



Evaluating Atlanta's Proposed Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO)

Session 4 of 4

April 8, 2021



Agenda



- Fast recap of Session 1, 2 & 3
 - Video & Slides
 - Progress
- Criteria for evaluation
- Discussion Framework: “Impact Chart”
- Specific standards and recommended changes – Session 4
- Q&A and Next Steps

Logistics



- Timeline
 - March & April: fee assessment notification at NPUs (non-voting item/comment only)
 - April 27: CDHS (Community Development/Human Services) committee makes recommendations to full City Council
 - **May 17: City Council vote (new date – may continue to change)**
- Today's Q&A will be monitored
 - If not answered live today, we will follow up with an answer to all questions
 - Please do not use CHAT
- Contacts
 - Judy Yi (judy@treesatlanta.org)
 - Greg Levine (greg@treesatlanta.org)

We believe there is a path forward ... with changes



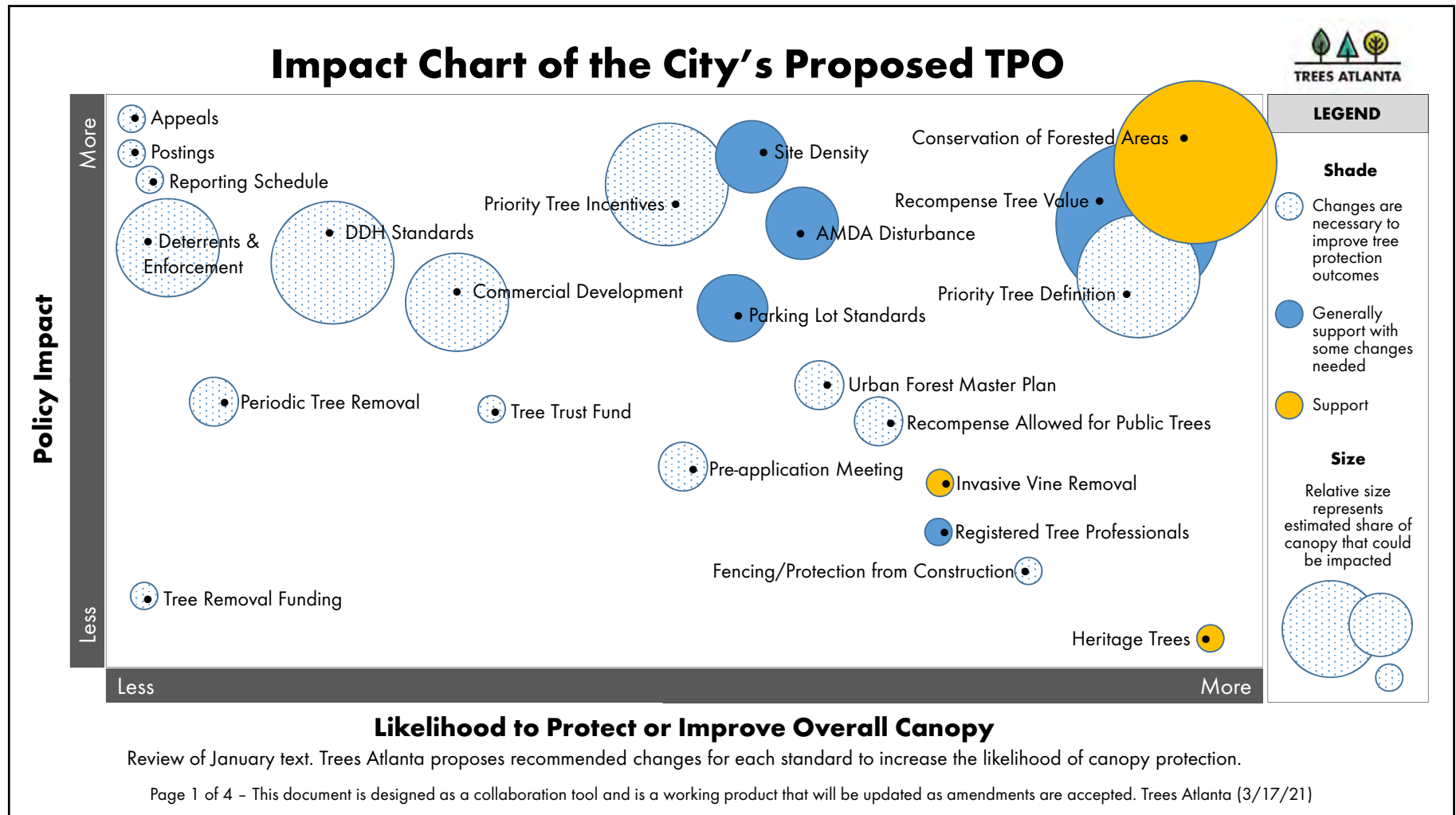
- Approach
 - Balances guidelines with incentives
- Standards
 - Needs more field-testing and supporting data to verify
 - Needs numerous amendments in order for Trees Atlanta support for approval
- Organization
 - Complex and difficult to follow
 - Needs companion user guides with rollout
- **Next steps**
 - **Writing specific amendments for City Council consideration**
 - **23 standards**

