

Municipal Information Form
Borough of Highland Park
County of Middlesex

Address: 221 South 5th Ave., Highland Park, NJ 08904

Contact name and title: Karen Swaine, Chair, Highland Park Shade Tree Advisory Committee

Phone # 732-485-3534

Organization Name: Highland Park Shade Tree Advisory Committee

Mayor's Signature _____

I certify that this Community Forestry Management was developed specifically and exclusively for our municipality.

Date of Management Plan Submission: December XX, 2018

Time period covered in Management Plan: 2019-2023

Check off the Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) practices identified in the management plan.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 1 Training | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 2 Ordinance Establishment |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 3 Public Education and Awareness | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 4 Arbor Day Activities |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 5 Tree Inventory | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 6 Hazard Tree Assessment |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 7 Storm Damage Assessment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 8 Tree Maintenance & Removals |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 9 Insect and Disease Mgt. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 10 Wildfire Protection |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 11 Tree Planting | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 12 Tree Recycling |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 13 Sidewalk Maintenance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 14 Storm Water Management |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 15 Other | |

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 standards set forth by the State and the NJ Community Forestry Council and is approved for the period covered.

State Forester _____

Approved Date _____

The Borough of Highland Park

**Community Forestry
Management Plan**

December 2018

prepared by

Highland Park Shade Tree Advisory Committee

and

**Kevin L. Scibilia
New Jersey Licensed Tree Expert # 279**

Highland Park Community Forestry Management Plan

2. Introduction

A. Mission Statement

The Borough of Highland Park strives to achieve an urban forest that is safe, healthy, diverse, aesthetically pleasing and functional. By maintaining the tradition of site-appropriate, large, stately trees and acting as stewards of the urban forest, the Borough provides for the health, safety and pleasure of residents and visitors. Through the sustainable management of our urban forest, the Borough seeks to sustain and enhance the valuable ecosystem services and biodiversity that our urban forest supports.

B. Goals and Objectives

Goal 1

Maintain a safe urban forest to minimize damage to property and injury to persons.

Objectives

- Continue to update street tree inventory. Refine information collected in street tree inventory to include nearest street address, blank planting spaces, and complaints/hazard trees.
- Continue pruning and removing trees as required.
- Proactively remove or protect ash trees in manner designed to minimize total economic and environmental costs associated with the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer.
- Seek an amendment to Highland Park's Municipal Code that will facilitate the removal of ash trees by eliminating the permit requirement and the permit fee, and also eliminating the replanting/tree fund payment, all of which would otherwise be required by the Municipal Code.
- Note the removal of municipal ash trees on the Borough's tree inventory and add additional replacement trees to its tree planting plans.
- Set up procedures involving Code Enforcement, the Shade Tree Advisory Committee (STAC) and the Highland Park Department of Public Works (DPW) so that tree removal permit applications are dealt with as required by the Highland Park Municipal Code, including on-site inspections prior to the issuance of any permit.

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Establish a minimum fine of \$250 per tree for the removal of trees without a required permit.

Goal 2

Improve the density and diversity of the street tree canopy. Focus on native species in street tree plantings where appropriate. Promote tree health and survival.

Objectives

- Increase number of trees planted annually with an initial target of 40 trees to be increased each year culminating in 200 trees planted in year 5 of the plan.
- Fill requests to plant in vacant sites with appropriate species (smaller stature trees under utility lines or in smaller curb strips, larger stature trees in larger curb strips with no overhead obstructions). Diversify species composition to adhere to previous objective with an emphasis on native species.
- Identify areas where a significant number of trees have been or will be removed due to disease, hazard or construction, or where tree density is otherwise below average, and target for area-wide, neighborhood-based restoration plantings.
- Promote planting of street trees on public school grounds as a method of increasing number of trees planted.

Goal 3

Encourage interest and active stewardship of trees and the urban forest among Highland Park residents and businesses.

- Address the reluctance on the part of certain property owners, business owners and tenants to accept and care for adjacent street trees.
- Contact recipients of new street trees to increase acceptance rates for new tree plantings.
- Maintain an updated and informative web page; make web page more user-friendly.
- Promote planting of street trees by educating and inspiring public school students.
- Conduct education and outreach by writing articles, tabling at events, speaking to schools, youth and community groups, and holding community meetings.

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C. Liability Statement

Adherence to this management plan will reduce significantly liability claims against Highland Park. Already the Borough has identified and removed the vast majority of hazard trees present at the time of the street tree inventory. Trees that are potential hazards are noted in the inventory database and will be monitored annually. A pruning schedule to remove dead, diseased or structurally weak wood on a routine schedule is planned.

Whereas no maintenance program can predict each tree failure before it occurs, the Borough of Highland Park is taking reasonable care of a living and changing resource. The maintenance program will reduce exposure to liability by reducing significantly the occurrence of tree-related accidents.

The benefits of following this Community Forestry Management Plan has been a more organized approach to management resulting in better detection of maintenance problems, better diversification of plants limiting pest damage, better location of small stature trees under utility lines, and increased awareness of the tree resource and its importance.

