally created developments that preserve trees, yet the homebuilding industry is largely viewed as the responsible party for degrading the environment and destroying trees. As a result, many jurisdictions have enacted punitive ordinances that prohibit tree removal or require expensive recompense fees during the construction process.

The Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association supports flexible, performance-based, non-prescriptive tree ordinances that balance legitimate development and construction concerns with environmental and aesthetic values that trees can provide. Setbacks, driveways, streets, sidewalks, drainage and other common development regulations, in addition to topography, affect the ability to save, move or plant trees. Tree preservation standards can sometimes be too restrictive and inflexible, making preservation and replanting a difficult and costly proposition. Communities must adopt performance-based standards for tree preservation, as well as allow variation from rigid development requirements to enable developers and builders the flexibility to sensitively respond to the unique conditions of each site.

The Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association supports collaboration between local officials, planners, the community and the homebuilding and development industry to create tree ordinances. These collaborative efforts should include the vision of elected officials and their constituents and the professional expertise of planners and the development community who understand the constraints and effects of local zoning and subdivision and development regulations on a developer's ability to save trees.