Criteria for Evaluation



- Preservation
- Replanting
- Recompense

- Comparison of current versus proposed
- Collaboration and discussions with community, professionals, advocacy groups, and city staff
- Field-testing evaluations
 - Single Family Housing
 - Commercial Development



Explanation of the Impact Chart



- Likelihood to Protect or Improve Overall Canopy (x-axis)
 - Policy Impact (y-axis)
 - Scale of Canopy affected (size)
 - Status (color)
-
- Priority is to comment on the standards with highest Policy Impact and Scale of Canopy affected
 - With amendments, the standard can be re-evaluated to the right and status

Four Session Topics



Session 1

Priority Tree Definition
 Recompense Allowed for Public Trees
[Recompense Tree Value](#)
[Site Density](#)

Session 2

Pre-application Meeting
 Priority Tree Incentives (Priority Tree Preservation Standard)
[AMDA Disturbance](#)
 Allowance for Periodic Tree Removal by Homeowners

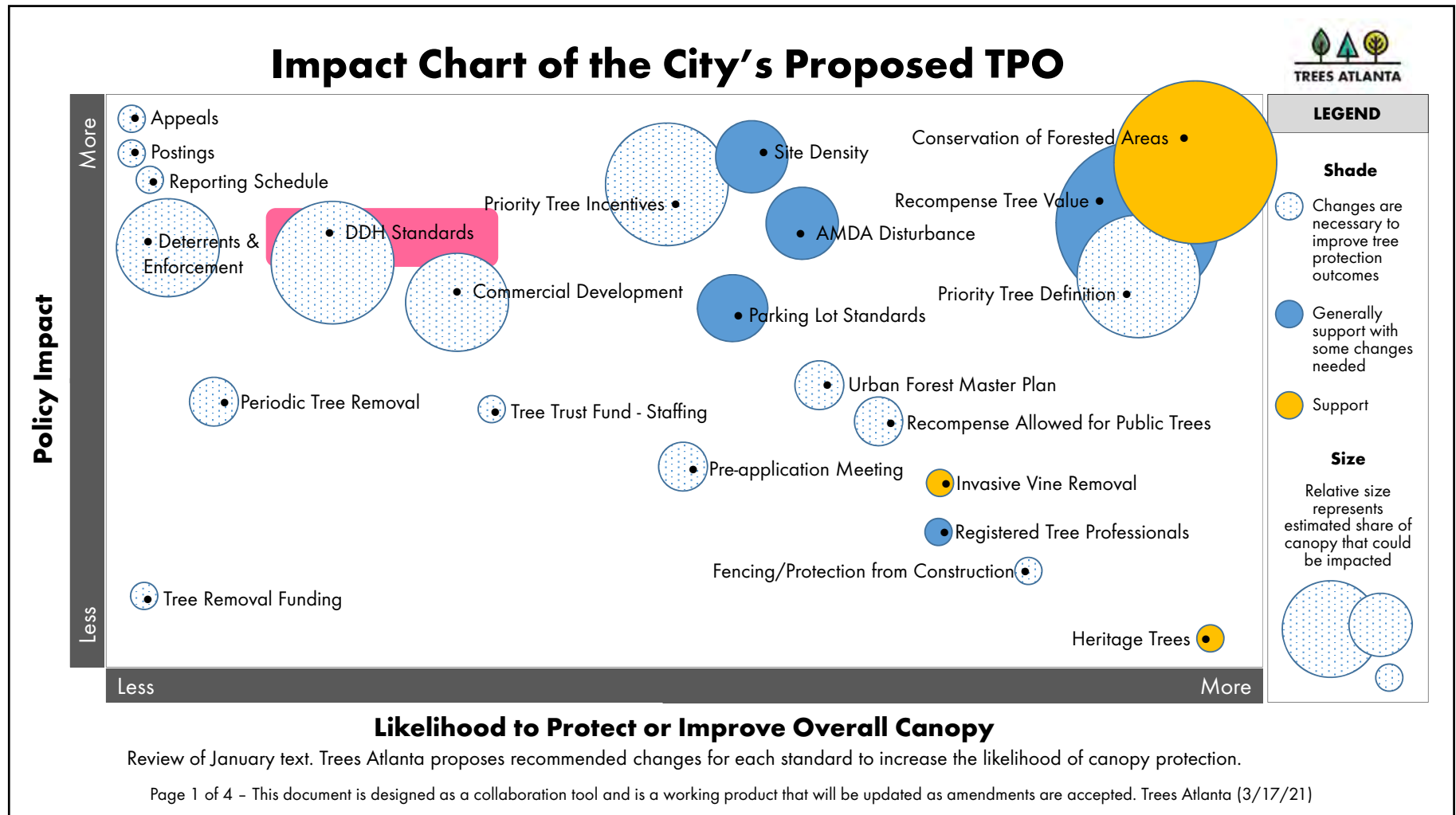
Session 3

Postings
 Appeals
 Reporting Schedule
 Urban Forest Master Plan
 Commercial Development
[Parking Lot Standards](#)

Session 4

DDH Standards
[Registered Tree Professionals](#)
 Deterrents & Enforcement
 Fencing/Protection from Construction
 Tree Trust Fund
 Tree Removal Funding
 TCC
[Conservation of Forested Areas](#)
[Heritage Trees](#)
[Invasive Vine Removal](#)