3. Community Overview

The Borough of Highland Park, with an area just under two square miles, is situated along the Raritan River in Middlesex County, New Jersey (see Appendix 1). Settlement of Highland Park began in the early 19th century. Route 27, which runs north from Princeton, cuts through New Brunswick, crosses the Raritan River, and continues northward through Highland Park and onwards towards Edison and Metuchen. Route 27 is Highland Park's main commercial district and is known within the Borough as Raritan Avenue. Due to a recent replanting, many of the trees lining Raritan Avenue are relatively young. Residential neighborhoods extend outwards on either side of Raritan Avenue. Neighborhood streets are mostly tree-lined and consequently shady; many are framed by large, stately oaks and maples. Highland Park has been designated a Tree City USA for close to 20 years.

Ordinance and Communication

Highland Park's tree ordinance was adopted in the 1980's and amended in its entirety in 2007, with some subsequent amendments to correct errors and omissions (see Appendix 2). The tree ordinance expresses Highland Park's commitment to its urban forest: "Trees are declared to be important cultural, ecological, scenic and economic resources. It is recognized that there is a strong relationship between the integrity of the Borough's water resources, development on steep slopes, tree removal, soil disturbance, stormwater management and the general use of the land resources; and a correlation between increased air pollution and high-density residential and commercial or industrial uses. Therefore, the Borough finds that the appropriate management of these resources is an important health, safety and general welfare concern."

Highland Park's tree ordinance requires permits for the removal of diseased trees or those in danger of falling or that pose a safety hazard; it requires that removals are mitigated by

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replanting or else by contributions to the tree replacement fund. The Borough Council, Highland Park's governing body, will be asked to provide relief from the permit process and expense in connection with the removal of ash trees, as well as relief from the mitigation requirements.

The Shade Tree Advisory Committee (STAC) partners with the Borough's communications office on an on-going basis to improve access to information regarding Highland Park's urban forest. A link to "Trees" is readily found under "Services" on the Borough's webpage, which leads to a page entitled "Highland Park Trees." That webpage provides a wide range of information, including forms to request a street tree and information on the permit process. Recent updates include new lists of deer-resistant plants and recommended trees. An email address is provided to allow more efficient communication between Borough residents and STAC.

A Highland Park Tree Walk guide was developed in brochure form. This lists notable trees near the main street in Highland Park (Raritan Avenue). The brochure is handed out during the Street Fair each year.

Inventory

The first shade tree inventory was completed in 1998. In 2017 a new inventory of all street trees was completed (see Appendix 3). The data were field collected, with additional guidance from remotely sensed imagery, to create a geospatial database of the street inventory. The street tree inventory was not conducted as a sample, but an effort to map and identify every street tree in the Borough. At the end of 2017 the database included just over 3,000 street trees of which approximately 98% had their size and species identified. As part of an update process that continues, over the spring/summer of 2018, over 2,000 street trees were field-checked.

The inventory demonstrates a lack of species diversity: just 5 species represent more than 50 percent of the specimens. Based on the resulting map, a rough estimate can be made that nearly half of all potential street-tree spaces are vacant across the Borough as a whole.

During the current planning period, efforts will be made to improve the tree inventory in the following ways:

- add street locations
- add vacant/potential planting sites
- develop data entry methods for continual updating, e.g., for hazard trees/storm damage, new plantings, and planting requests.

Street addresses would be most helpful for the Department of Public Works (DPW) when performing maintenance or when locating a resident request. However, it can be difficult to determine whether certain trees are on State property (US 27 Raritan Avenue), Middlesex County property (Donaldson or Johnson Park), Highland Park property or private property.

Tree-planting and Maintenance

About 35 street trees have been planted in the Borough each year from 2014-2018. Our aim is to increase the number planted as we gain capacity through experience, beginning with 40 street

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trees in Year 1 (2019), and increasing by roughly 50% per year to planting targets of 60 in Year 2, 90 in Year 3, 130 in Year 4 and 200 in Year 5.

The focus of tree planting is on species not currently overrepresented in the Borough and on native species wherever practical. The pace of tree planting is trailing the rate of removal by at least a factor of two. On top of Norway maple senescence, removal of pin oak succumbing to bacterial leaf scorch and now removal of ash doomed by EAB are further increasing the gap between removal and planting.

The budget for tree planting has not previously been used for maintenance, although the Borough ordinance does allow for this (up to 30% of the Fund). Currently the Department of Public Works completes about half of the tree removals and pruning, with the other half performed by a contractor (Rich Tree Services). In light of the increased removals due to EAB, the DPW may encourage an increase in maintenance funding through a focused effort on grants for tree removal or by using some of the money in the tree fund for maintenance or removal.

In the previous plan period, a letter was developed for homeowners that had a tree removed in the curb strip adjacent to their house. This letter was sent out by the Department of Public Works and many residents declined to have a replacement tree. It has been the practice of the Borough not to plant a tree in front of a home in front of the residence where the owners have refused a tree. We are reconsidering this practice in favor of an approach that engages all homeowners in a neighborhood.

Performance on the second goal in the previous plan, increasing the number of trees planted in relation to the trees removed, has not gone as hoped. Perhaps surprisingly, it is not lack of funding that is the major impediment as much as resident refusal to have a tree planted in front of their residence.

