The Countryside Program
TREE PRESERVATION APPROACH
Revised draft 6-11-02.
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Introduction

There seem to be four steps needed during the development process to address tree preservation adequately.

1) Preliminary Analysis – general tree/woodland areas are mapped and prioritized, to assist in initial project design layout.
2) Tree Protection Plan – within areas to be disturbed, specific tree locations and driplines are mapped. A plan is developed to provide information on what will be removed, what will be retained, and to outline a program of preservation during and after construction.
3) Construction Protection –during the construction phase, tree preservation methods are implemented and monitored.
4) Post-construction protection – after construction, recommendations for ongoing protection of trees are implemented and monitored.

Much attention has been given in model ordinances to steps 2, 3 and 4, but little attention has been given to providing a cost-effective way to prioritize tree protection at the preliminary design phase. The following is an attempt to define how such a preliminary analysis might be done.

Preliminary Tree and Woodland Analysis

Purpose. The purpose of the tree and woodland analysis is to identify areas of woodland on the site that are suitable for preservation and/or conservation. Five factors are considered: underlying soil type, the size and type of trees, their age and health, their tolerance for construction, and the likelihood of long-term viability. It is possible that larger trees on a site will receive a lower preservation priority rating than smaller trees, depending on these factors.

This is intended to be a brief, preliminary review which is done at the early sketch plan level of development planning, simultaneously with wetland delineation. Ideally, this information will be used on conservation development subdivisions to assist in determining the places on the site that are desireable and suitable for conservation or preservation, and those where development can occur without significant impact on woodland quality. Followup analysis, which might include a detailed survey of trees to be preserved and construction requirements for tree preservation, is beyond the scope of this preliminary analysis.

Information Required. A tree/woodland evaluation shall be provided by a certified arborist or a certified forester. The evaluation shall include:

- A map delineating distinct areas of woodland, which are classified on the map as high, medium, and low suitability for preservation. Any major trees shall be labeled and located approximately; groups of major trees may be labeled and located with an approximate outline. Distinct woodland areas are distinguished from each other by significant differences in species mix, age, health, and soil type.
- A brief report describing each of the areas and outlining the reasons for the classification assigned. A general description of underlying soil types, size and type of trees, their age and health, life-expectancy, rarity of species, species diversity, species tolerance for construction, and the likelihood of long-term viability, shall be outlined for each area.
- The report should include an assessment of existing working forest easements or Ohio Forest Tax Law enrollment in woodlands on the site (if any), including a brief review and summary of existing management plans, and an assessment of the impact of proposed development on the working forest status and management.

Definitions.

Certified arborist. A professional arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture, Champaign, Ill.

Certified forester. A professional forester certified by the Society of American Foresters, Bethesda, MD.

Major tree. A tree measuring 12” or more diameter at 4.5 feet above the ground level.