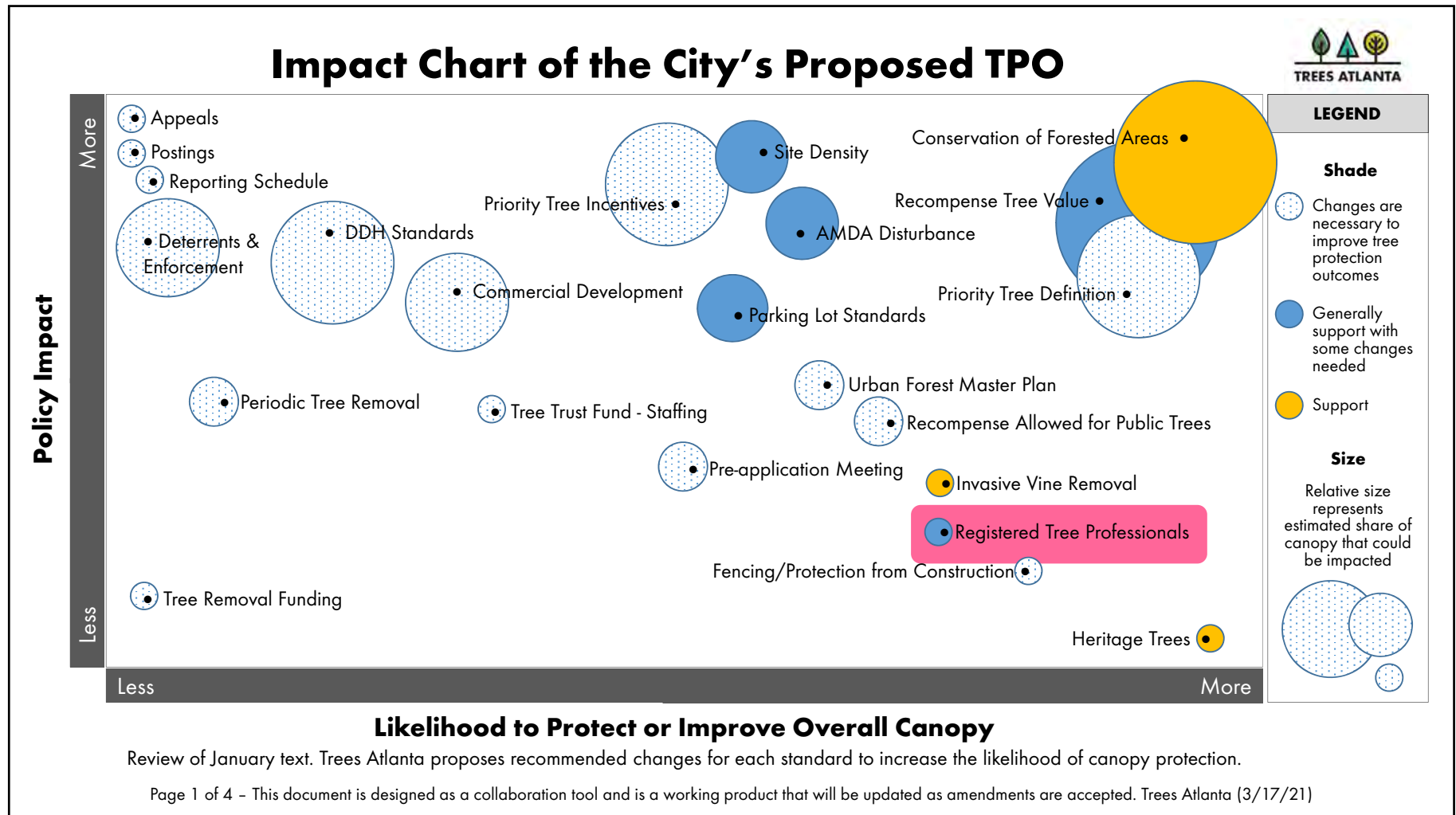




DDH: Dead, Dying, and Hazardous Trees



- Proposed Ordinance
 - City Arborist's proposed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for DDH trees has been posted on the City's website.
 - Requires assessment by a Registered Tree Professional or City Arborist.
 - All DDH tree removal permits shall be available for public inspection on the Arborist Division's website.
- Recommended Amendments
 - Trees should not be approved as DDH if they can be remedied by prescription.
 - Require self-posted notice permit number as noted in postings when the work begins and remains on site during work.
 - *Administrative:* All DDH removed must be recorded in Accela regardless of method of notice of removal.



Registered Tree Professional (RTP)