In order to limit homeowner refusals in the upcoming period, the Borough plans to concentrate plantings on particular streets or neighborhoods at a given time. In 2018-2019 we will pilot this approach. Each year thereafter we will aim to replant all the neighborhoods within a particular zone, each zone covering approximately one-tenth of the borough's streets. Within these zones, the focus will be on neighborhoods and areas where a significant number of trees have been or will be removed due to disease, and/or construction, or where tree-density is otherwise below average. At the same time, requests for trees from homeowners will be filled even if they are outside the targeted street or neighborhood.

A potential division of the Borough into ten zones is shown in the attached map (see Appendix 1). While the specific boundaries of the zones on this map are still under discussion, our intent is to plant street trees neighborhood by neighborhood within one zone at a time, covering the whole Borough over a ten-year cycle. Year one of the plan will be dedicated to pilot-testing the approach in one neighborhood of a few blocks only. Thereafter, our aim is to replenish the urban canopy of roughly 10% of the Borough each year for the remaining four years of this planning period. Replanting the remaining 50% of the Borough will be the focus of the next five-year CFMP.

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The new focus on area-wide restoration plantings is aimed at encouraging neighbors to participate in a collective project. Assisted by the Public Communications Officer, the Shade Tree Advisory Committee will actively support this new approach by conducting outreach efforts, such as by holding public meetings at the neighborhood level. It is expected that neighbors will encourage each other and exert peer pressure to participate in a project that will be to the benefit of the entire neighborhood.

In 2018, the Borough was awarded \$30,000 in support of a NJ Urban and Community Forestry Stewardship Grant under the Community Stewardship Implementation Program (CSIP). The grant will support the planting of 75 shade trees, primarily on the grounds of the Highland Park public schools, with a few shade trees intended for adjacent streets in the immediate neighborhood.

Emerald Ash Borer

The updated street tree inventory provides useful information for the management of ash trees in response to the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation. As of September 2018, the inventory located 73 ash trees out of a population of approximately 3000 trees. Eleven ash are less than 5 inches dbh (diameter at breast height). These are small enough to remove with one cut at the base and pose little financial hardship to remove. Forty-six ash have diameters between 6 and 20 inches dbh. This is a limitation of our current data set, because it groups relatively easy removals up to 10 inches dbh with more involved removals of 16 inches and greater.

The DPW is removing ash trees along the street in a cost-effective and efficient manner using the inventory map. Wherever possible, the DPW is taking advantage of opportunities for group felling in connection with trees slated for removal due to other problems. The felling of the larger ash will be contracted out. At this time there are no plans to protect any ash trees in the public right-of-way through regular application of pesticides. Treating an ash over many years would be costly. Sustained interruption or failed application in the pesticide would negate any previous investment in that tree if EAB severely damaged or killed it. Finally, treatment with pesticides is difficult to monitor. It is difficult to assure that the treatment was administered as specified.

Training

Since the original Community Forestry Management plan, those who work with the trees have become more aware of the resource through attending classes for CORE accreditation and in obtaining education in the form of continuing education units. Currently four DPW staff and two members from the Shade Tree Advisory Committee are CORE trained.

In addition to the STAC's own website, the development of the Highland Park Environmental website (www.leoraw.com/hpenv/) in conjunction with the Highland Park Environmental Commission allows a low cost avenue to disseminate information, such as the benefits of having a tree in the curb strip or parking strip adjacent to the house. A form to request a street tree is available on the Highland Park shade tree webpage on the Borough's website (www.hpboro.com). Participation in the Highland Park Street Fair and the Earth Day/Green Fair

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provides opportunities to distribute literature, recruit volunteers, and raise awareness. Much of the information available at the community fairs is also made available in the Environmental Information drawer shared with the Environmental Commission at the Highland Park Public Library.

Master Plan

The Community Forestry Management Plan has strong connections to local and regional planning documents. The last full Master Plan was adopted in 2003 and was re-examined in 2010. It specifically mentions the Shade Tree Advisory Committee and their tree-planting efforts.

Highland Park has also installed a native plant reserve on Green Acres land along the river and adjacent to a main artery, River Road. This has spurred great interest in the community and is maintained through a volunteer work force. Although started by the Shade Tree Advisory Committee, this Native Plant Sanctuary is now maintained by the Native Plant Society. Promoting native plantings in and around the greenway (including the Native Plant Reserve) is a focus of the Highland Park Master Plan.

