



Understanding the Community Tree Management Ordinance

Athens-Clarke County Community Tree Program

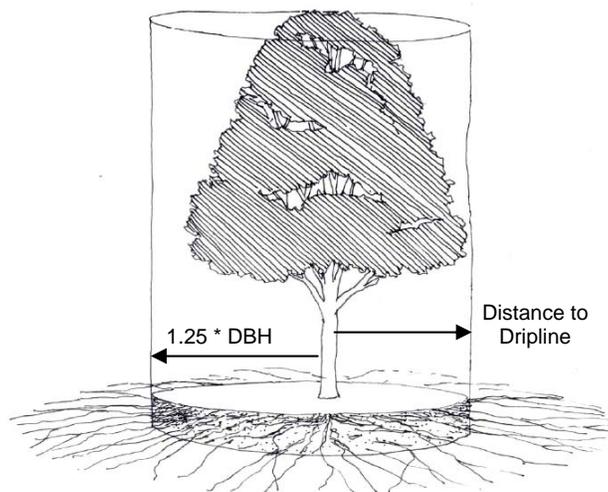
Conserving Trees During Development

Developers and homeowners must often make site improvements that could be damaging to trees. If trees are not protected during these improvements, they decline greatly over a two to five year period until their eventual death. Proper planning and alternative construction methods can ensure that trees will survive a construction event. Trees must be conserved during development to meet the requirements of the Community Tree Ordinance.

It is critical to protect roots during development. In the Athens-Clarke County area, 90% of roots are in the top 18 inches of soil. Tree roots extend out 3-5 times the height of the tree. Construction events that impact these roots can lead to canopy loss, stress-induced pest or disease outbreaks, whole tree failure, and tree death. Also, soil areas must be protected to ensure enough roots are preserved to meet the tree's needs.

Critical Root Zone

The critical root zone is a roughly circular area around a tree with a radius equivalent to the distance to the edge of the canopy, or 1.25 feet for every 1 inch of trunk diameter, whichever is greater. The critical root zone increases in size as a tree grows larger. This zone is vital to the survival of the tree. A limited number of activities can occur within the outer half of any given side of the critical root zone.



CRITICAL ROOT ZONE

The **critical root zone** equals the distance to the dripline, or 1.25 feet for every 1 inch in DBH, *whichever is greater*. It also includes the roots and soil to a depth of 24 inches.

Regulations

- Conserved trees and forested areas must have active tree protection during construction
- Tree protection fencing must be installed at the perimeter of the critical root zone
- The critical root zone has a radius of 1.25 feet for every inch in trunk diameter
- Tree protection fencing must be 4 feet high, high-visibility polypropylene fencing



Damage is likely to occur if fencing is not installed prior to construction.



A great amount of damage can be done in a short amount of time if trees aren't protected.



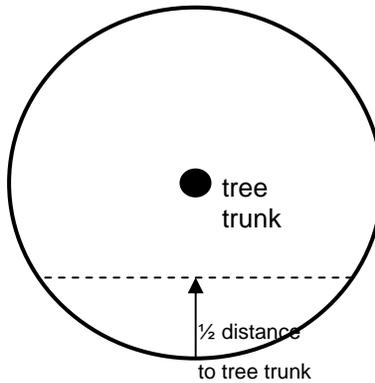
While not required, the boulders around this tree ensure the CRZ will not be breached.



This fencing protects enough roots to ensure the survival of this tree.

Activities in the Critical Root Zone

Some activities may occur in the outer one half of any given side of the critical root zone. These activities are generally a temporary condition that the tree will adapt to over time. It is important not to do any activity in the critical root zone that leads to irreversible damage to the tree. If a property owner chooses to work within the outer half of any given side of the critical root zone, he or she must be sure to relocate the fencing to the edge of area where the activity is permitted. This movement will ensure that additional damage is not done beyond the permitted limits.



ENCROACHMENT INTO THE CRITICAL ROOT ZONE

The circle is the extent of the CRZ in an aerial view of a tree.

Limited activities can occur within the outer half of the CRZ.

Prohibited Activities

Vehicle/equipment traffic,
parking, or storage

Materials or supplies storage

Structure placement

Equipment maintenance

Wounding of trunk or
scaffold limbs

Fires/excessive heat

Limited Activities

Site clearing or grubbing

Soil excavation, cuts, or fills

Grading or trenching

Tilling or edging

Soil compaction or paving

Top dressing with soil
greater than two inches

For more information, contact the Athens-Clarke County Community Forestry Coordinator at (706)613-3561 voice, (706)613-3566 fax, or by e-mail at forester@co.clarke.ga.us.