

Borough of Metuchen – Third Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP)

1

Appendix 1. Municipal/County Information Form

Municipality METUCHEN

County MIDDLESEX

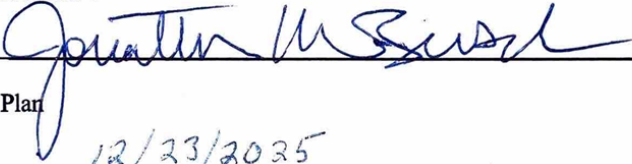
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METUCHEN, NJ 08840

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Organization Name Prepared by Ken Sammond, Chair, Metuchen Shade Tree Commission

Mayor/County Commissioner's
Signature 

Date of Management Plan
Submission 12/23/2025

Time Period Covered in
Management Plan 1/1/2025 - 12/31/2029

Official Office Use Only

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 Todd Wyckoff 1/14/2026
State Forester Approved Date

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1. Introduction and Background

This is the third five-year Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP) for the Borough of Metuchen. This plan has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by the New Jersey State Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program (NJUCF program) pursuant to the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act, P.L. 1996, Ch. 135, N.J.S.A. 13:1L-17.1 et seq. This plan builds upon the previous five-year plan approved and submitted in 2014.

This plan has been designed to demonstrate how the Borough of Metuchen currently manages the community tree resources under its jurisdiction, including trees in parks and other open space (both municipal and county), all right of way streets (including county since Middlesex County does not have a Shade Tree Commission), Borough-owned buildings, and other holdings. This plan will clearly articulate how the Borough of Metuchen intends to improve this resource over the next five years, following years of slight decline in canopy due to aging tree stock originally planted more than a century ago.

Implementation of the plan will require the oversight and engagement of the Metuchen Shade Tree Commission (STC), a fiscal commitment for the money, the guidance and assistance of the borough administrator and elected officials, the experienced and skilled efforts of the staff of the Department of Public Works (DPW) along with the involvement and participation of residents, civic and religious organizations, Board of Education, and others interested in maintaining and enhancing Metuchen's municipal forest.

a. Mission Statement

Our mission is to protect the asset our shade trees represent, enhance the quality of life for borough residents and visitors, and foster a better environment by planting and maintaining sustainable, healthy, and safe shade trees, preserving and expanding species diversity, and promoting proper tree care and stewardship in the community.

b. Liability Statement

Although street trees are an asset to the community, it is inevitable that as they mature, they will require care, maintenance, and eventual replacement. Care and maintenance, in addition to planting “the right tree in the right place,” can help ensure that community trees not only contribute to the environmental and economic vitality of the area, but also reduce the potential hazards to public safety. However, the Borough of Metuchen must work within a reasonable budget and may not be able to meet each and every demand placed on its workers and volunteers. Therefore, it is the intent of this plan to focus available resources to reduce obvious risks to public safety.

Since it is impossible to predict or prevent all hazardous conditions that may arise, Metuchen is developing this plan to become more proactive in its tree management. Proactive tree management should reduce the occurrence of unexpected events. Following this plan will demonstrate Metuchen’s commitment to proper tree management within the rights-of-way and public holdings with the aim of reducing the potential for future tree related accidents and thereby reducing its exposure to liabilities and increasing public safety. Having an approved CFMP conveys benefits and opportunities to a municipality. The benefits include liability protection under the New Jersey Tort Claims Act, P.L. 1996, Chapter 135, Section 16, N.J.S.A. 59:4-10, for the Borough of Metuchen, the Metuchen Shade Tree Commission, its members, and any volunteers participating in the community forestry program. Overall, it is the intent of this plan to focus available resources toward the greatest need in a step-by-step fashion, working towards a healthy forest with commensurate reductions in risk to public safety.

c. Community Overview

i. Overview

The Borough of Metuchen is 2.79 square miles and located in Middlesex County in Central New Jersey. Our community is labeled as urban according to [NJ DEP 2024 Land Use/ Land Category update](#), with the exception of three areas, Centennial Park, Woodwild Park, and the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve, the former two of which are categorized as deciduous forest, and the latter as deciduous wetland forest. Surrounded by Edison Township on all sides (Metuchen is the donut hole), the Borough is bordered on the south by Interstate 287 and to the east by US Route 1. State Route 27 bisects Metuchen from the southeast corner to the northeast corner. The four-track Northeast Corridor rail line also bisects Metuchen from the southwest corner to the northeast corner. Throughout the plan, this plan will refer to the delineations used by our DPW (NW, NE, SE, SW) to describe planning and implementation. The NW and NE sections are located north of the Northeast Corridor line; the NE and SE sections are located east of Main Street (which becomes Clive Street at the intersection with Plainfield Rd and Christol St). These sections roughly correspond to the census blocks in the canopy maps.

Street trees comprise the greater portion of Metuchen’s publicly managed tree resources since most of the land in the borough has been developed. Significant private development and redevelopment have occurred, especially within the past ten years, primarily in the center of the borough and extending north from the Northeast Corridor line. These projects include a parking deck, plaza, several apartment buildings, a Whole Foods Market, and, currently, the completion of a large apartment complex on the seven-acre Gulton site, a formerly polluted brownfield site abutting the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve. Each of these new developments has provided the borough with an opportunity for new street tree plantings, most of which are less than seven years old. These plantings have increased our diversity of plantings.