4. Community Forestry Program Administration

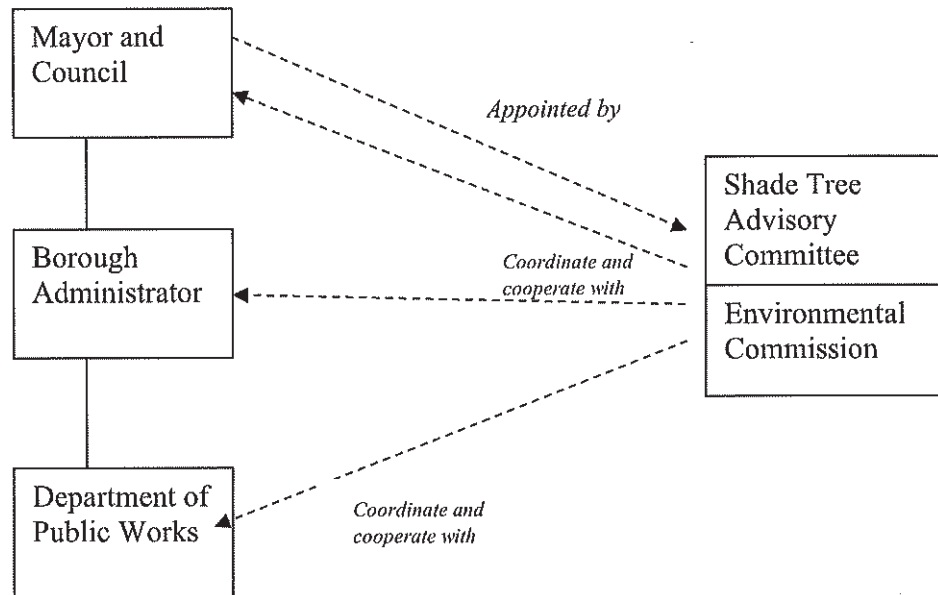
Management of the Borough's shade trees has been through the Department of Public Works, with oversight by the Borough Administrator. The volunteer-staffed Highland Park Shade Tree Advisory Committee and the Highland Park Environmental Commission provide input to the Mayor, Borough Council, Planning Board and Borough Administrator.

Shade Tree Advisory Committee

Karen Swaine	Chair
Rosanne Baruh	Vice chair
Carol Avelsgaard	member
Belinda Beetham	member
Mary Denver	member
Roseann Cala	member
Mary Ann Allard	member
Paul Sauers	member
Melanie McDermott	member
Philip George	Council Liaison

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Organizational Chart



Highland Park's tree ordinance was adopted in the 1980's and amended in its entirety in 2007, with some subsequent amendments to correct errors and omissions (see Appendix 2).

The pruning or removal of existing trees is handled by the Department of Public Works (DPW), with a budget set by the Borough Council. The actual work is either assigned by the DPW supervisor to the DPW staff or contracted out. Residents direct requests for tree service or complaints about trees to the Department of Public Works. The volunteers of the Shade Tree Advisory Committee also alert the DPW to trees needing care. The DPW secretary logs the call and dispatches the DPW employee in charge of trees to determine whether the problem can be handled by DPW or should be contracted to a private tree service. If the problem can be handled in-house, the work is scheduled on a priority basis. Work too involved for the in-house crew is placed on a list for the tree service contractor. Urgent work is performed by the contractor on a time and material basis usually within days of notification. Lower priority work is placed on a list by DPW for a lump sum bid, released once a year. If needed, DPW requests an opinion from the Shade Tree Advisory Committee or a New Jersey Licensed Tree Expert.

The Borough's Zoning and Planning Boards routinely submit tree-planting and removal plans to the Shade Tree Advisory Committee for review prior to commencement of projects.

Requests for trees by the owners of homes or businesses come to various branches of government: DPW, Borough Hall, or the Shade Tree Advisory Committee. Wherever they come first, they are given to the Shade Tree Advisory Committee for advice on whether the site is suitable and what tree species fit that site.

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To date, the policy of Highland Park has been to plant a tree in the curb strip only when the homeowner is agreeable to it. The Borough sends a letter to each owner on the list of suggested sites in order to verify that property owners in fact want trees and will care for them. The letter incorporates a form that recipients sign and return, promising to water the new tree(s) during the rainless weeks for the first year. Based on the returned letters, sites are chosen with the input of the Shade Tree Advisory Committee. The Borough Administrator then puts out a request for bids. Contracts incorporate good planting practices as found in published standards. Any questions that arise during planting are handled by the Borough with the advice of the Shade Tree Advisory Committee. After planting, Borough personnel check all sites to confirm that each tree has been planted properly.

After planting, a letter is mailed from DPW to tree recipients with tree care instructions. Shade Tree Advisory Committee members make one or more visits to the new trees in their areas to check on health and perform light maintenance during the first two years.

As discussed further below (see the Public Education section), under this Plan, in the future replacement of trees requested by property owners will be supplemental to area-based replanting zones in which planting will be concentrated in a localized street or neighborhood to encourage group participation for the benefit of the community.

5. Community Map

(See Appendix 1).

6. Training Plan

Training overview. Training needs for volunteers center on their advisory role (plus a practical but nonprofessional role in tree identification, use of inventory, iTree and other tools, minor tree pruning and maintenance of natural areas). Employees of the Department of Public Works (DPW), however, need professional arborist training as they will do much of the Borough's routine pruning and removals. Work beyond the skills and equipment of the DPW will continue to be contracted out.

Core training and continuing education units (CEU's). Highland Park continues to meet the state requirements for core training with two volunteers and four DPW's employee CORE-trained. A third volunteer will be CORE-trained. Two individuals will receive continuing education credits each year (eight credits each year by at least two individuals, not necessarily the ones who are CORE-accredited). The STAC finds the current system of applying for CEU's for courses not specifically offered for CEU credit to be burdensome. We wonder if there may not be a more streamlined approach to applying for credit for these courses outside the mainstream continuing education courses.

