

CONSERVATION INCENTIVES

Incentives to encourage developers to save trees in green spaces include, primarily, density bonuses (allowing more building height or floor area), expedited permitting to save time and money, and reduced impact fees or parking requirements. Other effective "carrots" include stormwater credits for retained trees, tax rebates, and transfer of development rights (TDRs). [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]

Here are specific incentives that can be offered to developers:

1. Development and Zoning Bonuses

- **Density Bonuses:** Allowing developers to build a higher floor area ratio (FAR) or additional residential units if they preserve existing mature trees, as seen in programs like Austin, Texas.
- **Reduced Setbacks/Parking Requirements:** Allowing structures closer to property lines or reducing the number of required parking spots to preserve trees.
- **Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs):** Allowing developers to sell the unused development rights from a preserved tree-dense portion of their land to another site. [1, 5, 6, 7, 8]

2. Financial and Administrative Incentives

- **Expedited Permitting:** Moving projects that prioritize tree preservation to the front of the line for approval, saving developers substantial carrying costs.
- **Fee Waivers and Reductions:** Lowering impact fees, permit fees, or utility hookup fees for developers who retain mature trees, which can reduce their mitigation costs.
- **Stormwater Credits:** Counting mature trees toward stormwater management requirements, reducing the cost of installing artificial drainage systems.
- **Tax Incentives & Rebates:** Providing property tax credits or direct, one-time payments for preserving specific trees or forested areas. [1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11]

3. Regulatory and Structural Incentives

- **Tree Mitigation Credits:** Allowing developers to count preserved trees toward their landscaping requirements, reducing the high cost of buying and planting new, young trees.
- **Cluster Development:** Allowing homes to be clustered on one part of a site to maximize open space and protect trees elsewhere.
- **Green Certification Recognition:** Offering official city recognition or marketing incentives for environmentally friendly projects, which improves a developer's reputation. [11]

These incentives allow developers to save on upfront costs or increase their project's profitability, turning tree preservation from a potential loss into a monetary advantage. [1, 5, 11]

All responses may include mistakes.

- [1] <https://www.vibrantcitieslab.org/urban-forestry-roadmap/strategies-to-achieve-tree-equity/incentives-to-property-owners/>
- [2] <https://rtmec.com/government-incentives-for-going-green/>
- [3] <https://research.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/67305>
- [4] <https://www.usgbc.org/articles/good-know-green-building-incentive-strategies-0>
- [5] <https://www.vibrantcitieslab.org/developer-perspectives-on-incentives-to-save-trees/>
- [6] <https://www.scenic.org/take-action/resources/toolkits/strategies-for-tree-conservation/>
- [7] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S161886672600021X>
- [8] https://www.cityoftacoma.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/ES/UrbanForestry/Urban%20Forest%20Manual/06_Ch3.pdf
- [9] <https://www.nixonpeabody.com/insights/alerts/2023/04/19/grants-available-for-green-space-development>
- [10] https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-10/documents/gi_munichandbook_incentives.pdf
- [11] <https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202310.0030>