

# "Summary of Comments"

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1. Green laws are any municipal ordinance that protects, preserves or rebuilds nature in the city. Common green laws include tree ordinances, landscape codes and land development regulations.
2. Urban Forest Sustainability is addressed in my paper "*Greening Tree Ordinances*" and in the Clark et al 1997 paper, "*Model of Urban Forest Sustainability*" both in the binder given you at the conference. Be sure too read both.
3. Tree Ordinances are written in three parts, they address Context, Technical Requirements and Administrative Procedures. Common clauses of a tree ordinance are seen in the handout titled "*Tree Ordinance Model Structure*" attached.
4. Landscape Codes are always part of the city Zoning Code, while Tree Ordinance are often only included in the Municipal Code. Parts of a Zoning Code are always enforced by planning commission employees, some parts of the Municipal Code go un-enforced. Also it should be noted, that both of these policies are often promoted by different interest groups, (arborists & landscape architects-planners). Since both the Tree Ordinance and the Landscape Code contain public policy toward trees it makes sense to combine both into the zoning Ordinance. I refer to this as "harmonizing" them together.
5. Urban Forests are naturally occurring sustainable features of towns and cities that provide environmentally useful services for society. These services involve soil, water, vegetation, wildlife habitat, climate and air quality.

6. Urban Forestry that is one thread on the “thin green line” has long promoted city greening and sustainable forests yet as a professional group does not publish this knowledge to others including citizens, public officials and related professional associations.
7. Urban Forestry ought to directly address sustainability in the writing of tree ordinances and landscape codes.
8. The one urban forestry technology element that is missing is an accepted procedure to measure sustainability of the urban forest. Closely related however are several programs used in landscape architecture that may cast light on this. The LEED Program is used to measure sustainability in buildings, The ASLA SITES Program (The Sustainable Sites Initiative [www.sustainable-sites.org](http://www.sustainable-sites.org)) is used to determine sustainable Federal Government embraces sustainability in its guidelines document *Federal Greening, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* published by U.S. Department of Energy. Another document widely used to pursue sustainability issues include the *Sustainable Building Technical Manual*, specifically, Part III Site Issues published by Public Technology Inc. and the United States Green Building Council. The *Florida Friendly Landscaping Program* published by the Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Florida also offers a procedure for measuring certain sustainability issues.
9. It is relatively easy to address sustainability in a tree ordinance.

First, the title of the ordinance can indicate that sustainability of the community tree canopy is the important goal of the public policy. Also, since most ordinances begin with a Context or Purpose Statement that ties the ordinance to the needs of the community this statement can be written to read as follows.

## **DIVISION 6. – SUSTAINABLE URBAN FORESTS – TREE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION**

### **Sec. 58-281. - Purpose and intent.**

Sustainable urban forests benefit the city by decreasing urban noise and air pollution, conserving energy, infiltrating storm water, enriching the soil, minimizing flooding, providing food and cover for beneficial urban wildlife, preserving native plant species and providing value and stability to business and residential neighborhoods.

Recognizing that most species of trees require at least two decades of growth to begin to exhibit such beneficial qualities, it is the intent of this division to establish policies, regulations and standards necessary to ensure ~~that~~ the sustainability of the city's urban forest, which has been declared a "Tree USA," will continue to realize the benefits provided by its urban forest.

The provisions of this division are enacted to:

- (1) Establish and maintain the maximum sustainable amount of tree cover on public and private lands within the city.
- (2) Maintain city trees in a healthy and non-hazardous condition through good arboricultural practices.
- (3) Establish and maintain appropriate diversity in tree species and age classes to provide a stable and sustainable urban forest.
- (4) Minimize the removal of protected trees.
- (5) Require compensation for the loss of protected trees in all stages of maturity on public and private property.
- (6) Preserve the community's character and quality of life for future generations.

Sharp eyed readers will notice that this language is modeled after the language of the Winter Park, Florida *Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance*.

If this same language is used to introduce a community landscape code then citing a minimum sustainability benchmark standard to be met in the design of a built landscape might read such as:

“All landscape plans submitted to the city for review shall meet a minimum ONE STAR rating based upon the SITES(LEED) program.”

10. In the workshop sessions we found that small communities such as *Windermere*, medium communities such as *Pompano Beach* and larger cities like *Orlando* all have similar issues in regard to tree and landscape ordinances. The one thing they all have in common are trees and the scale of development. Small towns work to preserve and manage a forest environment and its character, medium size towns work to strike a balance the relationship between green areas and developed areas by having more tree preservation and planting programs while larger urban areas seek to find successful ways too plant trees in hard paved landscapes with minimum space and subject to urban stresses.