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Specific Needs

The Highland Park Shade Tree Advisory Committee would like to have a round table discussion among shade tree committee/commission representatives and partners, possibly at the annual Shade Tree Conference. We believe there is valuable information that can be gained in peer-to-peer discussions on common problems faced throughout the various communities in New Jersey. It would be an added benefit if continuing education units were offered for this session.

The STAC would like to become more familiar with the objectives and use of iTree. We would welcome more training sessions on iTree. It would also be of interest and benefit to STAC if a session were presented on community outreach and engagement, particularly in regard to persuading residents to accept and care for trees in front of their homes. Additionally, a hands-on field session presented to volunteers on how to prune young trees for structure and small stature trees for clearance to the street and walk would be desirable.

7. Public Education/Awareness/Outreach

Highland Park has been actively pursuing the care and maintenance of street trees for over thirty years. It has continues to have a very active and successful Shade Tree Advisory Committee, which has secured numerous grants for a street tree inventory, tree planting funds and maintenance grants for the Borough streets. The year 2018 marks the 25th anniversary of Tree City USA status recognized by the National Arbor Day Foundation. In addition, numerous memorial and Arbor Day plantings have occurred over the years. Volunteers within the community have tended the Native Plant Sanctuary on River Road for many years.

The major thrust of public education should be in gaining acceptance of new street tree plantings and their care so the number of vacancies can be reduced sustainably. The number and survival of tree plantings has to increase dramatically if the Borough wants to maintain tree-lined streets.

The challenge posed current resident refusal of street tree planting is the most pressing problem. The regular occurrences of storms and hurricanes have left many people afraid of large trees near their homes or vehicles. This is one of the objections to replanting when large trees are removed, although STAC points out to residents that it would be decades before a new tree would attain the stature of the tree removed.

The greatest impediment to maintaining and enhancing the tree canopy in Highland Park has been the resistance by many residents to the replanting of trees when they are removed in the curb strip (parking strip) adjacent to their houses. In a shift in strategy, the focus of outreach for tree planting will now be on neighborhoods. The new focus on area-wide restoration plantings is aimed at encouraging neighbors to participate in a collective project assuming stewardship for the trees lining their street.

Assisted by the Public Communications Officer, the Shade Tree Advisory Committee will actively support this new approach by conducting concerted outreach. STAC and Council will

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lead community meetings in each zone targeted for planting that year, with block parties held at the neighborhood level wherever possible. In doing this work STAC will enlist and partner with other local institutions, such as churches, synagogues, boy and girl scout troops, local businesses, Main Street, Sustainable Highland Park, Sustainable Jersey for Schools, the Native Plant Society, and the Environmental Commission. Some of these groups may sponsor or adopt particular streets and neighborhoods.

Homeowners should be notified when trees in front of their property will be removed, explaining the need for removal and stages of removal, and stating to whom their concerns can be addressed. (For instance, a trunk may be standing in front of their house for a period of time; stump grinding may be done a few weeks after this.)

The Shade Tree Advisory Committee has developed a tree fact sheet to be given to each house that gets a new tree planted. This includes watering recommendations, and advice on removing planting stakes, protection from deicing salts, and basic pruning of low branches, together with a contact phone number at the DPW or a volunteer at the Shade Tree Advisory Committee. Homeowners are urged to be responsible for the tree, especially with regard to watering. Currently, the Borough requires a signed request form from each home or business owner as a condition of receiving a new tree. The request form sets out the minimum standards of care for the tree's well being. The Borough is revisiting this policy.

The Shade Tree Advisory Committee should continue to lead volunteer activities. Its volunteers currently have individual assigned areas of town, which they patrol, inspecting recently planted trees, removing stakes, elevating branch levels, and speaking with homeowners. These activities can be broadened to include leading The Native Plant Society, scout troops, senior citizen groups, and others on pruning days where newly planted public-space trees are pruned using hand clips and hand saws. Pruned branches can be picked up the next day by DPW.

STAC seeks to involve the press in tree-related activities and publicize future events in on the borough website and newsletter, in newspapers, and on the local cable station to attract more volunteers and interest. Continue to provide educational materials, free tree planting request forms and free seedlings at annual community day events, such as the Earth Day green fair and the Highland Park Street Fair.

8. Statement of Tree Budget

The Highland Park Borough Council determines the budget each year. We will be projecting forward on a similar basis. The expenditures for tree planting will increase by roughly 50 percent per year. The expenditures on ash removal will increase for two or three years until all ash have been removed from municipal property. STAC will request an increase in the community outreach budget to approximately \$3,000/year in order to implement the zonal/neighborhood replanting scheme.

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The Borough should have sufficient funds for replanting and ash removals out of the Tree Replacement Fund established under the Highland Park Municipal Code (see sec. 388-12). Currently the Tree Replacement Fund has approximately \$246,000 available for tree replacement, planting and maintenance.

Highland Park Borough was awarded a Stewardship (CSIP) planting grant for \$30,000 for the 2019-2021 period, which will be a significant contribution toward the Borough's goal of increasing the number trees planted. The project design focuses most of the tree planting school property, however there are some street tree plantings envisioned as part of the program.