Metuchen has a wide variety of planting spaces along streets, some highly amenable and others very challenging for growing shade trees sustainably. Some

streets, particularly in the southwest section of our borough, have few sidewalks and, where there are sidewalks, the planting strips are prohibitively narrow. The northeast section of Metuchen has planting strips ranging from four to six feet wide, which are very good for planting trees. Other neighborhoods in the northwest and southeast sections of the borough have trees planted in narrow strips, approximately three feet wide, or narrower. In many cases, it has been necessary to situate tree plantings on the Borough right of way easement (ROW) between sidewalks and building structures.

Metuchen has ten Borough-owned parks within its borders and a portion of a County-owned land in the Barnes wildlife preserve. While most of the parks are devoted to active recreation, two are maintained in their natural state: Centennial Park (12 acres) and Woodwild Park (4 acres), the latter is managed by the Woodwild Park Association. Both parks are in the borough's northeast section, which has the highest tree canopy percentage.

The northwest section of the borough contains 48 acres of the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve, an 843-acre area of wetlands, meadows and hardwood forest which is the largest remaining contiguous wetland ecosystem in the highly urbanized landscape of northern Middlesex County. The preserve includes areas with Black willow, London plane, Swamp oak, Silky dogwood, red maple, pin oak, and River birch. This Metuchen section was formerly filled with more than one hundred American Ash trees, all of which have succumbed to the devastating effects of the Emerald Ash Borer.

The following are the municipal ordinances specific to tree management in our borough:

[Chapter 10, Article 1 – Shade Tree Commission](#)

[Chapter 77 – Tree Removal and Replacement](#)

[Chapter 110 – Land Development, including Tree Standards](#)

[Chapter 181 - Trees](#)

Other municipal ordinances, for preventing damage to trees, include the following:

[Chapter 98, Article 4 - Signs](#)

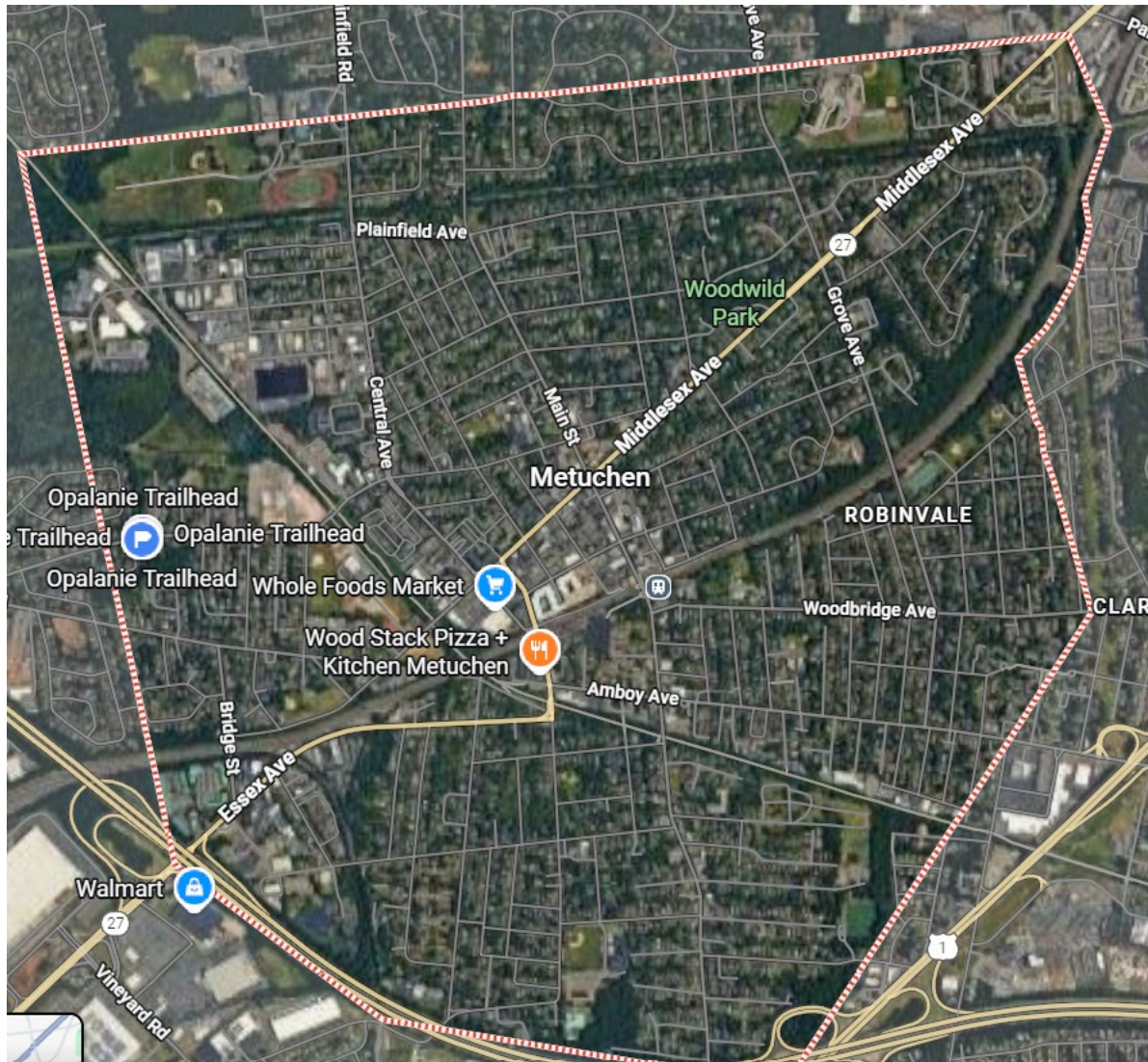
[Chapter 118, Article 15 – Posting Notices on Public Structures](#)

