

Community Forestry Management Plan 2016 - 2020

for

West Windsor Township

Mercer County, New Jersey

Prepared by the

**WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP
SHADE TREE COMMISSION**

ADOPTED

October 28, 2015

Community Forestry Management Plan

Introduction

The Community Forest can be defined as the woody landscape plants that exist in a locale. For the purpose of this document the Community Forest shall be defined as the landscape plants that occur on all public properties particularly including the trees that line streets within the public right of way, typically termed street trees. Some street trees may exist on private property in close proximity to the streets and since these trees impact upon the community streetscape they shall be considered part of the Community Forest. The focus of the Community Forest shall be the trees but it should be recognized that understory shrubs are a significant part of the “public” landscape and shall also be recognized as an element of the Community Forest.

Acknowledging the contribution shade trees and Community Forest make to a community, and the necessity to nurture, protect and manage a vigorous Community Forest resource, the State Legislature passed the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act on December 5, 1996.

This Act enables New Jersey’s communities to reduce or eliminate their exposure to litigation due to the drastic decline and poor condition of the community tree resource. The basis for this protection is a properly planned community forestry program implemented through a State approved management plan with municipal participation in the State training and accreditation program.

**“I am the LORAX,
I speak for the trees
for the trees have
no tongues.”**

Dr. Seuss

This Community Forestry Management Plan is an essential guide to successfully achieve a healthy and safe community forest. To continue and expand proactive and efficient practices the West Windsor Township Shade Tree Commission has developed this third edition of the plan. The Commission has established new goals and guidelines for future planting and maintenance of the Community Forest. Implementation of the plan objectives will enhance the livable nature and prosperity of this community. The managed Community Forest will improve aesthetics, civic pride, environmental quality, and climatic conditions for the general welfare of the community. In addition, this plan will result in a decrease in hazardous tree situations and long term reductions in tree maintenance and removal costs.

The New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Act requires that a Community Forestry management plan include ten elements. This document addresses these ten elements and offers additional proposals for the development of future community forest projects to be implemented for the years 2016 to 2020.

The West Windsor Township Shade Tree Commission is honored to present this plan to the Mayor, Township Council and community to help us “treasure our trees.”

Community Forestry Management Plan

October 28, 2015

Mayor, Shing-Fu Hsueh
West Windsor Township
West Windsor, NJ

RE: **Community Forestry Management Plan**

Dear Mayor and Council:

The Shade Tree Commission is pleased to announce that in accordance with the duties promulgated to the Shade Tree Commission by Ordinance, and the guidelines established under the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Act, we have prepared and adopted this fourth edition Community Forestry Management Plan for the West Windsor Township. This plan covers the years 2016 to 2020, establishing the goals and objectives of the Shade Tree Commission providing a clear path for the Commission to continue and expand its work with the preservation, maintenance and enhancement of the Community Forest over the next five years. This plan will help our Township maintain a sustainable, productive living forest resource for our community.

Certification of this plan by the State and enactment of the objectives outlined will provide the Township with protection from liability associated with the Community Forest resource. Upon acceptance the Township will be eligible for future grants to fund the various programs and activities necessary to implement this plan.

As a result of these actions the Shade Tree Commission and the West Windsor Township will pledge to a directed commitment of efforts and resources to create a Community Forest that greatly enhances the quality of living and public safety for Township residents now and well into the future.

Thank You,

Ronald J. Slinn, Chairman
West Windsor Township Shade Tree Commission

cc: Shade Tree Commission
Township Council

ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

I. Municipal Information Form

II. Introduction

- A. Mission Statement
- B. Goals and Objectives
- C. Liability Statement

III. Community Overview --- 5 Years of Progress

- A. Review of 2011 to 2015 Management Plan
- B. Present Community Forest
- C. Linkages to Township Master Plan

IV. Community Forestry Program Administration

- A. Community Forestry Program Administration:
- B. Interaction with Planning and Zoning Board
- C. Tree Service Requests

V. Community Map

VI. Community Training Plan

VII. Public Education / Awareness / Outreach

- A. Programs
- B. Communications
- C. Outreach

VIII. Community Tree Budget

ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

IX. Statement of Plan Implementation

- A. Short Term Implementation (1 to 3 years)
 - 1. January 2016 to December 2016
 - 2. January 2017 to December 2017
 - 3. January 2018 to December 2018
- B. Long Term Implementation
 - 1. January 2019 to December 2019
 - 2. January 2020 to December 2020
- C. Continual Tasks

X. Community Stewardship Incentive Program

XI. Appendix

Documents provided to enhance an understanding of the West Windsor Township Community Forestry Program.

- A. Shade Tree Commission and Trees Ordinances
- B. Arbor Day Art Contest Flyer
- C. W.W. Twp. Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan
- D. Adopt and Ash West Windsor (AAAWW Trees) program flyer

I. Municipal Information Form

Municipality: **West Windsor Township**
County: **Mercer**
Address: **271 Clarksville Road**
PO Box 38
West Windsor, NJ 08520-1999
Contact Name and Title: **Dan Dobromilsky, Landscape Architect**
Phone and Facsimile #: **Phone – 609-799-2400 x227 Facsimile – 609-275-4850**
E-mail: **ddobromilsky@westwindsortwp.com**
Organization's Name: **West Windsor Twp Shade Tree Commission**

Mayor's Signature: _____

Mayor, Shing-Fu Hsueh

Date of Management Plan Submission: _____

Time Period Covered by Management Plan: **2016 through 2020**

Please check off the Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) practices identified in your management plan.