2017 EXPENDITURES

Municipal Salaries (DPW and Admin.)	\$8,000
Volunteer time*	\$15,800 (560 hours)
Equipment maintenance (DPW)	\$3,175
Wood and brush recycling	\$2,250
Contracted tree services (removal, pruning stumping, inspections, sidewalk roots ground down)	\$55,000
Tree Planting	\$16,000
STAC operations: courses, tools, materials for public outreach events	\$500
Training and education of municipal employees	\$245
TOTAL	\$100,970

*Volunteer time valued at \$28.32 in 2017 according to:
https://independentsector.org/resource/vovt_details/

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9. Statement of Plan Implementation

2019

- Remove hazard trees discovered in 2017.
- Remove as many of the 73 ash street trees as possible. Prioritize trees that show dieback.
- Update tree inventory with addresses.
- Amend tree ordinance in Municipal Cod to facilitate the removal of ash trees by providing relief from the permit process, fees and mitigation requirements.
- Divide the Borough into 'replanting zones'.
- Implement the new area-wide, neighborhood-based approach to tree-planting and outreach in one pilot neighborhood.
- Maintain necessary pruning and removal.
- Plant approximately 40 trees in pilot neighborhood and as necessary to fill requests.
- Support planting of trees in and adjacent to the three public schools, beginning with CSIP planting grant awarded in 2018.
- Maintain Tree City status and plan Arbor Day celebration.
- Attend continuing education and/or CORE accreditation classes.
- File New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act Annual Accomplishment Report.

2020

- Continue/finish removing remainder of street trees that are ash.
- Designate 1st replanting zone.
- Plant at least 60 trees in total, focusing on targeted neighborhoods in the 1st replanting zone and as necessary to fill requests.
- Conduct intensive outreach in neighborhoods targeted for replanting.
- Support planting and maintenance of trees in and near public schools; implement CSIP planting grant.
- Maintain and update inventory and database. Add blank planting spaces and information on complaints and hazard trees.
- Continue/finish removing remainder of ash street trees.
- Maintain necessary pruning and removal.
- Update web page: clarify in FAQ that any tree within the Borough public or private needs a permit for removal.
- Monitor email address for the STAC for public inquiries.
- Maintain Tree City status and plan Arbor Day celebration.
- Attend CEU education and/or CORE accreditation classes.
- File New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act Annual Accomplishment Report.

2021

- Designate 2nd replanting zone and identify target neighborhood(s).
- Plant at least 90 trees in 2nd replanting zone and to fill requests.
- Conduct intensive outreach in neighborhoods targeted for replanting.

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- Support planting and maintenance of trees in and near public schools; implement CSIP planting grant.
- Maintain and update inventory and database
- Maintain necessary pruning and removal.
- Continue/finish removing remainder of ash street trees.
- Maintain Tree City status.
- Attend CEU education and/or CORE accreditation classes.
- File New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act Annual Accomplishment Report.

2022

- Designate 3rd replanting zone and identify target neighborhood(s).
- Plant at least 130 trees in 3rd replanting zone and to fill requests.
- Conduct intensive outreach in neighborhoods targeted for replanting.
- Maintain necessary pruning and removal.
- Maintain and update inventory and database
- Support maintenance of trees at public schools.
- Maintain Tree City status.
- Continue CEU education and/or CORE accreditation.
- File New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act Annual Accomplishment Report.
- Apply for CSIP funding for next Community Forestry Management Plan.

2023

- Designate 4th replanting zone and identify target neighborhood(s).
- Plant at least 200 trees in 4th replanting neighborhood and to fill requests.
- Conduct intensive outreach in neighborhoods targeted for replanting.
- Maintain necessary pruning and removal.
- Maintain and update inventory and database
- Promote maintenance of street trees in an near public schools.
- Maintain Tree City status.
- Continue CEU education and/or CORE accreditation.
- File New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act Annual Accomplishment Report.
- Prepare update of Community Forestry Management Plan.

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10. Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP)

The sections below provide an index of where each of the 15 CSIP practices are located in the plan, along with a brief summary.

1) Training Pgs. 4, 8, 11

An additional Shade Tree Advisory Committee member is scheduled to be CORE trained in this management period. In addition, CEU training will continue for Shade Tree Advisory Committee members and DPW staff to maintain approved status under the CFMP

2) Ordinance Establishment/Revision Pg. 3

The ordinance was revised in the last management period to allow for removal of “weed” trees without a permit. The permit fee was relaxed for multiple trees within a one-year period. A Borough resolution will be sought to extend the waiver to the removal of ash trees.

3) Public Education and Awareness Pgs. 2, 9, 11, 12

Assisted by the Public Communications Officer and local partners, the Shade Tree Advisory Committee will actively support the new area-wide, neighborhood-based new approach to tree-planting. STAC and Council will conduct outreach to the public on EAB and how to address the risks to ash trees on private property. STAC will continue to table at community events.

4) Arbor Day Pgs. 10, 11, 12

Continue annual proclamation by the mayor as has been done as part of the Tree City USA program.

A tree-planting ceremony has traditionally been part of Arbor Day activities (though not necessarily on Arbor Day itself). This tradition is planned to continue as part of meeting the Tree City USA requirements.