[Chapter 124, Article 1 E. – Prohibited Acts](#)

It is intended that the current CFMP will be an integral part of the latest revision of the Master Plan currently being undertaken by the Borough, particularly with regard to land use and development goals, to account for the need to increase our canopy, diminish impervious surfaces, increase stormwater retention while increasing passive recreation spaces which will include trees and shrubs.

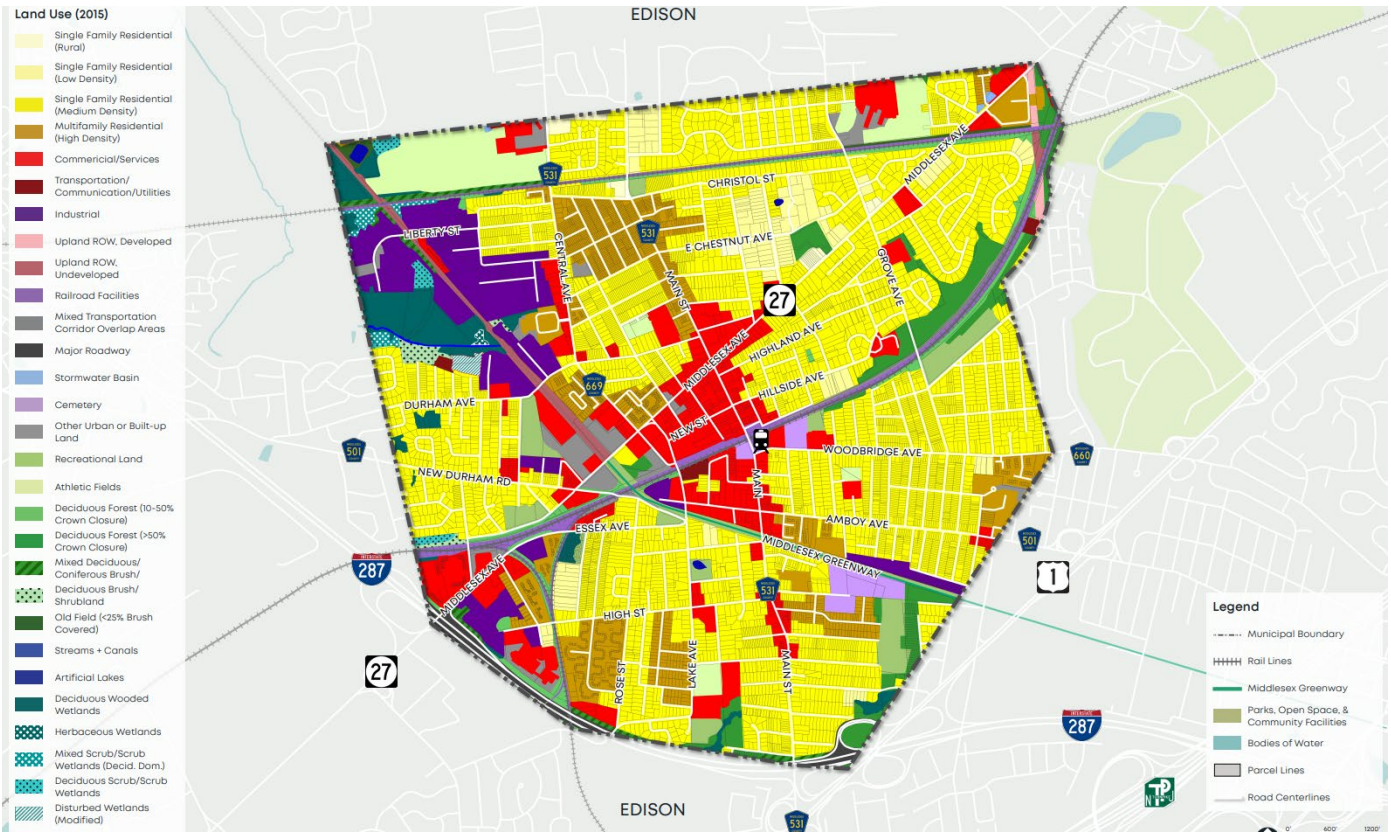
ii. Community Maps

Satellite Map



Source: Google Maps

Land Use Map



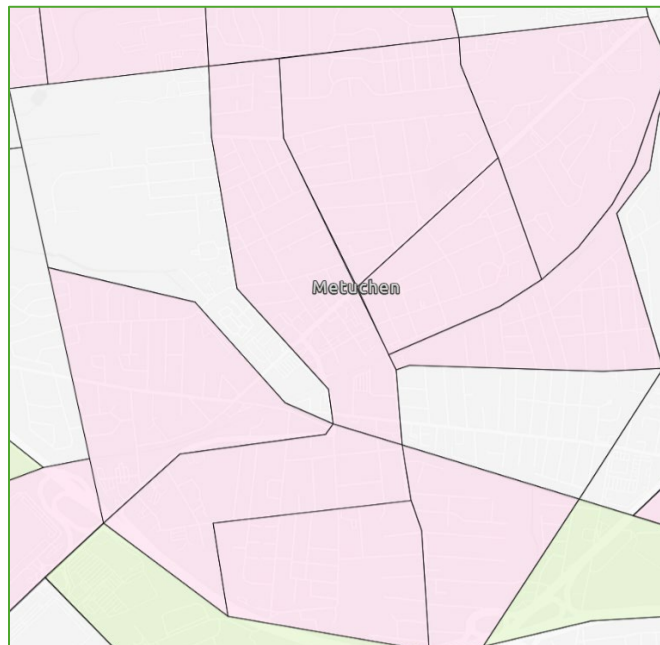
Source: Metuchen Zoning Official.

Canopy Map



Source: TREECANOPY.US

Canopy Change 2017 – 2023 (pink = loss, white = no significant change)



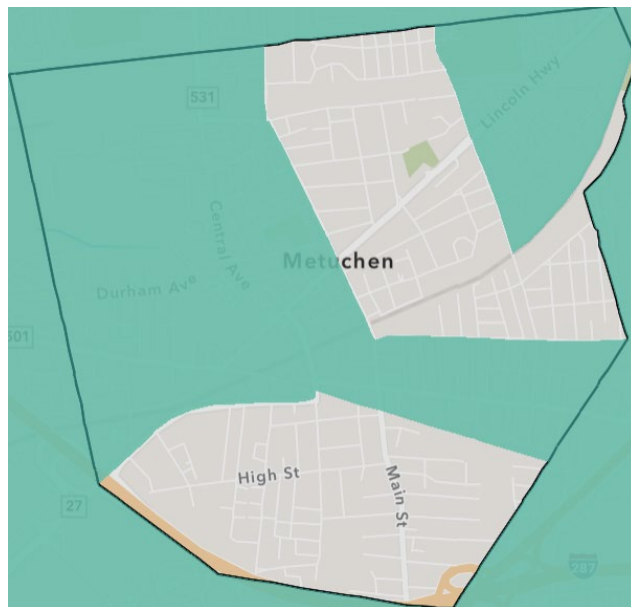
Source: TREECANOPY.US

Here is the data regarding historic canopy (2017) and current canopy (2023):

Census Block ID: 34023002	2017 Historic Canopy	2023 Canopy	% Change	Relative Change
0002	29.6% (79 acres)	30.3% (81 acres)	0.7% (2 acres)	+2.3%
0001	32.9% (62 acres)	29.4% (56 acres)	-3.5% (-7 acres)	-10.6%
1012	46.6% (92 acres)	43.5% (86 acres)	-3% (-6 acres)	-6.5%
1021	44.6% (86 acres)	42.3% (81 acres)	-2.3% (-4 acres)	-5.2%
1011	45.9% (48 acres)	43.2% (46 acres)	-2.3% (-3 acres)	-5.9%
1022	39.1% (50 acres)	37.6% (48 acres)	-1.5% (-2 acres)	-3.9%
1023	38.7% (54 acres)	38.3% (53 acres)	-0.4% (-1 acres)	-1.1%
2001	43.2% (51 acres)	42% (50 acres)	-1.2% (-1 acre)	-2.7%
2003	41.4% (59 acres)	39% (56 acres)	-2.4% (-3 acres)	-5.8%
2002	40.9% (57 acres)	39.8% (55 acres)	-1.2% (-2 acres)	-2.9%