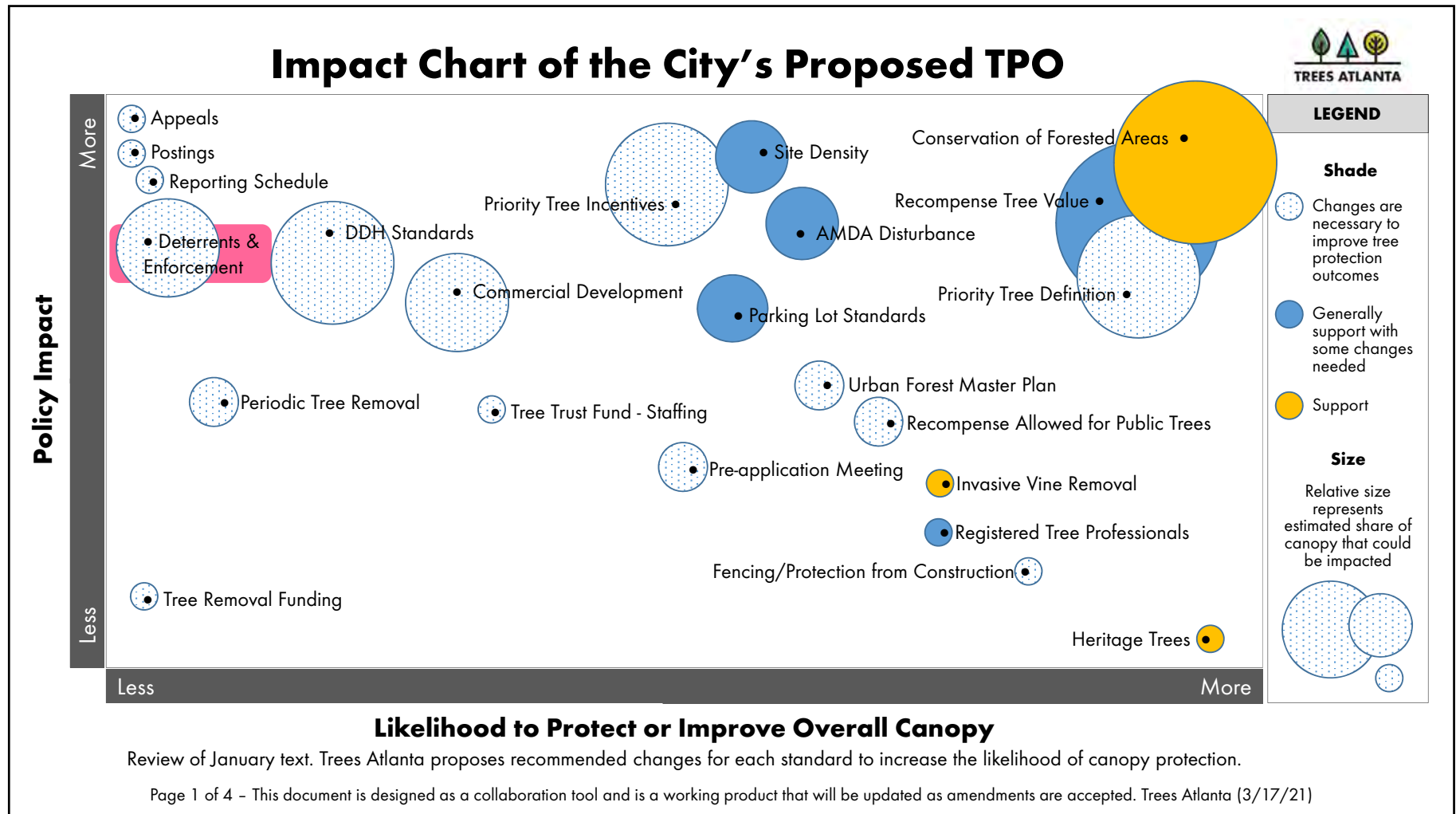


- Proposed Ordinance
 - All arborists and tree companies wishing to do work in the City, including any tree work that requires a permit, are required to become a Registered Tree Professional and must assert they will abide by the TPO.
 - There is no fee to apply.
 - Annual registration update is required at end of each calendar year.
 - Must provide documentation: ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) or RCA (Registered Consulting Arborist) certification (national), or be a licensed Forester (state).
 - Any tree survey or site plan submitted for permitting must include the signature of a Registered Tree Professional.
 - Violations are: (1st) warning, (2nd) one-month, (3rd) six-month, and (4th) 12-month suspensions from the Register.

Registered Tree Professional (RTP)



- Recommended Amendments
 - Increase period of registration to 2 years renewed on application date.
 - Excessive repeated violations (after 5th violation) results in a 5-year suspension.
 - Unpermitted removal of any Regulated Trees counts as two violations.