5) Assessment/ Inventory Pgs. 1, 3, 11, 12

A new, 100% Street Tree Inventory was completed in 2017 and will be continuously updated and improved.

6) Tree Hazard Identification Plan Pg. 11

Each year, a "windshield survey" will be conducted by the DPW arborist or an outside consultant to spot obviously dead trees or other obvious hazard trees. The volunteers of the Shade Tree Advisory Committee will continue to report to DPW any problems as they notice them in walks or drives through their assigned areas. The new inventory will be expanded to account for hazard trees.

7) Storm Damage Assessment

Storm damage assessment is undertaken by the DPW as needed after major storms.

8) Tree Maintenance and Removal Pgs. 10, 11, 12

Highland Park Community Forestry Management Plan

Prune trees as necessary to maintain clearance over roadways (14') sidewalks (8') remove large diameter deadwood (3"). In addition to the above, continue the response to resident requests and removal of dying and hazardous trees. The DPW does certain removals itself and relies on an outside contractor for the remainder.

9) Insect and Disease Management Pg. 6, 15

The Borough must plan for the managing impending and currently prevalent tree diseases. The Emerald Ash Borer is currently present and will be fatal to essentially all ash trees in the Borough. As discussed on page 6, the Borough will remove all municipal trees in response to this blight. Public outreach about the infestation by this destructive insect will help maintain the safety in the wake of many trees, both public and private, dying in a relatively short time.

10) Wildfire Protection

Wildfire protection is not necessary in this urban setting.

11) Tree Planting Pgs. 1, 3, 11, 12

The Borough will shift tree-planting strategy to focus on area-wide restoration plantings. Street trees will be planted by neighborhood within one zone at a time, covering the whole Borough over a ten-year cycle. After pilot-testing in Year one of the plan, one zone will be targeted in each subsequent year. In addition, requests for trees will continue to be filled as received.

12) Tree Recycling

Highland Park is currently disposing of wood waste from municipal property at an approved waste recycling facility for a fee. We are negotiating with Middlesex County to use their chipper to process waste wood, particularly from ash removals, so that they could spread the chips on the trails in our county parks.

13) Sidewalk Maintenance Pg. 2

Residents are responsible for sidewalk maintenance and have alternatives to slab replacement detailed on the Shade Tree Advisory Committee web page.

14) Storm Water Management

Highland Park collects fallen leaves to prevent them from clogging storm drains and also to prevent them entering waterways en mass. Planting more trees will aid in the filtration, reduction and slowing of stormwater.

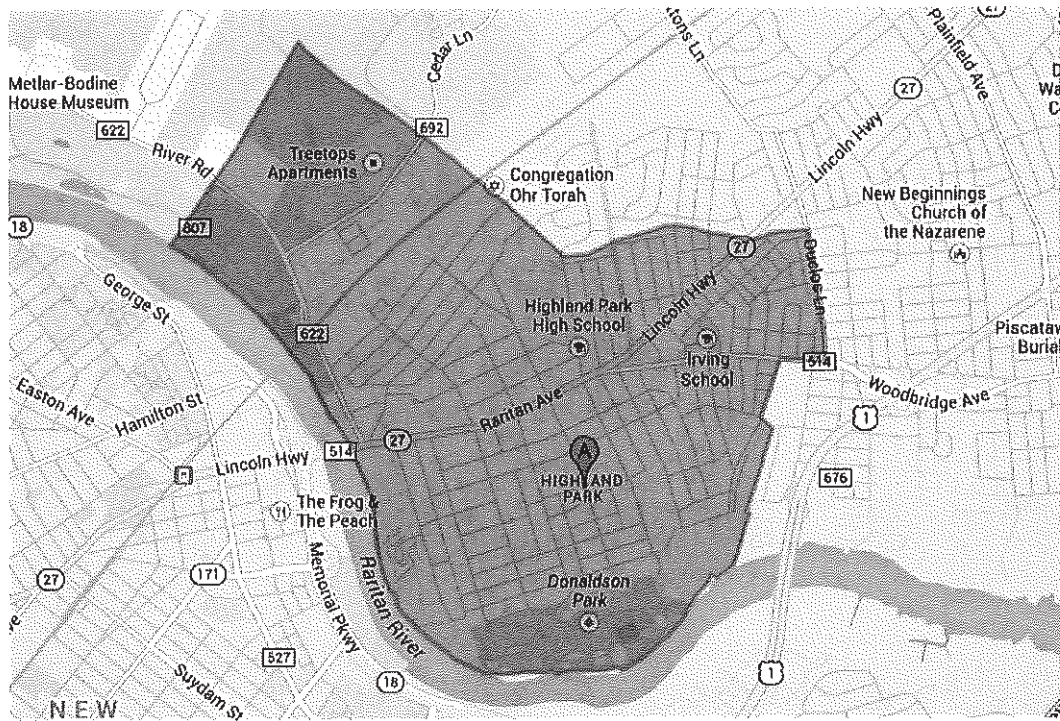
13) Other

Additional funding for tree planting and management will be sought as appropriate opportunities become available.

