



# **Native Tree and Plant Amendments**

## **PWPT Committee Presentation**

**Planning, Building & Development**

**July 27, 2022**

# Agenda

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- **Background**
  - **Canopy Cover in Lake County**
  - **Benefits of Native Plants**
  - **Buckthorn and Oak Regeneration**
  - **Natural Resource Protection Standards**
  - **Objectives & Progression**
- **Policy Options**
  - **Update Plant Materials List**
- **Increase Species Diversity Requirement**
- **Require Native Trees & Plants**
- **Expand Natural Resource Protection Standards**
- **Committee Direction**
  - **Anticipated Timeline**
  - **Discussion**

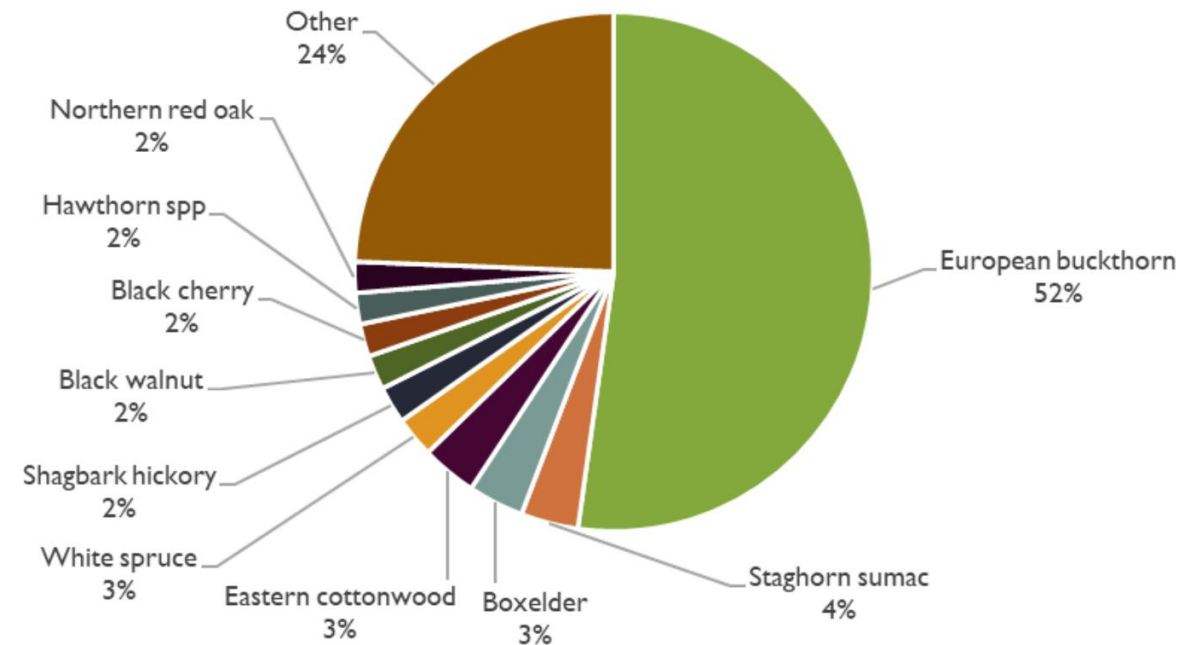


# Background

# Canopy Cover in Lake County

- Lake County has 30% canopy cover, but could theoretically increase up to 83% ([CRTI](#))
- Larger trees have greater benefits to local animals and plants
- Residential is largest land use category in Lake County
- Residential areas have greatest potential for increased tree canopy

Figure: Lake County tree species by stem count (CRTI, 2020 Tree Census)



# Benefits of Native Plants

## *For the Community*

- Water conservation & retention
- Wildlife habitat
- Carbon storage

## *For Individuals*

- Low maintenance
- Less pesticides and herbicides



Young oak woodland. Source: Lake County Forest Preserve District



# Buckthorn & Oak Regeneration

- Buckthorn grows quickly, densely, and regenerates cut stems
- Shift from agriculture and woodlands to residential in past 100 years created disturbances in local habitats
- Buckthorn prevents oak and other native seedlings from growing to fill forest gaps



Forest with and without buckthorn. Source: Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum

