

Town Of Lopatcong Shade Tree Commission



Community Forest Management Plan

Pursuant to the Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act
P.L., 1996, Chapter 135

Prepared By E. Joseph Bruschetta
Consulting Forester



**TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG
SHADE TREE COMMISSION**

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Community Forestry Management Plan

Municipal/County Information Form

Municipality Township of Lopatcong
County Warren
Address 232 S Third Street Phillipsburg N.J. 08865

Contact Name and Title Matthew Herzer Chairman

Phone # (908) 859-3355

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Organization Name Lopatcong Shade Tree Commission

Mayor/County Freeholder's Signature _____

Date of Management Plan Submission _____

Time Period Covered in Management Plan January 1,2017 - December 31,2021

- Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) Practices Identified in Management Plan
- CSIP #1 Training
 - CSIP #2 Community Forestry Ordinance Establishment
 - CSIP #3 Public Education and Awareness
 - CSIP #4 Arbor Day
 - CSIP #5 Tree Inventory
 - CSIP #6 Hazard Tree Assessment
 - CSIP #7 Storm Damage Assessment
 - CSIP #8 Tree Maintenance and Removals
 - CSIP #9 Insect and Disease Management
 - CSIP #10 Wildfire Protection
 - CSIP #11 Tree Planting
 - CSIP #12 Tree Recycling
 - CSIP #13 Sidewalk Maintenance Program
 - CSIP #14 Storm Water Management
 - CSIP #15 Other

Official Use Only Certification

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

Signed _____
State Forester Approved date _____



The **Lopatcong Shade Tree Commission** has a long history of caring for our community's tree resources. Our mission continues to provide for a sustainable healthy, safe, and productive urban forest for the town residents of Lopatcong. Providing for the trees and other vegetation is a major way to improve air quality, energy conservation, reducing noise pollution, increasing economic stability, improving personal health, improving water quality, creating wildlife diversity, and adding beauty to the community.

Goal 1 – To keep the viability of our trees within our borders strong.

Objectives:

- Take an inventory of our trees (to be paid by grant??)
- Assess the condition of our trees (to be paid by grant??)
- To capitalize on the GIS mapping being done by the township engineer.

Goal 2 – To create for the citizens a thorough educational resource in the commission and tree awareness program in township.

Objectives:

- To provide an information in an electronic as well as a printed format for homeowners on proper tree care including planting, pruning, mulching, watering, fertilization, insects and diseases, sidewalk conflict with roots, and song bird habitat creation.
- To become a point of reference for the Lopatcong Planning Board and Athletic Association and Environmental Commission and elementary Schools.
- Collaborate an Arbor Day Program with the public schools.
- To celebrate Arbor Day in keeping with the requirements of the designation of Tree City USA.
- Provide brochures to local nurseries about proper tree care acknowledging Shade Tree Commission as source.
- To participate in Community Day by manning a booth that explains our role here in Lopatcong, distribute information on care and maintenance of trees, recruit volunteers for projects set for the ensuing year that reflect the goals of the management plan.

Goal 3 - Reduce hazardous trees and conflicts to maintain public safety.

Objectives:

- To work toward a maintenance program whereby each municipal shade tree is pruned at least every 10 years.
- To identify and repair sidewalk conflicts by working with the homeowner and municipality.
- To change the elevation of the lower limbs of street trees.

Goal 4 - To replace any trees removed with species appropriate to our maintaining the variety of specimens we currently have.

Objective:

- To utilize local nursery sources for township planning where possible.

Goal 5 - Add shade trees to municipal building grounds and Lopatcong Park. Improve the aesthetic appearance of major roads.



Goal 6 – To continue to support training for the Shade Tree commission members and township employees.

Objectives:

- To maintain membership in the NJ Federation of Shade Tree Commissions.
- To maintain core training and continuing education requirements of the Community Forestry Assistance Act.
- To increase the knowledge and capabilities of Township employees on tree care by attending at least one training session sponsored by Rutgers, the NJ Forest Service, of Federation on an annual basis.

Goal 7 – Gradually reduce the window of leaf pick up time to residents by DPW as a way to reduce labor costs.

Objectives:

- Encourage mulching.
- Work with the boy scouts to provide the bags.



