

Along both the east and west sides of the property the developer will be preserving ten feet of existing trees and also adding 5 feet of proposed plantings. Along the north edge of the property (east of Walnut Avenue), the developer is preserving 35 to 50 feet of existing trees. An additional 5 to 65 feet of existing trees will remain undisturbed north of that property line and south of the creek. Along the north edge of the property on the west side of Walnut, 20 feet of existing trees will remain undisturbed between the north property line and the creek except for ten-foot wide weir over flow area. The screening landscaping proposed in the ten-foot landscape easement along the south side of the development and along Walnut Avenue will be much, much more dense upon maturity than ten feet of the existing trees would be.

Not all trees are equally worth saving. Box elder trees, the predominant tree on the site, are weak-wooded, prone to rot, have poor form, poor to no fall color, attract box elder bugs, and self seed to the point of being weed trees. Further, as was stated in the Plan Commission report for this project, the overcrowded conditions that exist on the site have resulted in trees that are tall, skinny and high-branched, which make unattractive landscape specimens when viewed individually. As an additional point of information...we saved box elder trees along the east edge of the G&H condominiums, and the adjacent homeowners worked with our Village Engineer following Village Board approval to have the trees removed anyway because they considered them to be nuisance trees.

In summary, the developer is preserving anywhere between 10 and 100 feet of existing landscaping along the north, west and east sides of the development. The proposed landscaping along 63rd Street and Walnut Avenue is proposed to be a minimum of 10 feet in width and densely planted with a mixture of quality species at different heights which will provide higher quality landscaping screen in the long run than the box elder trees they are replacing.

Regarding Trustee Brandt's suggestion to place fencing inside a landscape screen, part of the purpose of the proposed landscape screen along 63rd Street and Walnut Avenue is to create a screen of vegetation for the benefit of neighbors passing by. Allowing the new homeowners to erect a fence between the landscaping and 63rd Street/Walnut Avenue defeats this purpose. Therefore, the proposed landscape easement provisions prohibit the placement of fences within the landscape easement. Fences may be placed adjacent to the landscape easement between the back yards and the landscape screen, thereby preserving the aesthetic benefit to the surrounding neighborhood. The individual lot landscaping that is required will provide each homeowner with a view of their own extensive private vegetation regardless of whether or not they fence off the landscape screen.

2) Also, do we have any expert opinion about the quality of the trees on the property? [Staci reply] I have pasted the portion of the Plan Commission report for this case pertaining to tree preservation below. If there are further specific questions, I would be happy to respond to those.

Tree Preservation: Based on tree surveys that were conducted, there are no high quality trees on the site. Sixty-nine percent of the trees are low quality species such as box elder, buckthorn, silver maple and Siberian elm. An additional twenty-nine percent of the trees are fair quality species but have messy fruit or are susceptible to disease (mulberry, black cherry, American elm). The remaining 2 percent are green ash, a good species but over planted in Woodridge.

The overcrowded conditions that exist on the site have resulted in trees in the interior of the site that are tall, skinny and high branched, which make unattractive landscape specimens when viewed individually. Given the low-quality species and poor form, preservation efforts were directed to the west end of the property abutting Timke Estates and to the east end of the property abutting the tollway to preserve a screen at the property lines. Airhart proposes a ten-foot tree preservation area along the east and west property lines as well a five-foot landscape buffer area adjacent to the tree preservation areas in which they will provide additional landscaping to enhance the screening effect of the preserved vegetation.

A 50-foot buffer area along the south side of the creek will remain undisturbed on the east parcel, preserving a natural screen between the development and the existing homes to the north. The detention facilities on both parcels will provide an additional approximately 120 feet of green space separating the proposed houses from the north property line. The detention areas will be landscaped with prairie-type vegetation in accordance with DuPage County requirements.

Landscaping/Tree Replacements: To replace the trees that would be removed, Airhart proposes a substantial landscape buffer along 63rd Street and Walnut Avenue. This landscaping, in time, will provide a naturalistic wooded appearance at the perimeter of the site similar to that currently enjoyed by passers-by. The homeowners' association would maintain this perimeter landscaping.

Airhart also will provide extensive foundation and yard landscaping on each individual residential lot that would also count towards the Village's tree replacement guidelines. The trees and shrubs in the perimeter landscape buffer and on each individual lot will be higher quality species, offer a better mix of plant types for use by wildlife, will diversify the species mix to minimize the spread of disease, and offer better year-round ornamental characteristics than the existing low quality trees. Though initially the proposed new landscaping won't be as large or have the same visual impact as the existing trees, they will grow, and in time will be a significant aesthetic asset to the neighborhood. The overall amount of landscaping proposed meets the Village's tree replacement guidelines.