0003	33.2% (65 acres)	31.7% (62 acres)	-1.6% (-3 acres)	-4.7%
Analysis			(-30 acres)	-5%

(Source: TREECANOPY.US)

As noted in the Environmental Justice Map below, five (out of eight) census block groups, 340230020002, 340230020002, 340230020003, 340230021021, and 340230021023, identified as *overburdened* per NJ Environmental Justice Criteria.



Source: Environmental Justice, Mapping, Assessment, and Protection Tool (EJMAP)

iii. History, Accomplishments, and Barriers to Success

In 1897, the Corbin family deeded nearly four acres of land to the Woodwild Park Association “to hold said lands as a public park,” protecting forested land which still exists today with shade trees, shrubs, and a kettle pond.

In the early twentieth century, the primary arteries of the borough, including Amboy Avenue, Main Street and the northeastern stretch of Middlesex Avenue, were planted with London plane trees, creating canopied allées that are intrinsic to Metuchen’s charm and personality. During the early to mid-twentieth century, many other streets, particularly in the northeast, were planted with species that matched up with their names: thus, Linden Street has American Lindens, Oak Street has Pin oaks, Maple Avenue had been planted with Sugar and Red maples. In addition, the “Radio” section in the northwest section of Metuchen, largely made up of bungalows, has many with Pin oaks that were planted mid-century. For decades, these trees have been central to Metuchen’s identity, and their health also seems to have been taken for granted.