☒ CSIP #1 Training	☒ CSIP #2 Comm. Forestry Ordinance
☒ CSIP #3 Public Education and Awareness	☒ CSIP #4 Arbor Day Activities
☒ CSIP #5 Tree Inventory	☒ CSIP #6 Hazard Tree Assessment
☒ CSIP #7 Storm Damage Assessment	☒ CSIP #8 Tree Maintenance & Removals
☒ CSIP #9 Insect and Disease Mgmt.	☒ CSIP #10 Wildfire Protection
☒ CSIP #11 Tree Planting	☒ CSIP #12 Tree Recycling
☒ CSIP #13 Sidewalk Maintenance Program	☒ CSIP #14 Storm Water Mgmt.
☒ CSIP #15 Other	

Official Use Only

Certification

OFFICIAL USE ONLY
CERTIFICATION

The above named community has made formal application to the New Jersey Forest Service. I am pleased to advise you that after our review, the NJ Forest Service has concluded that this plan meets the standards set forth by the State and NJ Community Forestry Council and is approved for the period covered.

Signed _____

State Forester

Date Approved

West Windsor Township, Mercer County, New Jersey

II. Introduction

A. Mission Statement:

West Windsor Township and the West Windsor Township Shade Tree Commission shall act to maintain and grow the Community Forest as a sustainable, productive, living resource enhancing community aesthetic and environmental quality and thereby improving the physical health, social well being and economic vitality for township residents and their properties.

In order to accomplish this mission, the Shade Tree Commission, the Environmental Commission, the Township Landscape Architect, and the Public Works Department work together advising the Mayor, Township Council, Township Administration, Planning Board and Zoning Board and implementing programs and tasks.

The Shade Tree Commission shall adopt a Community Forestry Management Plan to establish appropriate policy and procedures to guide Township officials, staff and community volunteers with the implementation of appropriate rules, regulations and actions necessary to uphold this mission.

B. Goals and Objectives:

The Shade Tree Commission establishes the following goals and objectives to maintain and supplement the West Windsor Township Community Forest:

1. GOAL:

Examine and re-affirm or modify the mission and policies of the Shade Tree Commission.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Develop and adopt a fourth edition Community Forestry Management Plan for the years 2016 to 2020.
- b. Submit and receive approval of fourth edition Community Forestry Management Plan by the New Jersey State Forester.
- c. Develop a list of Shade Tree Commission tasks relating to management of the Community Forest.
- d. Periodically review the present Township ordinances establishing the procedures, objectives and powers of the Shade Tree Commission in comparison to the State statutes and the practices of other communities in the State of New Jersey.
- e. Present recommendations to the Mayor, Township Administrator, and Township Council concerning any modifications or additions to Township ordinances, policies or standards, appropriate to enhance conformance with present State statutes and consistency with present Shade Tree Commission and Township goals, policies and procedures, or accepted arboricultural standards.

2. GOAL:

Examine, update and publicize Township standards pertaining to the regulation of the Community Forest.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Periodically review present Township ordinances regulating the planting and removal of landscape (e.g. tree removal permit requirements) on public and private property in the Township in comparison to other communities in the State of New Jersey.
- b. Periodically review the Township Master Plan and present policy and procedures that regulate proposed land development or re-development applications with respect to landscape and Community Forestry requirements.
- c. Consult with Township plan review boards and staff to evaluate ordinances, policies and procedures that govern land development applications and the Community Forest.
- d. Periodically investigate current State regulations and guidelines concerning the planting and removal of landscape trees and plants and compare to Township ordinances.
- e. Periodically investigate current arboricultural standards such as those published by State, National and International organizations, trade groups, professional associations and research groups, for applicability to the West Windsor Township.
- f. Submit recommendations to the Mayor, Township Administrator and Township Council regarding any appropriate modification of Township tree and landscape ordinances.
- g. Post notices and guidelines regarding accepted proper arboricultural practices relevant to the West Windsor Township Community Forest, on the Township web page and community kiosk at various Township parks. Distribute flyers at community events.

3. GOAL:

Maintain and protect the Community Forest resource on public properties in a sustainable, productive and safe condition.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Adopt a Community Forestry Management Plan.
- b. Maintain a clearly defined process for the prompt review and response to tree concerns received from residents and others.
- c. Evaluate and refine processes used to “inventory” street trees and public lands trees
- d. Continue present simple “inventory” to analyze the present status of the Community Forest, and identifying short and long term maintenance tasks as well as future planting sites.
- e. Develop budgets to perform routine, annual and special maintenance tasks that will be required, utilizing the Individual Property Plans as a guide.
- f. Develop and submit budget requests to fund treatment and replacement of public Ash trees, utilizing the Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan as a guide. Evaluate and adjust EAB actions annually.
- g. Periodically review and make recommendations related to Community Forestry maintenance tasks being performed on public properties, utilizing the Individual Property Plans
- h. Assist in the development of future Individual Property Plans for newly acquired open space and areas not presently addressed by these plans.
- i. Coordinate with the Department of Public Works on tree maintenance issues including training.
- j. Continue coordination with Emergency Services groups regarding tree services related to the natural disaster emergency plan for the community.

GOAL #3 OBJECTIVES CONTINUED

- k. Continue to evaluate, test and adjust the program and means of repairing uneven sidewalk sections associated with tree roots.
- l. The Commission shall during the month of February, submit an annual report to the Mayor describing the condition of the Community Forest including improvements made during the previous year and recommendations concerning tree maintenance budgets for the ensuing fiscal year. This report will coincide with the required NJ Forestry status report.

4. GOAL:

Expand the Community Forest resource to further enhance the visual and environmental quality of the Township streets, neighborhoods, parks, civic spaces and schools.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Identify areas of the community that are sparsely planted or void of trees.
- b. Develop and monitor a community forestry canopy goal.
- c. Collect detailed data concerning streets and properties in the Township that are sparsely planted or void of trees to determine the practical potential for the planting of supplemental or replacement trees.
- d. Prioritize new or replacement tree planting sites and organize into seasonal or annual projects.
- e. Coordinate planting or arboricultural projects to be implemented by volunteers and volunteer groups such as Scouts, Friends of West Windsor Open Space, and/or local clubs and church groups.
- f. Develop a schedule and budget for implementation of new or replacement tree planting projects.
- g. Explore opportunities for grants to fund Community Forestry projects.
- h. Present recommendations for the implementation of tree planting projects including any supplemental funding options.