The Township of Lopatcong street/park trees are a main element of the community's contribution to the well being of its present residents, those of the upcoming generations as well as those who visit or will visit the area. Through their inevitable maturation comes the requirement of *attentive care*. Hazard identification and abatement, maintenance and proper plantings all promote the assurance that the maturation process will result in healthy trees and healthy and safe people who enjoy them.

Therefore, it is the community's responsibility to ensure that this process is safeguarded by an ongoing commitment of fiscal support. While budgetary limitations may limit the level of response to each and every area needed in this comprehensive endeavor, a commitment none the less must be made reflecting more immediate as well as long term needs. Subsequently, it is the intent of this plan to proactively focus these available resources on our trees by assessing their *present* level of service priority, while making *safety the primary outcome*.

The logical steps outlined within the previously cited Goals and Objectives section should result in meeting these intended results. Furthermore, the cornerstone of good maintenance practices will greatly reduce the probability of tree failures and the resulting consequences. However, it must be made clear that *predicting and preventing all failures is impossible*. Yet, through annual inspections and responsiveness to identified symptoms most failures can be abated prior to incidence which, again, is the *primary responsibility* of this plan. Instrumental to this affect will be the use of an inventory system which will assist us with our attentive care practices.

Following this plan of action clearly demonstrates the *attempts* of the Township of Lopatcong's governing body through its Shade 'tree Commission to *reasonably* care for its tree resource in order to *reduce* it's exposure to liabilities via *increased safety*.



Lopatcong Township has 45.59 miles (73.37 km) of roadways, of which 35.19 miles (56.63 km) were maintained by the municipality. The community has six distinct neighborhoods which reflect different periods of development which has resulted in six distinct areas of tree lined streets. The STC is hoping to complete a comprehensive inventory which is a one of the goals identified in this plan. The Commission's manpower has been directed to deal with the planting and maintaining, along with addressing hazardous trees. The Commission was able to plant forty one new trees in appropriate locations throughout the township. At present the diverse species composition is made up of Pin Oaks, Sugar, Norway and Red maples, Sycamores, Flowering pears, White Pines , various conifers and Green Ash. The STC realizes the need to have a much needed inventory to help to better manage the Community Forest's needs.

The STC over the term of the previous plan, was able to achieve most of the goals outlined in it. The maintenance of the trees along the township's right of way was the prime goal of the STC along with seeing 41 new plantings along the township streets . The Commission was able to keep an active presence on the municipal web site along with distributing information at the annual community day celebrations but fell short of conducting an Arbor Day program due to the lack of volunteers.

The main Problem encountered was replacing vacancies in the commission. During the last five years, the resignation of several member has left positions vacant. Due to the lack of membership, the STC was put into peril of being dissolved which in turn has placed a strain on the remaining manpower. The hope is with the establishment of a new plan that outlines the goals and objectives for the next five year, there will be renewed commitment by the community.

The STC and community has benefited by have a Management Plan for it's Community Forest by establishing Goals and objective in-order to identify and establish a strategy for the effective management of the tree under there care. This also helps in getting the training needed so that the member of the STC can make wise decisions in effectively meeting the goals outlined in the plan.

Since the implementation of the previous community management plan the following objectives have been accomplished:

➤ **Provided training opportunities for commission members and Public Works Department**

An essential ingredient for improving the community forest is to improve the skills and knowledge of those responsible for its care and maintenance. The Commission annually attended programs that offer training in working with tree resources.

The criterion set forth by the Community Forestry Program is that two members be core trained. One of these individuals will need to be a Commission member while the other will be a town employee. The importance of having individuals who are responsible for policies and maintenance of community trees trained in the proper methods of managing this resource is a major asset for the town.



The Lopatcong Shade Tree Commission has continued to provide training for its members. In addition, this training has been made available to staff members within the Department of Public Works. The Shade Tree Commission has maintained a policy that a minimum of two individual be CORE trained and that adequate opportunities be provided so that all the commission members may acquire this training and the necessary continuing education units to keep it current.

In 2012 Due to staffing issues the Commission was unable to attend the Annual program at Shade Tree Federation Conference at Cherry Hill (STFC). Six commission members did attend a two-hour seminar given by Burt Kuhn of Action Tree Services which fulfilled the CEU requirements.