Within the past twenty years, many of these trees have reached senescence, and are either dying or in very poor shape. The STC, in concert with the DPW and the borough administrator, has been engaged in removing these trees as they become risks. The aging of these trees and their removal is a key reason our canopy has diminished over the past ten years.

The Borough of Metuchen created its Shade Tree Commission on September 26, 1966. The Shade Tree Commission has submitted two previous CFMPs, the last of which was submitted in 2014. That plan, prepared under the guidance of two Licensed Tree Experts and with an inventory completed in 2009 by the Davey Tree Expert Company, had five goals.

Goal 1 (2014): To collect, store, update and utilize tree data for effective program administration and implementation.

Accomplishments/Barriers: While the inventory datasets created by Davey were helpful for preparing the forestry plan initially, they were owned by Davey. When the Borough contract with Davey lapsed, due to the cost, the datasets became inaccessible. As such, the Borough has only general reference points regarding our trees but has not been able to access or utilize this data over the past several years. To amend this situation, representatives from the STC met with Dr. David Tulloch of Rutgers University and coordinated with Jessica Einhorn, Chief of Forestry with NYC Parks, in the summer of 2025 to determine best practices for utilizing VGI (volunteered geographic information) to update our data through sampling, with the intent to create a Borough-owned first line inventory over a five-year period starting in the Fall of 2025.

Goal 2 (2014): To maintain public safety through proper tree maintenance.

Accomplishments/Barriers: We have been mostly successful in meeting this goal, though the borough had to purchase newer tree equipment, including a new stump grinder and tree bucket, within the past five years to enable our ability to do so.

Goal 3 (2014): To sustain level of tree canopy coverage near 43% by regular replacement plantings.

Accomplishments/Barriers: Due to aging tree canopies (noted above) along main thoroughfares and sections of Metuchen, there has been significant canopy loss over the past ten years. In addition, there has been notable loss due to the Emerald Ash Borer. However, there have been consistent plantings of trees throughout the borough over the past five years. Within the past two years alone, more than 140 street trees have been planted, and more than 120 have been planted in new developments; however, any notable canopy uptake/recovery will take another five years due to the age of these newly planted trees, which take years to achieve full crowns.

Goal 4 (2014): To train and educate members of the STC, volunteers, and

municipal employees in community forestry technical and administrative topics.

Accomplishments/Barriers: This goal has been largely accomplished as three of our Shade Tree Commissioners have core training and one commissioner has accrued more than five forestry-related continuing education units (CEUs) per year. The head of DPW has fulfilled CEU requirements each year for the past five years.

In addition, in partnership with the Tree Ambassadors (an education/project partnership between the STC and the Metuchen Board of Education) the STC held an educational event at the Metuchen Library in April 2025, educating more than thirty members of the community regarding community forestry practices, including tree identification, planting, tree health, and pruning. The STC also held three other trainings that accompanied community events: the first was the "Tree Time" event in early June 2025, which saw volunteers trained in proper pruning techniques, and the two "Trees Count" sampling inventory events held in September 2025, which saw community members trained in tree identification and sampling.

Goal 5 (2014): To increase borough residents' awareness, knowledge, appreciation, support, and participation in the community forestry program.

Accomplishments/Barriers: Many of the accomplishments for goal 5 overlap with those of goal 4. We were able to achieve increased awareness, knowledge, appreciation, support, and appreciation by engaging more members of the public in volunteer efforts, creating the Tree Ambassadors program in partnership with Metuchen schools, and continuing to update our work accomplishments using social media.

d. Urban Forest Structure, Composition, and Trends

Over the course of 2025, the Shade Tree Commission sought out the guidance of two experts with experience in the use of volunteered geographic information (VGI) to discern means to aggregate a useful sampling of tree inventory data at little to no cost since there was no allocation for a tree inventory in the Metuchen Borough budget. Meetings and learning sessions were conducted with Dr. David Tulloch of Rutgers University and coordinated with Jessica Einhorn, Chief of Forestry with NYC Parks. These people were chosen since the entire tree inventory in New York City is driven by VGI as is the multi-year inventory in Highland Park, NJ.

The process involved creating worksheets along with a handout of tree leaf diagrams of the common street trees in Metuchen for ID purposes to be used by participants, trainings, and inputting/aggregating data required by the NJUCF, including but not limited to: Species (using common names), DBH (in 2" increments), Condition (Very Good – Dead/Dying), Height (S, M, L), Sidewalk Impacted, Wires Overhead, and Noticeable Disease/Insects. The initial sampling took place over two days in the last week of September 2025, and saw volunteers inventory approximately sixty blocks of our borough. The sampling inventory examined street trees only (no parks) in each of the four sections of Metuchen, ranging from municipal streets to county roads (the state highway, Route 27, was not included in the inventory).