5. GOAL:

Educate the community and community leaders on the value, need and proper methods to maintain and expand a desirable Community Forest resource.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Maintain and annually review current and typical community education projects implemented by the Township and Shade Tree Commission, including Arbor Day celebration activities as well as school and civic group programs. Consider modifications to enhance or update education programs.
- b. Help publicize Township education programs with press releases, bulletin board and web site postings.
- c. Maintain and publicize the Township's Tree City USA designation.
- d. Caucus with the Mayor, Council and Township officials to update them on new community forest findings and industry standards advising on appropriate new or modified Township actions to promote the value of the Community Forest resource.
- e. Maintain interaction with other volunteer groups in the community, including the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Friends or West Windsor Open Space, Green Team, Faith Groups, School Clubs, and the Senior Community. Examine the potential for expansion of interaction with other groups, soliciting them to participate in Community Forestry programs, offering to participate in their programs, and fostering knowledge in arboriculture.

C. **Liability Statement:**

The community forest, including street, park and open space trees, as well as greenbelt woodlands, endows the community with numerous aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits. Trees inevitably mature and retention of these benefits will require care, maintenance and eventual replacement. The community forest can impose dramatic costs upon a municipality if not properly managed. These costs are most obvious when poorly maintained or cared-for trees cause damage and inconvenience in the aftermath of a severe storm. Care and maintenance, in addition to planting “the right tree in the right place,” can help insure that community trees not only contribute to the aesthetic, environmental and economic vitality of the area, but also limit the potential of these trees to become hazards to public safety. Poor decision-making and maintenance will lead to premature tree removal and replacement incurring an inefficient expenditure of community efforts and funds. Proper management will reduce costs to the community.

It is the intent of this plan to focus available resources on the greatest need and procedurally work towards the creation and maintenance of a healthy forest. This will result in commensurate reductions in risk to public safety. However, the community must work within a reasonable budget that will not likely be able to immediately meet each and every community forest concern. Therefore time and monetary expenditures must be focused.

Additionally, the goals and objective established in this plan will help garner public support for implementation of the plan objectives providing demonstrative long-term benefits to the environment and public safety.

By establishing procedures to review tree requests and to “inventory” the Community Forest, including hazard assessment, the Shade Tree Commission shall attempt to foster implementation of corrective action prior to structural tree failure and other hazardous tree related conditions. It should be acknowledged that not all hazardous conditions can be detected or predicted. Proper planning, maintenance and care should reduce the probability of property damage or inconvenience, but unexpected events will still occur.

Implementing this plan will demonstrate that the West Windsor Township is devoting reasonable levels of resources in a planned manner to reduce tree related accidents and thereby reduce exposure to liabilities and promote public safety.

III. Community Overview – 5 years of Progress

A. Review of 2010 to 2015 Management Plan

The Community Forestry Program in West Windsor Township has made significant strides in the last five years under the guidance of the management plan. The following is a detailed review and analysis of the achievements, setbacks, and knowledge gained over the period.

The 2010 to 2015 Community Forestry Management Plan presented many proposed actions to be achieved by the Township. These actions can be categorized into 13 more general tasks. The following summarizes progress and difficulties related to each of these tasks;

1. Community Forestry Management Plan – The West Windsor Shade Tree Committee developed and adopted the third West Windsor Township Community Forestry Management Plan in the summer of 2011. It was submitted for State approval during the summer months. Approval was granted in September 8, 2011.
2. Develop an “inventory” of street trees and public lands trees – The majority of Township Street Trees were inventoried as the damage associated with hurricane Sandy were being observed and evaluated. The survey lists the street, total number of street trees, and the species of trees on a given street. It was determined that this is the most helpful information to have in the inventory relative to the type, means and interval of maintenance conducted by the Township Public Works staff. The trees along the major thoroughfares through the community need to be added to this inventory.

In 2014, Fraxinus, Ash tree location were re-inventoried, including the major thoroughfares in anticipation of a need to develop EAB management plans.

The inventory of Township open space trees and woodlands has been continuing. . The Commission coordinated completion of a Woodland Stewardship Plan for the Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum Woods, under the NJ BSF grant program in 2010. Amongst the recommendation was a plan to implement deer exclusion fence to promote regeneration of native trees in an area of significant windfall with hurricane Sandy. In 2014, Fraxinus, Ash tree locations were logged to facilitate treatment options.

The Shade Tree Commissions continuous evaluation of tree inventory programs and hardware has not revealed any apparent improvements to be afforded by the implementation of such options. It has been determined that the simple inventory that is presently in place is sufficient and efficient relative to the means and methods of tree care implemented by the Township.

To compliment this “inventory” the Shade Tree Commission developed a Tree Canopy Estimate Goal for the community. This goal included an estimate of the current canopy cover and establishes a goal of 40% canopy cover as well as a timeline and projected means to expand the canopy cover of the Township.

3. Implement tree work to remove any hazardous condition noted with tree inventory work. – This task was largely completed based upon initial inventory observations and hurricane Sandy related items. However, this task will remain as a continuous task to address specific tree conditions as they arise.

Community Forestry Management Plan

4. Investigate and test alternative means of repairing uneven sidewalk sections associated with tree roots. – In 2008, the Township Landscape Architect administered the sidewalk repair program and contract. New methods of sidewalk re-construction, ramping over roots, were implemented to reduce impacts upon street trees. The Township Landscape Architect accumulated, evaluated and administered the sidewalk repair program and contract for 2010, 2012 and 2014. This included investigation and evaluation of numerous products and methods developed by academia or researchers, commerce and other communities. It was concluded that alternative methods such as rubber sidewalks, root barriers, unit pavers and vinyl expansion joints would not be cost effective for application in West Windsor. Tree preservation sensitive methods of sidewalk construction, ramping over roots, that were implemented to reduce impacts upon street trees with the previous round of repairs in 2008, have been continued for the 2014 program. This task should remain as a continual charge into the future.
5. Arbor Day Celebration – The Arbor Day celebrations over the past 5 years were extremely successful. The programs typically included a school district Art or Poetry Contest sponsored and conducted by the Shade Tree Commission. All works were focused upon the value and beauty of trees. About 100 to 300 submissions were reviewed each year and prize money, donated by local businesses, was awarded to the best submissions in three age groups.