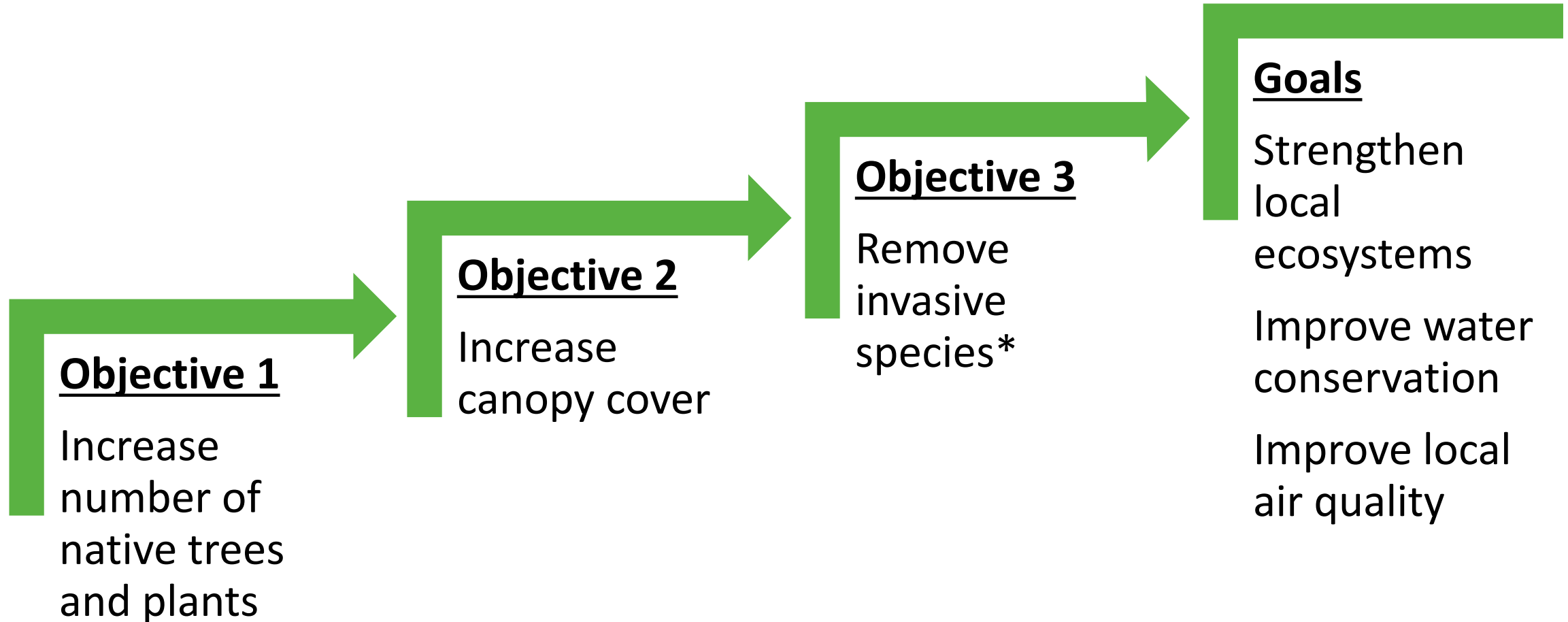
# Natural Resource Protection Standards (Ch. 151.071)

- Projects undergoing Site Capacity Site Plan Review must adhere to Natural Resource Protection Standards
- Floodplains, wetlands, and water bodies are protected in all development regardless of size
- Removal of protected trees/woodlands requires reforestation
- Reforestation may use trees on Plant Materials List or native trees

## Woodlands and significant trees are protected where:

- Developments with 3 or more dwellings
- Nonresidential development on parcels > 40,000 sq. ft.
- Development on parcels with area > 200,000 sq. ft.
- Certain high-impact nonresidential uses

# Objectives & Progression



*\*Pursuant to E&E Native Tree Restoration Program*





# **Planned Amendments**

# Update Plant Materials List

- **Plant Materials List is used as reference for replanting after removal of woodlands and significant trees**
- **Currently contains non-native, disease-prone, and incompatible trees**
- **Native trees are allowed but not indicated or prioritized on list**

## **Action:**

1. **Remove non-native, disease-affected, and trees deemed incompatible with County goals**
2. **Identify/add more native trees available locally**