The initial sampling inventoried 528 trees. Of the inventoried trees, the following aggregate data were determined:

Species	Genus	Family	Number	Percentage	Note
London Plane	<i>Platanus</i>	<i>Platanaceae</i>	92	17%	
Red Maple	<i>Acer</i>	<i>Sapindaceae</i>	79	15%	
Red Oak	<i>Quercus</i>	<i>Fagaceae</i>	43	8%	
Pin Oak	<i>Quercus</i>	<i>Fagaceae</i>	37	7%	
Sugar Maple	<i>Acer</i>	<i>Sapindaceae</i>	34	6%	
Little Leaf Linden	<i>Tilia</i>	<i>Malvaceae</i>	34	6%	
Norway Maple	<i>Acer</i>	<i>Sapindaceae</i>	33	6%	Invasive

Callery Pear	<i>Pyrus</i>	Roseceae	22	4%	Invasive
Honey Locust	<i>Gleditsia</i>	Fabaceae	21	4%	
American Linden	<i>Tilia</i>	Malvaceae	20	4%	
Japanese Pagoda	<i>Styphnolobium</i>	Fabaceae	17	3%	Invasive
Japanese Blossoming Cherry	<i>Prunus</i>	Roseceae	13	2%	
Sweet Gum	<i>Liquidambar</i>	Altingiaceae	13	2%	
Horse Chestnut	<i>Aesculus</i>	Sapindaceae	7	1%	
Ginkgo	<i>Ginkgo</i>	Ginkgoaceae	6	1%	
Zelkova	<i>Zelkova</i>	Ulmaceae	5	1%	
Maple (reclassify)			5	1%	
Eastern Red Bud	<i>Cercis</i>	Fabaceae	3	1%	
American Elm	<i>Ulmus</i>	Ulmaceae	3	1%	
Ash	<i>Fraxinus</i>	Oleaceae	1	0%	
Other or unknown	N/A		39	7%	

The top five species constitute 54% of all trees sampled. As pointed out above, London plane trees were planted in disproportionate numbers early in the twentieth century. They are a staple of urbanized areas but are overrepresented here. As noted above, many are at or near the end of their lifespan.

Regarding the 10-20-30 rule, we noted the following:

10% - one species, the London plane dominates at 17% and will be reduced in the coming years due to die out.

20% - one genus, *Acer*, dominates at 27%, with three species, including the invasive Norway maple, which is no longer planted and will be removed

30% - one family, *Sapindaceae*, is at 28%. This includes the genus *Acer* and the genus *Aesculus*.

Based on the sampling results, we will alter future plantings to diversify our tree stock, reducing the dominant species and the dominant genus.

Other results from the survey include the following:

Condition of Trees	Raw Number	Percentage
5 (Good)	152	29%
4 (Fair)	184	35%
3 (Poor)	115	22%
2 (Very Poor)	60	11%
1 (Dead/Dying)	16	3%

As we move forward, we will use this data to enable qualified professionals to judge the status of trees described as dead/dying to have them removed quickly and reduce community hazards. Of the trees categorized as very poor, one-third (20) are London plane trees, and one-sixth (9) are Japanese pagoda trees, which are invasive, and also cause many problems with sidewalk lifting and shedding of fruit.

Finally, as seen in the data below, one-third of trees have impacted sidewalks, largely due to the fact that planting strips are narrow in most sections of town, often three feet wide or less. We are exploring ways to mitigate the problem of sidewalk heaving, perhaps borrowing the practice used in Newport, RI where a composite paving process is used around trees that have or will have the potential for large roots which can impact sidewalks.

Moreover, nearly half of the trees have wires overhead in some capacity, either strung to a house, or directly overhead and strung from pole to pole. In 2024, Metuchen altered its planting guidelines to ensure that large stature trees are not planted under overhead wires. In some cases, we have explored the planting of certain species that are less averse to overhead wires, including Honey locust and London planes since they can be pruned to grow around wires. A high proportion of diseased trees are older London planes, which show signs of anthracnose.

Adverse Impacts: Actual or Potential	Raw Number	Percentage
Sidewalk Impacted	170	32%
Wires Overhead	253	48%
Noticeable Disease/Insects	125	24%

e. Overall Program Goals

Goal 1: Collect, store, update and utilize tree data for effective program administration and implementation.

Goal 2: Integrate fully the role of shade trees in community planning and engagement.

Goal 3: Create and maintain a thriving, healthy, and resilient urban forest.

Goal 4: Improve stewardship, community engagement, and professional capacity to benefit our urban forest.

f. Plan Connections and Other Considerations

The work and purpose of the Metuchen Shade Tree Commission have been incorporated in general terms into Metuchen’s Master Plan, first drafted in 1967, and in subsequent re-examinations.

The 1967 Metuchen Master Plan considered the role of trees under the category of landscape design in the following ways, where it states that:

- “Primary landscape treatment shall consist of shrubs, ground cover and street trees, and shall combine with appropriate walks and street surfaces to provide an attractive development pattern. Landscape materials selected should be appropriate to growing conditions.”
- “Whenever appropriate, existing trees shall be conserved and integrated into the landscape design plan.”