The ceremony and activities were conducted at the Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum unless weather required a shift indoors to the Township Senior Center. Significant crowds were attracted by including, Township Council members, school district administrators, school chorale or instrument groups, school environmental clubs and local Scout troops. This gave the Shade Tree Commission a wide exposure to discuss and distribute information about proper arboricultural practices.

In 2014, the State Arbor Day Celebration was conducted in West Windsor Township at the arboretum.

Tree seedlings are typically distributed to residents with instruction on tree planting.

Each year one or two memorial trees were planted at the Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum to continue expansion of the collection of native trees displayed.

In the winter the Shade Tree Committee analyzes the previous year's celebration and implements agreed upon modifications for the new annual celebration.

Community Forestry Management Plan

6. Investigate current arboricultural standards such as those published by State, National and International organizations, trade groups, professional associations and research groups, for applicability to the West Windsor Township – The Shade Tree Commission and staff conducted research and established Township policies, guidelines and public notices regarding:

- Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan
- Emerald Ash Borer Advisory
- Emerald Ash Borer Adoption Program – AAA WW Trees
- Bacterial Leaf Scorch Advisory
- Storm Damage Advisory
- Tree canopy Clearance Pruning
- Japanese Beetle Infestation
- Gypsy Moth Investigation and Infestation
- Tree Food – what is fertilizer ?
- Street Tree Planting and Sidewalk Conflicts
- Utility R.O.W. (right of way) Vegetation Management

These notices or guidelines have been posted on the Township web page and in kiosks at the arboretum or Township parks. They were also distributed to Township staff responsible for receiving inquiries from residents to facilitate a consistent and beneficial transmission of information and policies on these subjects to the public.

The Commission has also worked with several Boy and Girl Scouts to conduct tree care information sessions and handouts on topics such as mulching, planting and pruning.

7. Review the Township Master Plan, ordinances, policies and procedures that regulate proposed land development or re-development applications with respect to landscape and Community Forestry requirements, anticipating 2014 review and update by the Planning Board – The Commission has offered input into the Planning Board re-examination of the Township Master Plan. This included input into the Township Sustainability Plan produced by the Environmental Commission and the Riparian Buffer ordinance adopted in 2013.

The last review of the Township tree removal ordinances in 2009 by the Shade Tree Commission lead to a recommendation that the Township ordinance and policy regarding the regulation exemption for tree clearing on single family owner occupied lots remain unchanged. It was also determined that a mitigation process related to tree removal would not be appropriate for the Township. Current landscape ordinances provide for adequate forestation or re-forestation.

9. Re-examine content for Natural Disaster Tree Emergency Plan – The Commission initiated this task, but it has been determined that the tasks associated with the EAB Management Plan should take priority as the prospect of a significant quantity of dead Ash trees presents a more relevant danger, especially in the event of storms. .
10. Continue phased construction of an arboretum for the Township – The development of the Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum has continued to progress. Several new trees and shrubs have been planted. In particular, a “Liberty Tree,” *Ulmus Americana*, Elm was planted along with an interpretive display regarding the history of community “Liberty” trees. This was an Eagle Scout Service Project. The Commission has coordinated with several Scouts to implement service projects at the arboretum, including picnic tables, bat houses, and poison ivy interpretive exhibits. The arboretum continues to grow as a focal point for community gathering, recreation and celebrating trees.

Community Forestry Management Plan

11. Conduct routine community forestry management schedule. – The Department of Public works has developed a consistent program for the pruning of street trees along Township roads. The majority of this work is canopy raising or clearance pruning. The Township Landscape Architect conducts an annual pruning training session with the Public Works staff to introduce new staff to proper techniques and update the crew on the latest developments. The street tree replacement program has been very successful replanting approximately 100 trees annually. More recently, a single digital “resident request list” or spreadsheet that is shared by the Public Works and Engineering division has been implemented to enable more efficient and consistent sharing of information regarding requests and actions taken.
12. Apply for and maintain Tree City USA status – The Commission successfully applied for Tree City USA status each of the past five years. The Township continues to support the basic standards necessary to achieve and maintain this status. This program is a great source of pride for the community and aids all other efforts to promote conservation in the community.
13. Maintain CEU’s (Continuing Education Units) and approved status under the Community Forestry Act – The Township Landscape Architect and several members of the Shade Tree Commission have attended various education programs to maintain CEU’s under the Community Forestry Act. The training and education sessions attended have helped guide and inform the management program within the Township. Approved status has been maintained over the past five years. The liability protection associated with this act is the most beneficial element that helps sell continued participation and funding for work to retain approved status.

B. Link between Community Forestry Management Plan and Township Master Plan:

The Township implemented a complete re-examination of the Master Plan in 2008. The Community Forestry Management Plan was reviewed as part of this re-examination ultimately influencing the goals and objectives and discussion presented in the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element as well as the Conservation Plan Element. The Community Forestry Management Plan was attached to the Township Master Plan as an addendum and it is accessible via the internet and a link from the Township web page. During and subsequent to the 2008 re-examination of the Master Plan the Environmental Commission developed a Sustainability Plan that was adopted into the Master Plan as a Sustainability Plan Element in 2009. The Shade Tree Commission provided input for the development of the Sustainability Plan Element. The Shade Tree Commission has coordinated with the Planning Board requests regarding the periodic review of the Master Plan by the Board. No significant updates have been implemented during the past 5 years. This collaborative and inclusive process has further imbedded concepts and actions related to management of the community forest into the fabric of Township planning and forecasting.

C. Ordinance amendments related to the tree resource:

No specific modifications of Township ordinances related to the tree resource were implemented over the past five years. A riparian buffer ordinance was adopted by the Township, which will help protect and expand the community forest in stream corridor, flood plains and wetlands.