In 2013, two new commission member were able to receive their core training and received additional CEU while attending the (STFC)at Cherry Hill

In 2014, The Commission was able to send two members to the annual (STFC) at Cherry Hill where two attended the general program and were able to receive 16 CEU.

➤ **Public awareness and educational**

The Lopatcong S.T.C has annually had a Booth on the Townships Community Day celebration where they provide brochures and demonstrated proper pruning techniques to the township residents.

The Commission in 2014 also provide residents with 250 sapling for planting within the Township at the Annual Easter Egg Hunt.

➤ **Tree replacement and Maintenance program**

The years 2011 to 2015 the Lopatcong S.T.C. has planted forty one new trees in appropriate locations within the township, sixteen of these trees were the result of CSIP grant (310677031).

The commission has maintained an annual targeted pruning program along with hazardous and nonviable tree removals.

➤ **Community Forestry Plan Link With Municipal Master Plan:**

The Master Plan under Resources page 15 links the Townships Community Forest as a resource to be protected and properly maintained. The Shade tree commission through adoption of the Forestry management plan will provide for the future sustainability of this important resource.

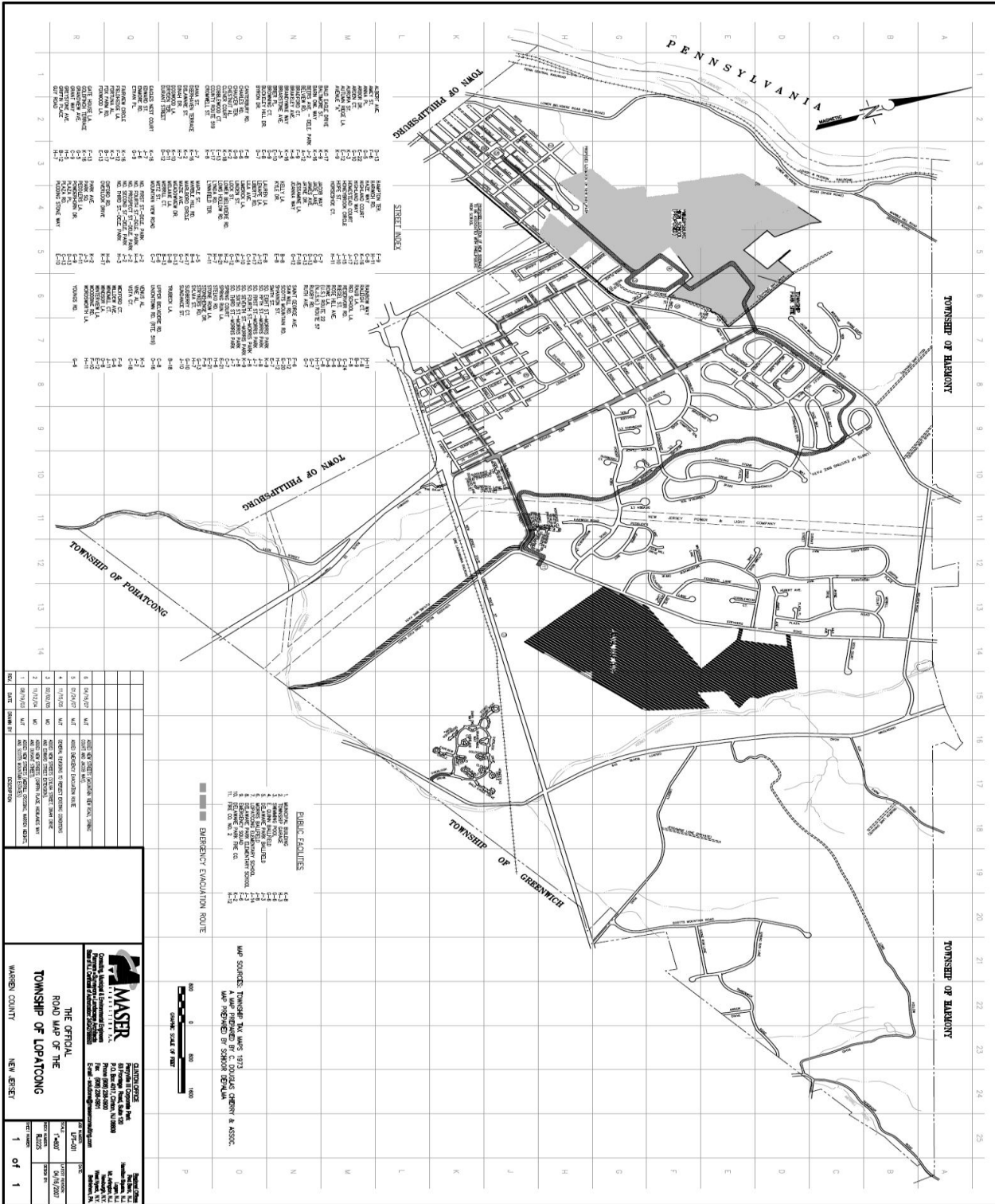
➤ **Community Forestry Plan Link With Open Space/Green Acres Property:**