Deterrents & Enforcement

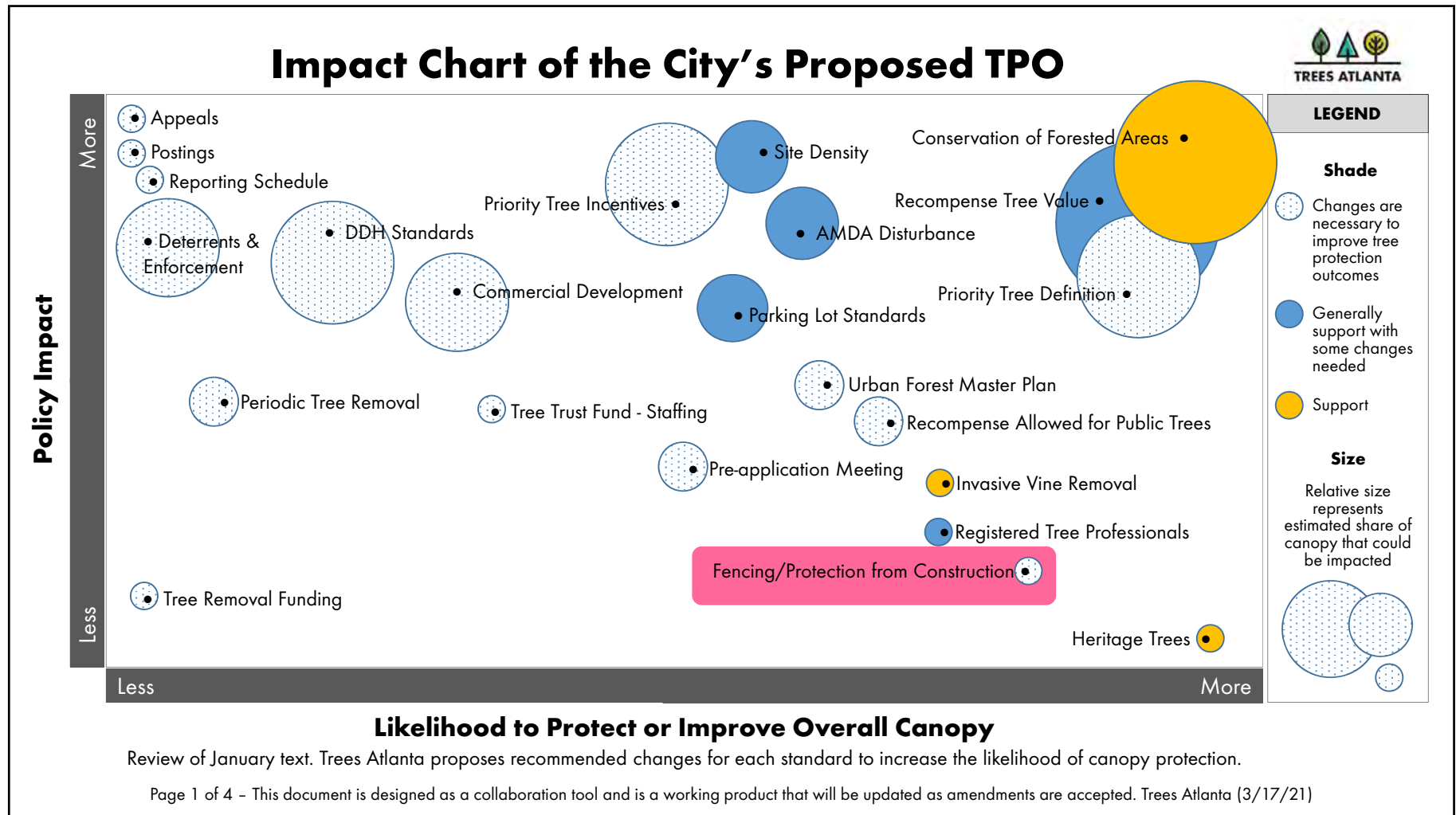


- Proposed Ordinance
 - City Arborists issue fines for illegal tree removal.
 - Fine values have not changed (limited by Georgia law).
 - Registered Tree Professional are subject to suspensions for violations.
 - Police may issue a citation for illegal tree activity.
 - Increase Arborist Staffing.

Deterrents & Enforcement



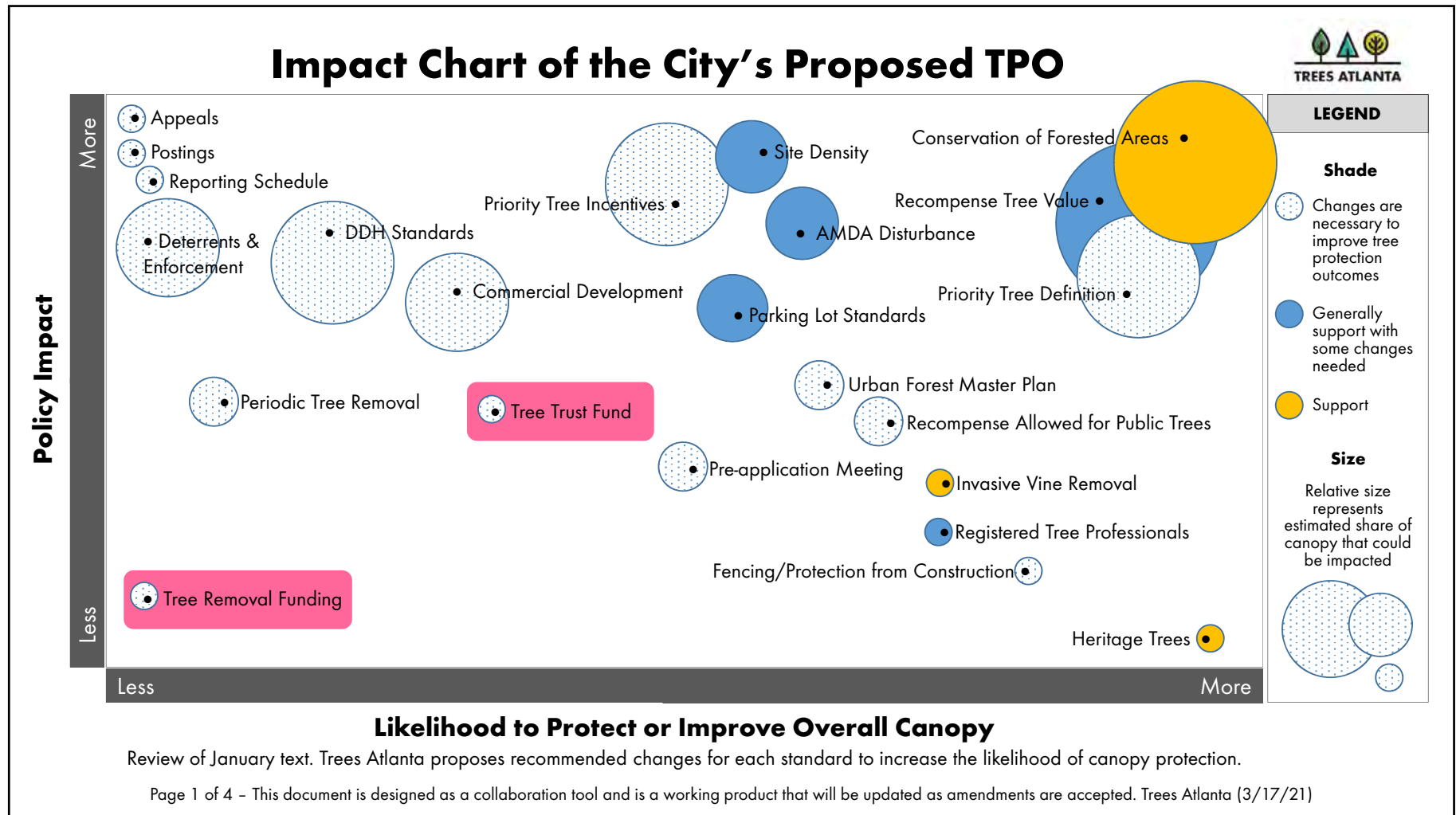
- Recommended Amendments
 - Weekend and evening enforcement procedures are needed.
 - Establish a single “exemption” process that applies overall to the TPO (as opposed to exemption variations throughout the document).
- *Administrative:*
 - More public education and easy to understand/accessible guides to follow TPO.
 - Add tracking number to 311 tickets for tree issues:
 - Set level of service for reply.
 - Note resolution before closing ticket.
 - Clarify penalties for citation and Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for police engagement, and record violation on parcel records.