D. Benefits of the Community Forestry Management Plan:

West Windsor Township has experienced nearly immeasurable benefit resulting from the development and implementation of the Community Forestry Management Plan over the past five years. These benefits include expanded preservation and planting of trees; improved tree maintenance; reduction of tree and sidewalk hazards; dissemination of proper arboricultural practices; and improved quality of life for the residents, as discussed throughout this document. West Windsor Township looks forward to the continuation of these efforts and implementation of new initiatives to further improve the community forest.

IV. Community Forestry Program Administration

A. Community Forestry Program Administration:

The program administration has not changed dramatically over the past five years. However, the Shade Tree Commission enabling ordinance did change such that the tree board was modified from a committee to a commission. A copy of the ordinance is included in the appendix for reference. A description of the Commission's duties, make-up and terms are offered in the ordinance.

The Commission meets monthly; oversees tree planting and maintenance with the Municipal Department of Public Works and Township Landscape Architect/Certified Tree Expert; administers the Arbor Day Celebration; and coordinates development and management of the Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum. The Commission has taken an active role in the development of the Individual Property Plans being developed by the Township to manage open space properties.

B. Interaction with Planning and Zoning Board:

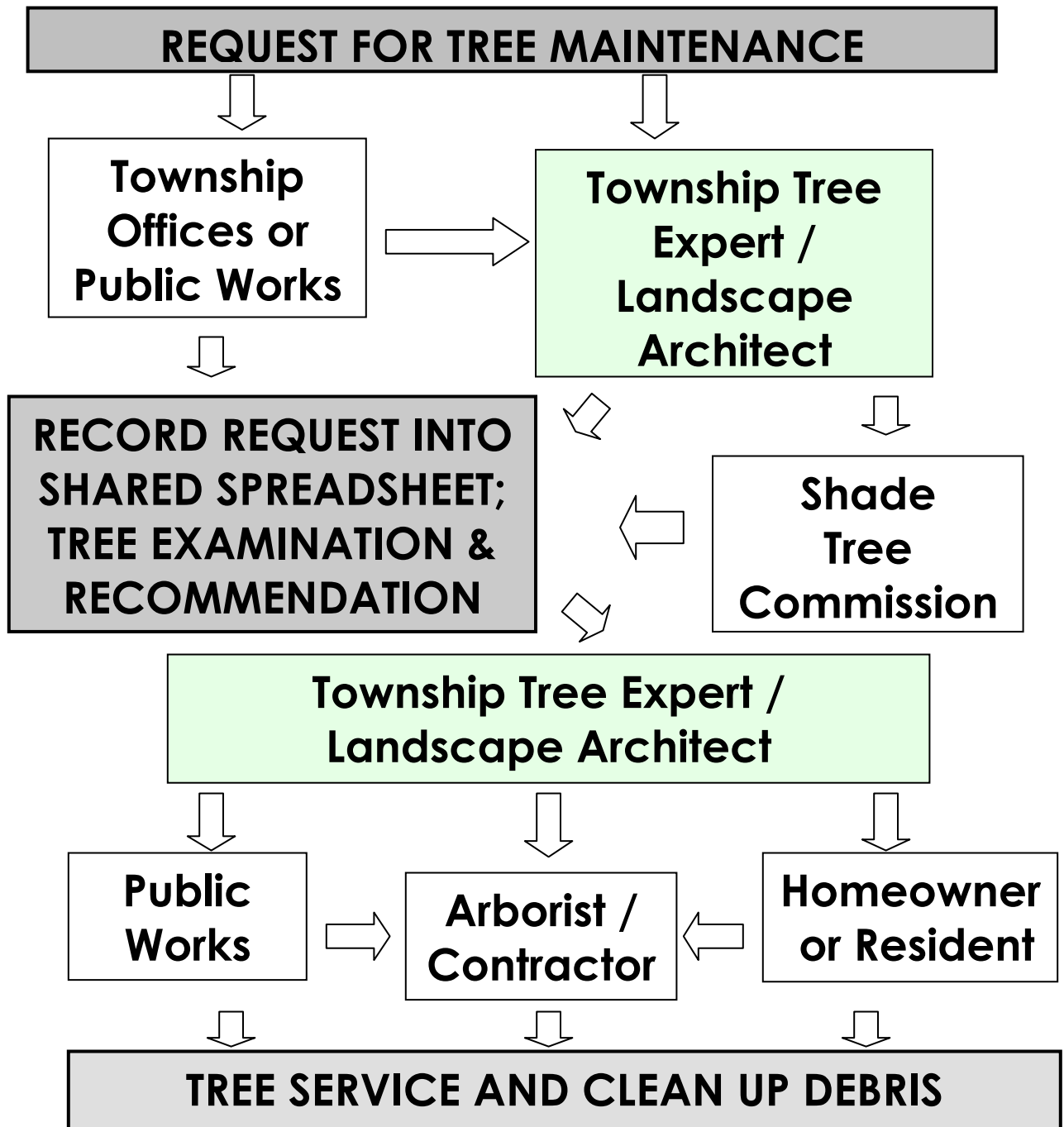
Members of the Shade Tree Commission also sit on the Township Environmental Commission and Site Plan Review Advisory Board. The Township Division of Land Use provides a copy of all new site and subdivision applications to the Commission for review and comment. Comments are provided through the Township Landscape Architect with his report to the various land use boards. The Shade Tree Commission will review site or subdivision plans that present concerns or opportunities regarding the community forest.

Interaction with the land use board has been successful and effective. However, the Shade Tree Commission will improve interaction with the land use boards by transmitting and presenting newly developed policy / guidelines to the Boards.

C. Tree Service Requests:

The following tree service request flow chart has been updated from the initial chart developed with the first West Windsor Township Community Forestry Management Plan and is included here as a reference tool.