# Increase Species Diversity Requirements

- **Natural Resource Protection Standards (NRPS) limits a single species to no more than 40% of reforested trees**
- **A greater mix of tree species and families can limit the spread of pests/disease and lessen overall impact on local forests**
- **Requiring a greater mix of species can better ensure long-term forest health from current and unforeseen biological and climate threats**

## **Action:**

1. **Determine appropriate maximum percent for any given species (no more than 15%, no more than 20%, etc.)**
2. **Determine appropriate maximum percent for any given genus**



# **Additional Policy Options**

# Prioritize Native Trees and Plants

- **Plant Materials List is used as reference for replanting requirements after removal of woodlands and significant trees**
- **Incentivize native tree planting by reducing reforestation requirements for each native planted**
- **Example: Applicant could choose to plant 3 native trees instead of 5 non-native trees**

## **Action:**

- 1. Determine appropriate reduction ratio**
- 2. Determine land uses and projects that may be eligible for prioritization**



# Require Native Trees & Plants

- **Plant Materials List permits, but does not require, native trees and plants**
- **Natives may be required based on project scope and size**
- **Requiring 100% natives is not feasible due to local supply chain constraints**

## **Actions:**

1. **Determine situations where required native trees and plants would be beneficial**
2. **Determine appropriate percentage for native trees and plants**

# Expand Natural Resource Protection Standards (NRPS)

- Most residential projects are unaffected by NRPS
- Expanded NRPS may include targeted residential projects – such as near protected lands or large properties
- Expanded NRPS may limit protections to specific resources, such as for significant “heritage” trees
- Additional NRPS for agricultural uses – preventing loopholes in woodland and wetland clearing

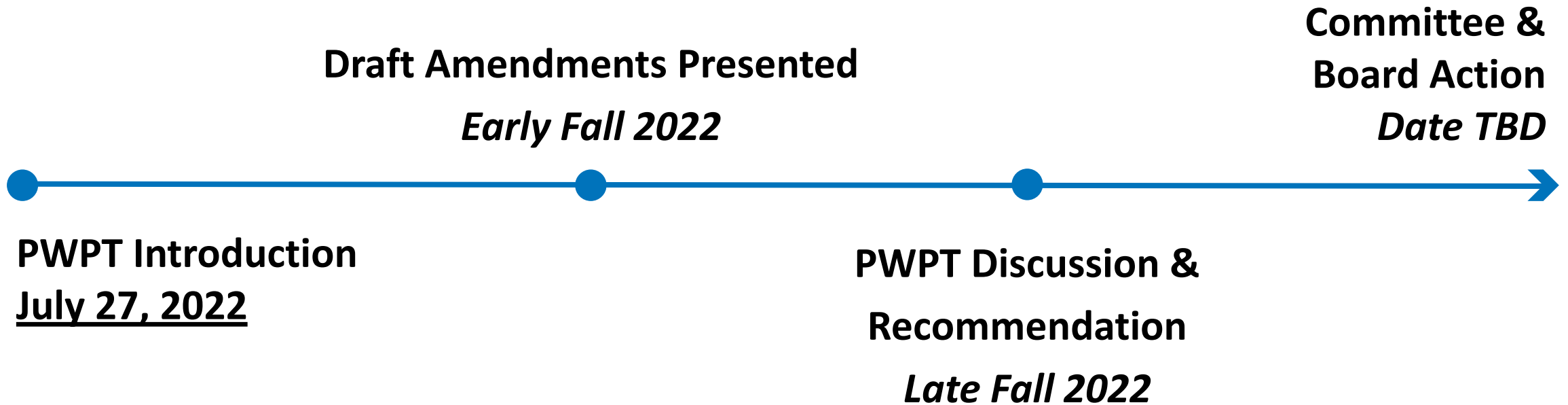
## Action:

1. Determine what protections could be reasonably extended in residential areas
2. Determine what constitutes an ecologically, economically, and aesthetically valuable tree to be protected under a potential “heritage” tree designation
3. Estimate the number of native “heritage” trees in residential areas
4. Work to close loopholes regarding NRPS and agricultural uses



# **Committee Direction**

# Anticipated Timeline





# **Committee Discussion**