Trees and Development
“The best way to preserve the countryside, is to build a better city.”
Starting with single family homes....

Single family detached lots of two acres or less, zoned for single family use and developed as such*, are exempt from all landscaping and tree preservation requirements.

City of Wilmington Land Development Code

*Once a typical SF lot is recorded, it is exempt.
But, before lots may be recorded, a new development of single family lots must meet tree standards for:

- Street trees, typically one every 30 feet
- Minimum 15 trees per acre requirement
- Mitigation for any significant trees taken, even if within an area of essential site improvements.
What are significant trees?

- Hardwoods, Some Pines $\geq 24''$ DBH
- Other Pines $\geq 32''$ DBH
- Flowering Trees $\geq 8''$ DBH

What are essential site improvements?

“…development features necessary for the intended use of the site, required by regulation, ordinance or law, which cannot be accommodated without removal of protected trees.” E.g.:

- underground and surface drainage
- off-street parking
- driveways and walkways
- retention areas
What about commercial properties?

Typical Tree Preservation and Planting Areas

- Street yards
- Buffer yards
- Foundation Plantings
- Parking Lot Landscaping
  - Interior planting islands
  - Perimeter landscaping
  - Parking area screening
- Other Areas
Basic Requirements for All Developments

- Approved landscape plan prior to building permit.
- Pre-development inventory of protected trees.
- Required or credited trees must be:
  - > 2 to 2.5” caliper for shade trees
  - ≥ 8 to 10’ for understory trees
- Minimum of 15 trees per disturbed acre.
- Mitigation for removal of protected trees, except where essential site improvements must go.
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A couple examples....
Our standards are working, but we can do better....
Land Development Code Opportunities

- Improve Parking Lot Landscaping Requirements
- Match streetyard landscaping to desired street frontages
- Simplify mitigation calculations
- Replace inches of tree diameter lost rather than numbers of trees

Stay tuned....
Discussion