FLOW CHART
DEPICTING THE PROCESSING OF TREE
SERVICE REQUESTS



V. Community Map

COMMUNITY MAP WILL BE ADDED TO THE FINAL DOCUMENT
IT IS NOT INCLUDED AT THIS TIME TO REDUCE THE DIGITAL FILE SIZE

VI. Training Plan

A. CORE Training and CEU's:

West Windsor Township has maintained CORE and CEU requirements to retain approved status over the five year period. Three current Shade Tree Commission members and one Township employee have completed CORE training. Commission members typically attend the NJ Shade Tree Federation Conference annually and participate in various supplemental training programs. Commission members also bring extensive independent professional qualifications to deliberations and decisions.

Additional, supplemental training has included several Bartlett Tree Experts Winter Seminars and other professional seminars that included presentations on hazardous tree identification, planting along watercourses, and landscape design. Township staff and Commission members shall continue to acquire the required CEU hours of training to maintain approved status.

In addition, Township staff continually reviews several professional journals to keep abreast of the latest developments in arboricultural practice and threats to the community forest. Appropriate topics are discussed during Shade Tree Commission meetings and bulletins are posted on the Township web page and at the Arboretum kiosk.

The municipal budget has included line items for continuing education for professional staff and volunteers in the range of \$1,500 to \$3000 per year. This funding must remain constant to enable the Township to fulfill the training requirements under the NJ Community Forestry Act.

B. Technical Training Needs:

It is anticipated that technical training and updated research will be required for Township staff and Commission members to help implement the action items associated with this plan. The following topics will be investigated.

- Pest and Disease Updates and Management
- Woodland / Wildfire Management
- Tree Recycling
- Pruning and Tree Care
- Tree Inventory / Hazard Tree Identification or Assessment
- Tree Root and Utility Conflicts (above and below ground)

VII. Public Education /Awareness/Outreach

The following is a summary of how community involvement has been integrated into the implementation of the Community Forestry Management Plan in the past and shall continue into the future.

A. Programs:

The Shade Tree Commission organized and administered the West Windsor Township Arbor Day Celebration each of the last five years. School children and their parents are attracted to the program via art or poetry contests and inclusion of choral or music groups, clubs and Scouting organizations, as well as sponsoring businesses, in the celebration. Some special activities included:

- 2011 – Space Shuttle Pine tree planted at the Ron Rogers Arboretum
- 2014 – State Arbor Day Celebration in West Windsor Township.

Every few years the Mercer County Extension Agent is asked to conduct an education program or discussion on arboricultural topics. Some years a local Tai-Chi club has conducted a pre-opening demonstration celebrating the connection between our chi and nature. In addition to these features each year tree planting and care demonstration are conducted as part of the ceremonies. Saplings from the NJ Forestry Nursery are distributed with planting instructions to the Arbor Day attendees.

A memorial tree program is offered at the Arboretum. Donations are accepted through non-profit organizations to plant trees with engraved pavers to memorialize persons and events associated with the community. This program has proven to be quite successful focusing the desire of the community for memorial tree planting and enhancing development of the Arboretum.

B. Communications:

The initiation and development of the Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum has been the largest accomplishment for public education over the first five years. In the second five years a kiosk was implemented at the arboretum. The kiosk has been utilized by the Commission to disseminate information on various arboricultural practices throughout the year, including planting, mulching, pruning, plant selection, and the value of trees, to name a few.

Community Forestry Management Plan

For the past 10 years Shade Tree Commissioners have penned letters or articles for the local newspaper and some High School students have become involved broadcasting some Arbor Day notices and health messages on the school radio. In addition, the Commission has developed several policy papers on arboricultural subjects or issues, such as Emerald Ash Borer and Bacterial Leaf Scorch that were posted on the Township web page and submitted to local newspapers in the form of letters to the editor.

C. Outreach:

The Township has partnered with the Lions and Rotary Clubs, High School clubs, a local retirement community Art Club, a local outdoors store, and several Eagle Scouts. Service projects have complete various elements (trails, benches, bat houses, tree planting etc) of the arboretum and other Township open space parcels and a few of the Eagle Scout projects involving tree planting and landscape development have been completed on Township open space properties. During the past ten years outreach has been expanded to include Girl Scout troops with a couple of successful planting and seed collection projects completed.

On a daily basis the Township Landscape Architect is available to receive and answer or direct resident requests concerning the tree resource. These requests cover a broad range of topics but common subjects are tree pruning, sidewalk repair, and disease or pest management.

In 2015, the Shade Tree Commission partnered with a local Girl Scout Troop to promote the Adopt-An-Ash West Windsor tree adoption program. The Scouts have been targeting streets with Ash trees for flyer distribution.

Additionally, the Girl Scout Troop, some Commissioners and Bartlett Tree Experts have helped develop a local cable channel PSA on Emerald Ash Borer, which is still in production.

Posting of notices on the Township web page has been a growing means of reaching out to the community regarding care and appreciation of the community forest resource. The Commission will continue to explore expansion of this aspect of community outreach.

VIII. Tree Budget

The budget for Community Forestry expenditures in the Township has been stable with some spikes related to specific tree planting projects associated with park development. However, the expenditures have remained relatively steady and healthy when examined over the past decade. Tree maintenance expenditures for the past five years have ranged between \$69,000 and \$103,000 annually. Tree planting funds have varied with the minimum expenditure at \$11,000 and the maximum achieving \$57,000. The variations reflect the timing of various capital projects as well as grants. The following is an itemized budget for 2012. It is offered as a typical tree budget for the Township;

2012 Expenditure Summary

	Provider	Qty	Type	# of Species	Cost
1.	Community Group/Scouts Planting	10	Deciduous Trees	1 Species	\$ 0.00
2.	Public Lands Contractor	141	Deciduous Trees	15 Species	\$24,700.00
3.	Public Lands Contractor	1	Specimen Trees	1 Species	\$ 2,800.00
			<u>Tree Planting Subtotal</u>		<u>\$27,500.00</u>
4.	Public Lands Contractor		Stump Grinding/Pruning/Maint.		\$ 16,400.00
5.	Department Public Works		Tree Maintenance 2767.25 hrs x 20.15		\$ 55,765.12
6.	Department Public Works		<u>Contracted Tree Maintenance</u>		<u>\$ 2,600.00</u>
			<u>Tree Maintenance Subtotal</u>		<u>\$ 74,765.12</u>
7.	Arbor Day Contest Awards		Donated Funds		\$ 600.00
8.	STF Membership / Conference / Training		<u>Budgeted Funds</u>		<u>\$ 200.00</u>
			<u>Tree Advocacy Subtotal</u>		<u>\$ 800.00</u>
			Total Tree Work		<u>\$103,065.12</u>

The Township Landscape Architect and Volunteer in-kind hours are not typically incorporated into the tree budget. Staff and the Shade Tree Commission should develop a means of recording this aspect of the tree budget. In addition the budget could also be expanded to include equipment and materials expended by the Public Works Department.