Lopatcong's (about 4581.76 acres/ 7.159sq. miles) accommodates open space areas which are Lopatcong Park and Pavilion and the town pool. Both sites are under the shade tree commission's jurisdiction for tree care. Additionally the pool area is also a Green Acres Area and its adjacent forested section is under consideration for further development. The commission will actively participate both in the study and implementation of this process.

TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG SHADE TREE COMMISSION

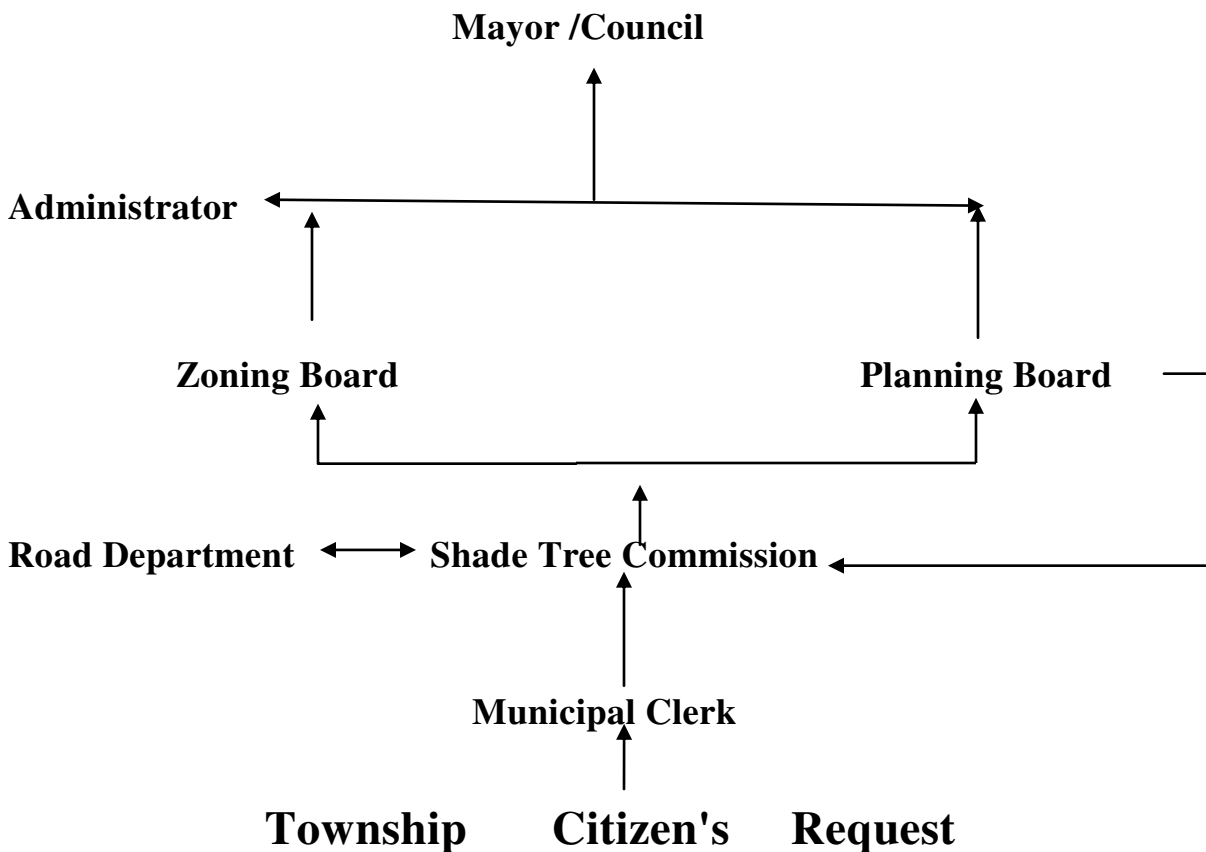


Community Map





The body responsible for overseeing the management of the Township of Lopatcong tree resource is the **Shade Tree Commission**. It consists of five members two of which are employees of the Road department five volunteers two are alternates. Presently, the two regular volunteer seats along with the two alternates are vacant. The seats are filled by mayoral appointment as they become vacant. Below is an organizational chart of the bodies involved in the management of our tree resource.



Shade Tree Commission Members

Matthew Herzer
Costos Zambas

DPW makes up about 95% of the requests which come from their presence on the streets. They address directly the community's forest needs . The final 5 % of the requests come from residents and contractors who are in town assessing other street trees and notice other service needs. Our response time is immediate in terms of emergent situations and within 24 hrs.

Services are provided by our DPW which generally consists of downed limb clean-up, small tree removals or pruning, stump grinding clean up, leaf pick up, mulch, sidewalk removals, grading, and backfilling/seeding.



An essential ingredient for improving the community's forest is to improve the skills and knowledge of those responsible for its care and maintenance. The Lopatcong Shade Tree Commission will provide the opportunity for its member and the DPW supervisor and employees to attend core and other training opportunities.

The criterion set forth by the Community Forestry Program is that two members be CORE trained. One of these individuals will need to be a township employee, while the other will be a member of the Shade Tree Commission. Presently the commission has one DPW employee who is core trained . The need to have additional members core trained which will be addressed.

The importance of having individuals who are responsible for policies and maintenance of community trees trained in the proper methods of managing this resource is a major asset for the township. In the past the township has and will continue to support this training. The shade tree budget demonstrates this in a line item in their annual budget.

