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Trees get broader protection in county
Greenville council gives plan final OK

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The Greenville County Council on Tuesday adopted a modified tree ordinance that applies to all new development, but only in zoned areas.

The 13-page ordinance applies to industrial, commercial, retail, institutional, recreational and residential projects as well as multiple-unit subdivisions. It requires developers to have a tree protection plan if they intend to save existing trees and offers incentives for saving heritage or specimen trees.

Plants in a buffer area along streams can't be disturbed except in certain circumstances. Trees may be planted in these buffers. The buffers are critical to address flooding and stormwater issues, said Council Chairman Butch Kirven, who proposed the modified ordinance.

This is the third version of the ordinance. A committee had worked on the project about two years.

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Nancy Fitzer, education director for Upstate Forever, said, "On a scale of one to ten, we would rate the original ordinance presented by the tree committee as an eight; the version passed at second reading as a one; and the final version passed tonight as a five." She added, "We are concerned about its limited application to zoned areas."

The vote was 8-3. Joe Dill, Sid Cates and Willis Meadows voted no. Bob Taylor abstained.