The 1988 Master Plan Re-examination Report noted that there is a “need for natural open space areas as a habitat for indigenous vegetation and as wildlife corridors”. Further recognition occurred in the 2016 Master Plan Re-examination Report which noted that Metuchen was seeking to make itself more sustainable and resilient and that it was expanding the role of “open space and recreation with the goal of

promoting health and wellness,”

Moving forward, the Shade Tree Commission will play an active role in the current Master Plan Re-examination Report and has already submitted goals and objectives that correspond to those listed in this report.

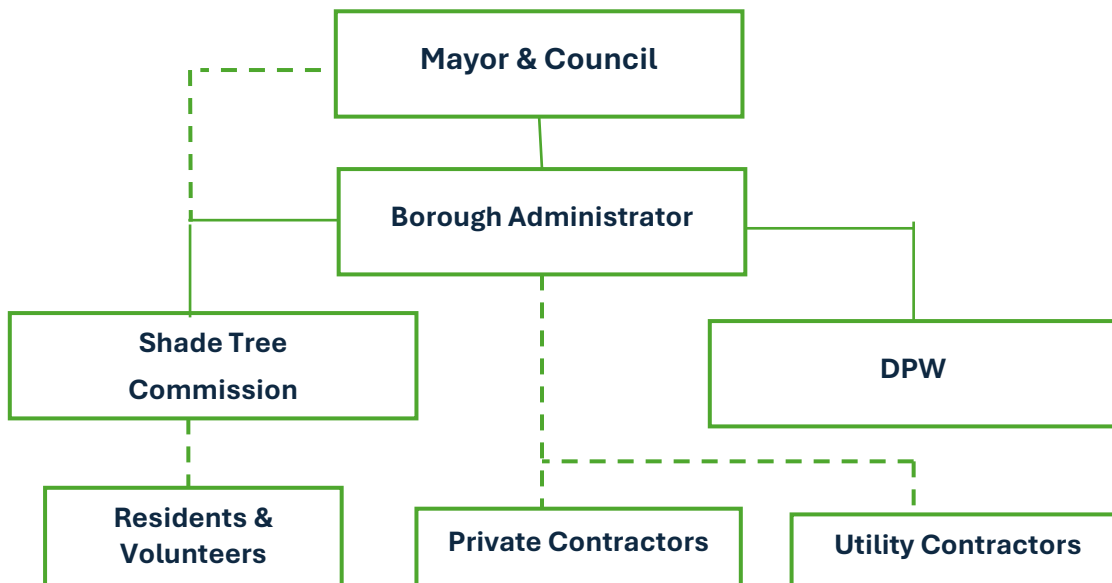
Ideally, by the end of the period covered by this five-year report, the Shade Tree Commission will have created a Community Forest Master Plan, which can establish a strategy for preserving and expanding street trees. That plan’s purpose will be to account more fully for the status and role of trees in our community and to establish recommendations to ensure continuity and efficacy in developing and maintaining our tree resource. Recommendations may include topics such as:

- Tree Placement guidance
- Establishing a Heritage Tree Program
- Crafting standards/specifications, easily implemented by DPW and licensed contractors, relating to planting conditions, species diversity, accounting for the role of tree form, and aesthetics.
- Adopting a five-year planting plan which anticipates the loss of existing trees and opportunities for new plantings.

2. Community Forestry Program Capacity

a. Community Forestry Program Administration

Administering the Borough of Metuchen Shade Tree Management Program is a cooperative effort conducted by the Shade Tree Commission, the Mayor and Council, the Borough Administrator, the Department of Public Works, private contractors, utility contractors, and Metuchen’s residents as shown below:



Mayor and Council

The mayor and council are responsible for appointing the seven members of the Shade Tree Commission. One councilmember serves as liaison to the Shade Tree Commission. The mayor and council shall annually appropriate such sums, as it may deem necessary to train the volunteer/staff to maintain approved status, and carry out the responsibilities of the Community Forestry Management Plan.

Borough Council Liaison

This Liaison reviews plans and policies submitted by the Shade Tree Commission, participates in meetings of the Commission, and makes recommendations to Council, including the Commission's annual budget.

Borough Administrator

The borough administrator is responsible for managing the day-to-day affairs of the municipality, including managing the DPW and coordination of the Spring and Fall tree plantings with the Shade Tree Commission.

Shade Tree Commission

The Shade Tree Commission is a seven-member volunteer commission appointed by the Mayor and Council. They are given the responsibility for all community trees on borough streets (including county roads), rights-of-way, parks, and other borough properties. Commissioner's duties include:

- Advising the borough about the planting, removal, and maintenance of Metuchen's trees.
- Developing and recommending ordinances, policies, and goals that will preserve and develop Metuchen's tree resource.
- Creating, implementing, and reporting on the Community Forestry Management Plan.
- Performing public outreach to foster understanding and care for Metuchen's trees on both public and private properties.
- Assisting with responses to complaints or requests received for work on Metuchen's trees.
- Reviewing the tree bank budget (described below) and other appropriations, in consultation with the borough administrator, and submitting them to the Mayor and Council.

The current members of the Shade Tree Commission are:

Kenneth Sammond*, Chair

Paul Pospiech*

Todd Pagel

Kunhan Lee

Rebecca Sabreen

Karen O'Neill

Jeremy Campbell*

Dorothy Giamboi*, Council Liaison

*CORE-trained.