The implementation of the Individual Parcel Plans, which are management plans for many of the open space parcels recently acquired by the Township, will result in expanded expenditure of funds for woodland and open space stewardship on these properties in the future.

The Shade Tree Commission has requested a separate budget for treatment and replacement of public trees related to the Emerald Ash Borer introduction. An initial anticipated annual budget of \$63,000 has been made. It is expected that all of the Township Ash trees can be treated or replaced in eight years with special annual funding in this amount.

IX. Statement of Plan Implementation

A. Short Term Implementation

1. January 2016 to December 2016

- a. Develop, adopt, obtain approval of the 2016 to 2020 Community Forestry Management Plan – Spring
- b. Promote and manage the Adopt An Ash West Windsor, tree adoption program. – Spring and Summer
- c. Coordinate EAB Ash treatment program for public trees – Spring
- d. Monitor Bacterial Leaf Scorch spread in the community and report to public officials and public (advisories / letters to editor) findings of significance. – Summer and Fall
- d. Investigate current arboricultural standards such as those published by State, National and International organizations, trade groups, professional associations and research groups, for applicability to the West Windsor Township. Implement annual Township Arboricultural Policy Statements or Guidelines from the Commission over the next five years. – Spring, Summer or Fall
- d. Implement Individual Property Plans, management plans, arboricultural tasks as scheduled. – Summer
- e. Supplement or update Street Tree Inventory based upon tree work orders and EAB replacement actions – Spring, Summer and Fall
- f. Complete actions to develop Ash and mature street tree replacement species / cultivar list (i.e. Understory Tree List) - Winter
- g. Plan and implement Arbor Day Celebration – Winter and Spring

A. Short Term Implementation continued

2. January 2017 to December 2017

- a. Promote and manage the Adopt An Ash West Windsor, tree adoption program. – Spring and Summer
- b. Coordinate EAB Ash treatment program for public trees – Spring
- c. Evaluate annual EAB special budge appropriations and make adjustments - Summer
- d. Investigate current arboricultural standards such as those published by State, National and International organizations, trade groups, professional associations and research groups, for applicability to the West Windsor Township. Implement annual Township Arboricultural Policy Statements or Guidelines from the Commission over the next five years. – Spring, Summer or Fall
- e. Implement Individual Property Plans, management plans, arboricultural tasks as scheduled. – Summer
- f. Expand Individual Property Plans, management plans for newly acquired woodlands on Township conservation open space parcels, to help develop future actions and budgets. – Summer
- g. Supplement or update Street Tree Inventory based upon tree work orders and EAB replacement actions – Spring, Summer and Fall
- h. Plan and implement Arbor Day Celebration – Winter and Spring

A. Short Term Implementation continued

3. January 2018 to December 2018

- a. Promote and manage the Adopt An Ash West Windsor, tree adoption program. – Spring and Summer
- b. Coordinate EAB Ash treatment program for public trees – Spring
- c. Review the Township Master Plan, ordinances, policies and procedures that regulate proposed land development or re-development applications with respect to landscape and Community Forestry requirements, anticipating 2019 or 2020 review and update by the Planning Board – Summer and Fall
- d. Caucus with Planning Board to initiate input recommendations into the Township Master Plan – Fall
- e. Caucus with Mayor and Township Council to garner support for any landscape ordinances modifications. – Fall and Winter
- f. Implement Individual Property Plans, management plans, arboricultural tasks as scheduled. – Summer
- g. Supplement or update Street Tree Inventory based upon tree work orders and EAB replacement actions – Spring, Summer and Fall
- h. Plan and implement Arbor Day Celebration – Winter and Spring

B. Long Term Implementation

1. January 2019 to December 2019

- a. Coordinate EAB Ash adoption and treatment programs for public trees – Spring
- b. Implement tree work to remove any hazardous conditions noted with Tree Inventory and EAB work. – Spring, Summer and Fall
- c. Continue to monitor Township owned open space woodlands – Spring, Summer and Fall
- d. Review the present Township ordinances regulating the planting and removal of landscape on public and private property in the Township - Summer
- e. Investigate current arboricultural standards such as those published by State, National and International organizations, trade groups, professional associations and research groups, for applicability to the West Windsor Township. Develop at least one new policy statement or guideline on an arboriculture subject - Summer
- f. Plan and implement Arbor Day Celebration – Winter and Spring

2. January 2020 to December 2020

- a. Coordinate EAB Ash adoption and treatment programs for public trees – Spring
- b. Implement tree work to remove any hazardous conditions noted with Tree Inventory and EAB work. – Spring, Summer and Fall
- c. Initiate re-examination of Community Forestry Management Plan for 2021 to 2025 – Summer and Fall
- d. Plan and implement Arbor Day Celebration – Winter and Spring

C. Continual Implementation

Continual Tasks 2016 TO 2020

1. Monitor, review and make recommendations related to Community Forestry maintenance tasks being performed on public properties.
2. The Commission shall during the month of February submit an annual report to the Township Council describing the condition of the Community Forest, improvements made during the previous year and recommending an appropriate tree maintenance budget estimate for the ensuing fiscal year.
3. Maintain Street Tree Inventory data.
4. Identify areas in the community that are void of trees, developing a means for planting trees in areas that could benefit from additional trees.
5. Maintain a clearly defined process for the prompt review and response to tree concerns received from residents.
6. Explore opportunities for grants to fund forestry projects.
7. Monitor and review community education projects and consider modifications to enhance or update education programs.
8. Monitor the condition of Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum specimen and woodland trees. Offer recommendations to improve maintenance practices and modify or amend the planting to sustain the mission of the Arboretum.
9. Administer the honorarium tree planting program at the Arboretum.
10. Monitor and review Township sidewalk repair projects and methods.
11. Publicize community education programs with press releases, bulletin board and web site postings.
12. Maintain CORE trained Shade Tree Commission requirements and annual continuing education requirements under the Community Forestry Act.