Highland Park Community Forestry Management Plan

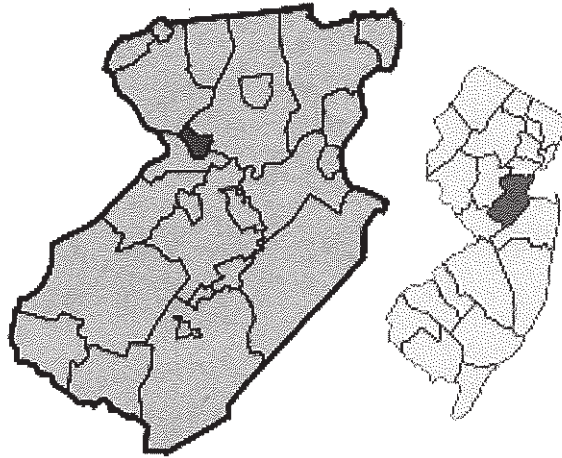
Appendix 1. Community Maps

Map of the Borough of Highland Park, NJ



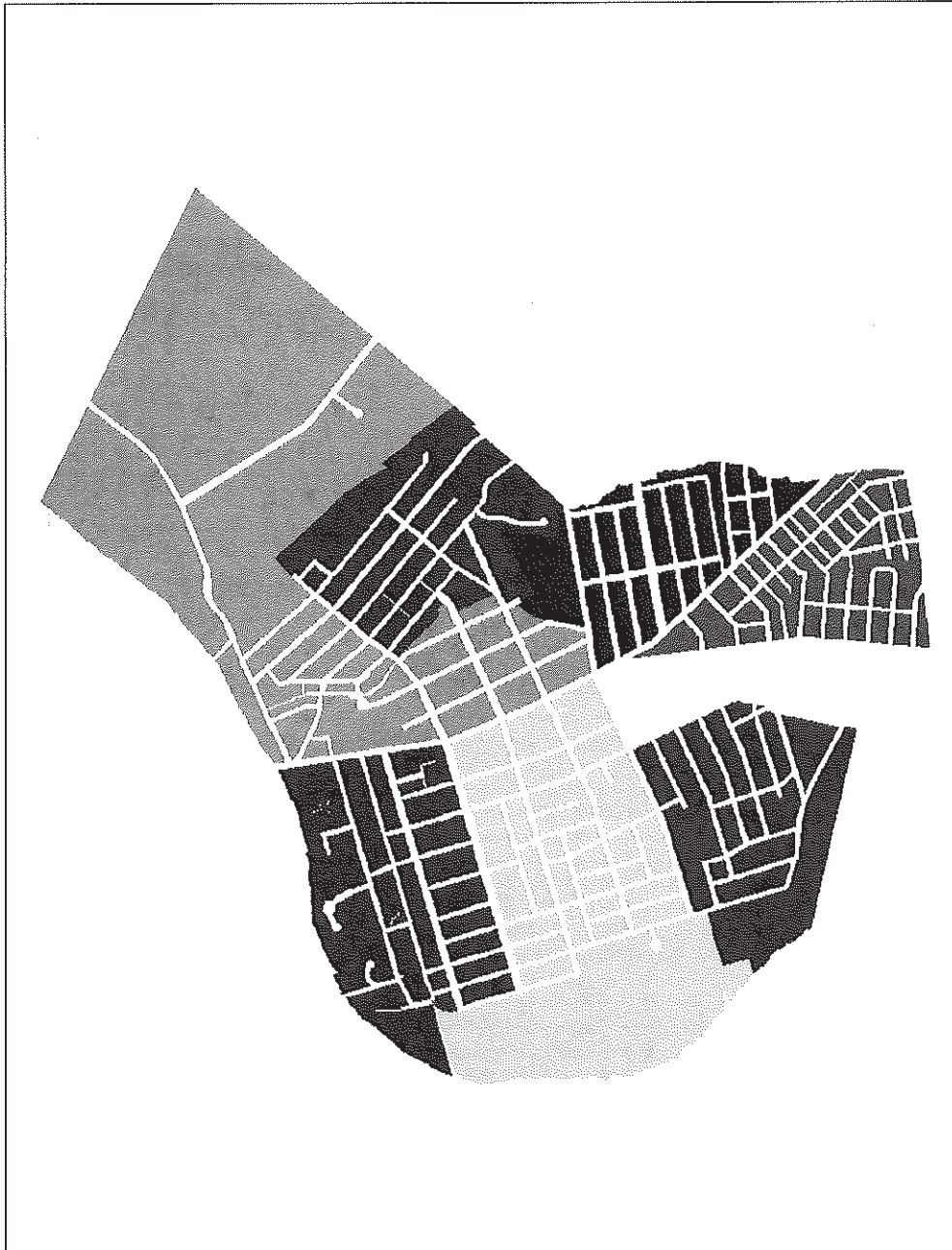
Highland Park Community Forestry Management Plan

Borough of Highland Park in Middlesex County, NJ



Highland Park Community Forestry Management Plan

Map of Proposed Tree-planting Zones



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Appendix 2. Highland Park Tree Ordinance

(Insert text).

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Appendix 3. 2017 Inventory map showing major tree species and sizes

[See attachment *Highland_Park_2017 Tree Inventory_MajorSpecies+Sizes.pdf*].