It is of major importance to have individuals who are responsible for policies and maintenance of the township's trees and are trained in proper methods of managing this resource. The commission also continues to consult and turn to various professionals regarding matters which extend outside of the commissions expertise.

The training needs to address areas such as and not limited to:

- 1) Tree Selection and Planting
- 2) Tree Hazard Identification
- 3) Tree Care in Disasters
- 4) Tree Pruning
- 5) Tree Removal
- 6) Insect and Disease Management
- 7) Tree Recycling
- 8) Other



The Lopatcong's Shade Tree Commission, in the past, has been involved in educating the community at large on various topics involving the benefits of trees to the community. The Commission will make a commitment to encourage public interest appreciation and support for public shade trees. They will work to garner public support and participation in public tree planting programs. The Commission has worked to establish an annual participation and distribution of Literature at the annual Community Day. The Commission has also advocated the stewardship of trees on private property.

Present practices include:

- The annual participation in the Annual Community Day
- Provide new residents important information concerning our town trees
- Eight year participation in the Tree City USA Program
- Providing educational opportunities so that Township residents can gain knowledge on proper tree care and maintenance (such as over mulching trees and sidewalk tree issues)
- The establishment of a preferred tree planting list, so that they guide Lopatcong residents in getting the right tree planted in the right place
- Provide an opportunity for memorial tree plantings within the Township



**TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG
SHADE TREE COMMISSION**

Annual Budget

Shade Tree Commission 2016 Budget Proposal

These are in predictive terms the funds needed for the basic operation of the **Shade Tree Commission - YEAR 2016**

Expenditures

* Labor

Pruning trees/chipping	320 hrs=	\$7,087.00
Leaf Removal	1760 hrs=	\$33,910.00
Equipment	leaf vac/ Chipper /4 trucks 8yd Back hoe 1 1/2 yd/ Frontend Loader 2/1/2 yd	

Trees Purchased/Planted	12 Arborvitaes \$95 each	\$1,140.00
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In Kind” services hours for : Lopatcong Shade Tree Commision Volunteers