Fencing/Protection from Construction



- Proposed Ordinance
 - Chain link fencing is required only for Priority Trees in front yard during construction.
- Recommended Amendments
 - Chain link protection fixed in place required for all trees if any tree violation occurs on project site (or if developer has been cited for a tree violation within the past 2 years).
 - All preserved trees on Commercial Developments require chain link fencing.
 - Conservation Areas must be protected with chain link fencing.



TCC: Tree Conservation Commission



- Proposed Ordinance
 - Comprised of volunteers appointed by the Mayor or the City Council.
 - Hears and rules on tree ordinance Variance requests and Appeals.
 - Determines how “financial hardship” is defined.
 - Receives financial reports related to the Tree Trust Fund (TTF).
 - Provides guidance on tree related education programs.
 - Designates and maintains Heritage Trees program.
- Recommended Amendments
 - Provide comments and recommendations to City Planning for projects to be funded by TTF.
 - TCC should provide an annual report/summary of issues raised by residents and permit holders.
 - City Planning should provide an annual report of accomplishments/outcomes funded by the TTF.

TTF: Tree Trust Fund

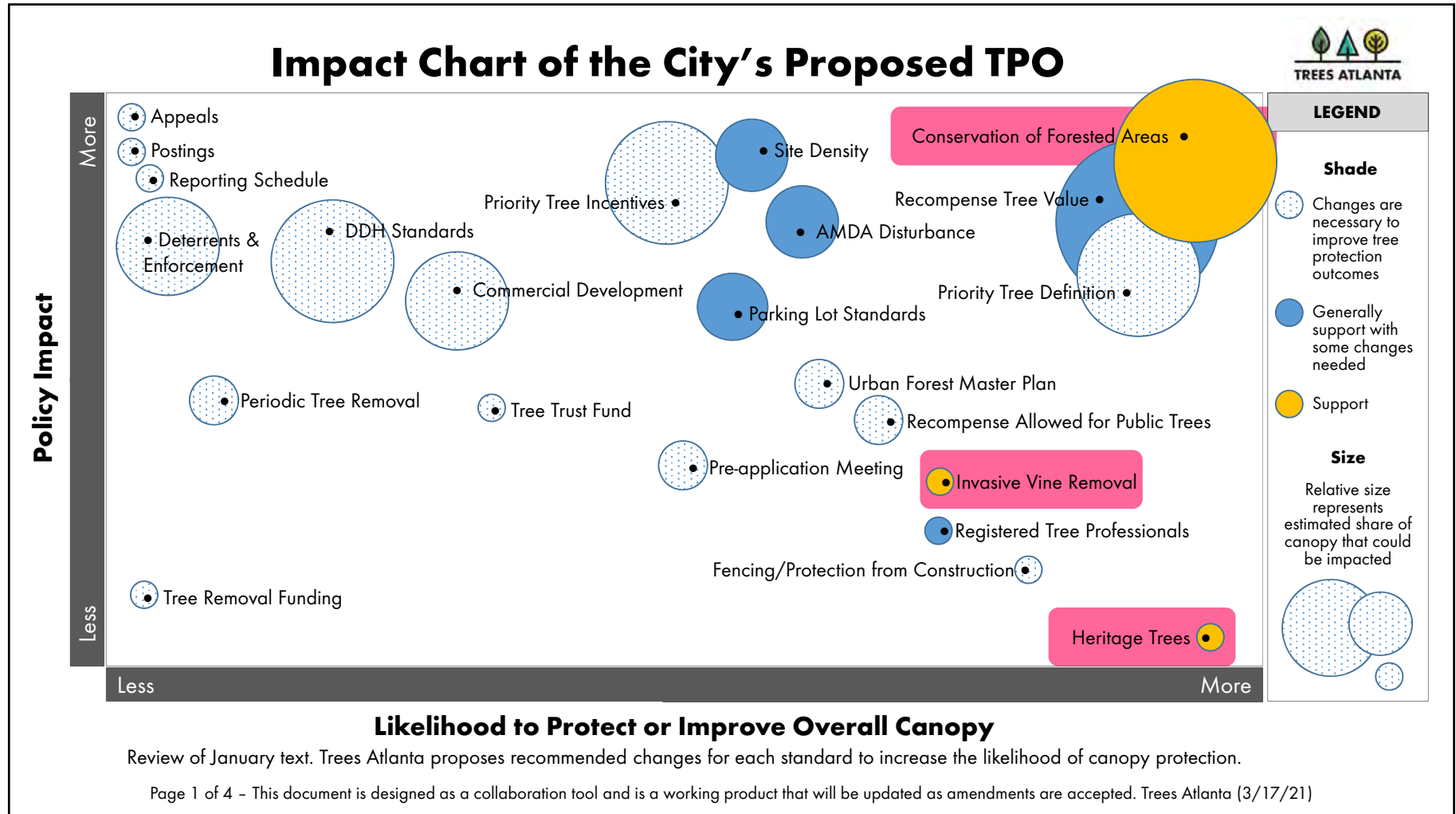


- Proposed Ordinance
 - Pays for planting, purchasing forests, restoration, tree care, tree education, and some staff.
 - Managed by Commissioner of the Department of City Planning.
 - Some staff will be funded by Tree Trust Fund -- not yet specified which roles and numbers.
- DDH Tree Removal Funding
 - \$200,000 per year funding for financial hardship to remove DDH trees.
 - At least one replacement tree must be planted for each DDH removed.

TTF: Tree Trust Fund



- Recommended Amendments
 - Prioritize use of funds for:
 - Purchase and protection of Forested Land (quickly disappearing opportunity).
 - Tree planting -- set aside minimum percentage for tree planting expenses.
 - If actual expense for purchase or tree planting is less than 70% for any year, next budget must include 70% or more.
 - No more than half of all City Arborist paid from the Tree Trust Fund.
 - Other city arborists should be paid by general city funds.