Community Forestry Management Plan

Continual Tasks 2016 TO 2020

13. Maintain and publicize the Township's Tree City USA designation.
14. Promote the value of the Community Forest resource in all contacts with community leaders.
15. Celebrate Arbor Day continually exploring improvements that promote interaction with a larger and more diverse segment of the community.

X. Community Stewardship Incentive Program (C S I P)

The Shade Tree Commission has previously applied for and received two CSIP grants for planting of trees at the Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum and along New Village Road. Approximately 100 trees were planted with a total expenditure of \$70,959.75, including grant funding that totaled \$28,291.25. The Commission coordinated completion of a Woodland Stewardship Plan for the Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum Woods, under the NJ BSF grant program in 2010, totaling \$7,000.00. The CSIP funds have been particularly beneficial to the Township, enabling achievement of one of the most successful task in the Community Forestry Management Plan - development of the arboretum. The Shade Tree Commission is committed to maintaining approved status and anticipates eligibility for future grant opportunities.

The following is a summary of CSIP practices addressed in this management plan:

CSIP #1 Training

Continuing Education and additional CORE training is addressed on pages – 9,16 and 21

CSIP #2 Community Forestry Ordinance Establishments

Ordinance review past and future is addressed on pages - 7,8,15,17,18, 27 and 26.

CSIP #3 Public Education and Awareness

Outreach to community on community forestry or arboricultural education at Arboretum kiosk, via public notices, web page postings, letters to newspapers and on Arbor Day is addressed on pages - 11, 16, 21, 22, and 29.

CSIP #4 Arbor Day Activities

Arbor Day Celebration planning and implementation is addressed on pages 11,14, 18, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29.

CSIP #5 Tree Inventory

Street and Open Space tree assessment and inventory is addressed on pages – 9,12,13,21,25,26,27,28 and 29.

Community Forestry Management Plan

CSIP #6 Hazard Tree Assessment

Street tree inventory and hazard tree work is addressed on the pages listed for CSIP #5.

CSIP #7 Storm Damage Assessment

Storm and natural disaster management of the tree resource is address on pages - 12, 15 and 29.

CSIP #8 Tree Maintenance and Removals

Identify tree planting needs in the community and planting projects is addressed on pages – 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30 and 32.

CSIP #9 Insect and Disease Management

Training Public Works Staff is addressed on pages – 10, 17 and 19.

Update tree maintenance ordinances and tasks is addressed on pages - 10, 11, 15, 18, 19, 25, and 30.

Public outreach to community on latest insect and disease managements concerns is addressed on page 21 and 23.

CSIP #10 Wildfire Protection

Wildfire protection is addressed on page 21.

CSIP #11 Tree Planting

Tree planting is addressed as noted in CSIP #8 and #2 above.

CSIP #12 Tree Recycling

Tree recycling is handled by the Township Administration and Department of Public Works. This area is addressed on page #21.

CSIP #13 Sidewalk Maintenance Program

Sidewalk / Tree conflicts is addressed on pages – 10, 14, 15, 17, 23, and 29.

CSIP #14 Storm Water Management

Tree planting and ordinances related to storm water management are reviewed as discussed as noted under CSIP #8.

XI. Appendix

Documents provided to enhance an understanding of the West Windsor Township Community Forestry Program.

- A. Shade Tree Commission and Trees Ordinances
- B. Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan
- C. Adopt an Ash West Windsor Flyer
- D. EAB Fact Sheet
- E. W.W. Twp. Tree Canopy Goal
- F. Bacterial Leaf Scorch – Resident Advisory
- G. Gouty Oak Gall – Resident Advisory
- H. Woolly Adelgid – Resident Advisory
- I. “How to Prune Young Shade Trees” – Resident Handout
- J. Tree Maintenance – Resident Advisory
- K. Mulching Do’s and Don’ts – letter to editor
- L. Dangerous Trees Notice – Township Form
- M. “When a Storm Strikes” – Resident Handout
- N. “Do’s and Don’ts” with Storm Damaged Trees – Resident Advisory
- O. Arbor Day Art Contest Flyer



WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF ENGINEERING

Shade Tree Commission

October 28, 2015

Mayor, Shing-Fu Hsueh
West Windsor Township
West Windsor, NJ

RE: **Community Forestry Management Plan**

Dear Mayor and Council:

The Shade Tree Commission is pleased to announce that in accordance with the duties promulgated to the Shade Tree Commission by Ordinance, and the guidelines established under the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Act, we have prepared and adopted this fourth edition Community Forestry Management Plan for the West Windsor Township. This plan covers the years 2016 to 2020, establishing the goals and objectives of the Shade Tree Commission providing a clear path for the Commission to continue and expand its work with the preservation, maintenance and enhancement of the Community Forest over the next five years. This plan will help our Township maintain a sustainable, productive living forest resource for our community.

Certification of this plan by the State and enactment of the objectives outlined will provide the Township with protection from liability associated with the Community Forest resource. Upon acceptance the Township will be eligible for future grants to fund the various programs and activities necessary to implement this plan.

As a result of these actions the Shade Tree Commission and the West Windsor Township will pledge to a directed commitment of efforts and resources to create a Community Forest that greatly enhances the quality of living and public safety for Township residents now and well into the future.

Thank You,

Ronald J. Slinn, Chairman
West Windsor Township Shade Tree Commission

cc: Shade Tree Commission
Township Council