Meetings. Zoning &Planning Mtgs, Planting nursery, Community Daybooth Annual report to council, Core Training	65hr. Fedral rate \$23.07	\$1,500.00
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Total \$43,637.00

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Year 1, January 2017-2018

- Enlist new members to fill vacant Commission positions
- Delineate areas of responsibility for each member
- Establish criteria for Township wide tree inventorying (i.e. applying for Grant, what data needs to be collected? Who will collect it? How will it be stored?)
- Identify a yearly budget
- Schedule routine tree replacement and maintenance
- Maintain member's Core training and CEU (continued education units) requirements
- Identify sites in need of planting
- Update Shade tree link to the Township of Lopatcong's Web page
- Provide annual accomplishment report

Year 2, January 2018- 2019

- Enlist new members to fill vacant Commission positions
- Delineate areas of responsibility for each member
- Identify a yearly budget
- Apply for Community forestry grants that may be available
- Review tree care disaster plan by meeting with necessary town officials such as Police, Fire and DPW (Department of Public Works)
- Attend and update annual Core training and CEU needs
- Update shade tree web link
- Continue participation in the Annual Community Day
- Provide annual accomplishment report

Year 3, January 2019-2020

- Enlist new members to fill vacant Commission positions
- Delineate areas of responsibility for each member
- Identify a yearly budget
- Apply for Community forestry grants that may be available
- Continue
- Review tree ordinance and update if needed
- Maintain member's Core training and CEU requirements
- Update shade tree web link
- Continue participation in the Annual Community Day
- Identify potential sites appropriate for replanting
- Provide annual accomplishment report



Year 4, January 2020-2021

- Enlist new members to fill vacant Commission positions
- Delineate areas of responsibility for each member
- Identify a yearly budget
- Apply for Community forestry grants that may be available
- Maintain member's Core training and CEU requirements
- Update shade tree web link
- Continue participation in the Annual Community Day
- Provide annual accomplishment report

Year 5, January 2021-2022

- Enlist new members to fill vacant Commission positions
- Delineate areas of responsibility for each member
- Identify a yearly budget
- Apply for community forestry grants for drafting management plan for the next five years
- Tri annual and/or severe weather tree inspection
- Begin review of Goals and objective for the next five years
- Maintain member's Core training and CEU requirements
- Update shade tree web link
- Continue participation in the Annual Community Day
- Identify sites of future removals requiring planting



This section of the Community Forestry Plan identifies CSIP practices within the plan which fall into the categories of projects that potentially are eligible for future grant opportunities.

CSIP #1 Plan Preparation (pages 1-17)

- Preparation of Community Forestry Plan and future updates

CSIP #2 Training (page 11)

- Core Training for additional township staff and volunteers
- Continuing Education Units
- Special Training Needs

CSIP #3 Public Awareness and Education (page 4, 12)

- Brochure for Community Memorial Tree Donation Program
- Annual tree awareness and educational information for distribution at the Annual Community Day
- Advertising costs associated with public awareness and education
- Providing tree information for new residents in the town

CSIP #4 Arbor Day Activities (page 4, 12)

- Trees for planting
- Awards for volunteer organizations and community leaders

CSIP #5 Assessment/Inventory (page 4 ,14)

- Creating a Town wide street tree inventory
- Identify Heritage Trees

CSIP #6 Tree Hazard Identification Plan (page 4)

- Hazard Tree assessment
- Hazard Tree removal



CSIP #7 Tree Planting (page 4, 11,14)

- Street tree planting
- Landscape planting in public spaces

CSIP #8 Tree Maintenance (page 4, 10, 11, 14, 15)

- Routine scheduled maintenance plan
- High priority (hazard trees) maintenance
- Maintenance for new plantings

CSIP #9 Tree Recycling (page 5, 7)

- Tree recycling plan and implementation

CSIP #10 Ordinance Establishment (page 14)

- Review and update the existing ordinance

CSIP #11 Tree-Care Disaster Plan (page 11, 14,15)

- Review and update natural disaster emergency plan

CSIP #12 Insect and Disease Management (page 11, 14,15)

- Routine scheduled or integrated pest management plan

CSIP #13 Other (page 4, 14, 15)