 - Trigger re-evaluation of TTF staffing expenses if it reaches more than 20% of the amount of recompense collected in the previous year.
 - TCC and Department of Parks & Recreation should review and comment on TFF budgets and expenditures for proposed Public Projects.
 - DDH Tree Removal Funding
 - Limit to when a permanent structure is the target or prevents safe access to the home but not used for trees without target.
 - Can fund strategic pruning / removal of branches to reduce risk.
 - Return unused balance of the \$200,000 to Tree Trust Fund at end of fiscal year.



Supported Standards without Amendments



- Conservation of Forested Areas
 - *Proposed:* Funds the purchase and restoration of forested land for permanent conservation.
- Invasive Vine Removal
 - *Recommended Amendment:* Specify that cut vines should spot treated with herbicide or roots removed manually.
- Heritage Trees
 - *Proposed:*
 - Requires property owner's consent.
 - Healthy Heritage Trees cannot be removed without approval of the TTC.
 - Considered Priority Trees.

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[Invasive Vine Removal](#)



Wrap Up



- We believe there is a path forward ... with changes.
- Contact us: greg@treesatlanta.org, judy@treesatlanta.org
- Attend your neighborhood or NPU meeting when the TPO will be discussed.
- Write or call your City Council member:
 - “The new ordinance has to save more trees and replant better, when that is not possible recompense should increase to fund future canopy. I will support the approval of the new ordinance with the amendments recommended by Trees Atlanta. I would like the City to show the analysis from field testing the proposed ordinance will save more trees.”
- Keep informed. Sign up for Trees Atlanta newsletter.
 - treesatlanta.org/signup
- Review recordings and slides from this 4-part series.
 - Trees Atlanta’s statement of [Conditional Support](#)
 - [Is the New Draft Tree Protection Ordinance Good?](#) (Found at treesatlanta.org/news)

Thank You

Comments regarding the
TPO can be emailed to:

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greg@treesatlanta.org



Visit our website:
www.treesatlanta.org



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