In addition, Paul Pospiech, one of our Shade Tree Commissioners, has more than thirty years' experience as a landscape architect with the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

Department of Public Works (DPW)

This department reviews requests for tree planting, removal or maintenance and makes the necessary inspections. It inspects all work performed by the public works crew and private contractors on Metuchen-owned properties and/or rights-of-way, and the STC may request the DPW to perform inspections of tree conditions.

The Department of Public Works is headed by Brian Lewis, who had more than 25 years' experience in the tree care industry prior to working for the borough. He has had multiple classes in Shade Tree Management, with the NJUCF, Committee for the Advancement of Arboriculture (CAANJ), and the American Public Works Association. In addition, members of his crew have had CORE training and completed diverse trainings conducted by the CAANJ.

Residents

Residents file requests for planting and/or maintenance with the Metuchen Shade Tree Commission and/or DPW, either by calling DPW or emailing the Shade Tree

Commission. Residents who want a tree to be removed must submit a [permit request](#) to the Borough. Residents also assist in the follow-up care of any newly planted trees in all rights-of-way within the borough.

Volunteers

Volunteers assist in community efforts to plant and maintain trees, to conduct volunteered geographic information (VGI) for ongoing inventory efforts, and to educate the public about the benefits of trees. Volunteers also include students in the Tree Ambassadors high school program. These students participate in a four-week (ten-hour) training and complete a project in the field (planting, maintaining).

Utility Contractors

Contractors hired by utilities must notify the borough administrator, Director of Public Works, Mayor, or Council when they intend to trim trees under utility lines. They must follow all arboricultural practices and guidelines of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Contractors may assist DPW crews in clearing trees due to line clearance requirements.

Private Contractors

Generally, most tree care and maintenance activities are conducted by DPW crews, but if scheduling conflicts or new equipment needs arise, private contractors may be deemed necessary, on a case-by-case basis, for such work. Private contractors are engaged by the borough administrator and must meet the following requirements:

- Provide proof of appropriate insurance, licenses, and necessary certifications to the appropriate borough official.
- Report to the Metuchen borough administrator prior to work beginning and after work is completed, at the end of each day.
- Complete all work in a safe and timely manner according to all applicable safety standards set by OSHA or ANSI that pertain to tree care operations.
- Follow all current arboricultural practices and guidelines.
- Report all hazards or problems directly to the necessary Metuchen official.

b. Partnerships (NGOs, nonprofit organizations, interdepartmental)

The Metuchen Shade Tree Commission maintains strong ties with the borough's Environmental Commission with regard to plantings, maintenance, and planning the removal of invasive species. In similar capacities, the STC also has a working relationship with the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve Commission to ensure ecological health of the trees in the preserve and to increase the tree canopy there. Finally, as the Borough revises its Master Plan, the STC is working closely with the Zoning Official and the Planning Board to ensure that there is an increase in tree canopy through additional plantings and the expansion of passive recreation spaces conducive to tree placement.

Over the past two years, the STC has increased its collaboration with the Metuchen Board of Education by spearheading the Tree Ambassadors program (discussed above), the Metuchen Library, Scouting America (particularly Troop 17, but also Troop 66), Girl Scouts, as well as with a variety of houses of worship, and the Borough Improvement League. These collaborations include Arbor Day plantings, tree maintenance, tree plantings, and public education regarding the benefits of trees. We plan to expand our engagement with the Metuchen Pool Commission to increase the amount of tree coverage on their grounds.

c. Training

In keeping with the goals and objectives of this CFMP, the STC is committed to maintaining and increasing the expertise of its members and municipal employees. Specific training and skills to be pursued include the following:

- 1) CORE training: Currently, three of Metuchen's seven STC members, and one municipal employee are CORE trained.
- 2) Continuing Education Units (CEUs): A minimum of two STC members will acquire up to eight CEUs each year to meet the State requirement. Over the past year, members have completed 15 CEUs in the following:
 - Municipal Shade Tree Management (5.5 CEUs),
 - Shovel Ready: NJ Community Forestry Projects (1 CEU),

- Trees & Municipal Development: Lessons from a Reviewer (1 CEU),
- NJ Shade Tree Federation Hits 150th Year! A Perfunctory Overview of 2075 (1 CEU),
- Municipal and Community Forestry: A Global Perspective (1 CEU),
- Municipal Tree Inventory (5.5 CEUs).

These courses improve our ability to address issues noted in this CFMP and enable us to plan. Members have attended the annual Shade Tree Federation Meeting, including the most recent meeting in October 2025 at which the Tree Ambassadors program received the Achievement Award, as well as other conferences. Members have also met with experts in street tree selection, including local landscape architects and university-based planners and tree specialists, to develop the approved Borough Shade Tree List included in the borough's Protection of Trees Ordinance.

We plan to have more Shade Tree Commissioners and DPW workers trained in Hazard Tree Assessment and Tree Pruning, as well as to monitor the latest information on pests and diseases. We also aim to seek training on the use of the inventory application (such as ArborPro) to adopt a reliable and effective tool for data aggregation to improve maintenance and planning.

d. Budget

Statement of 5-year Tree Budget		CFMP Budget
Administration	Municipal Salaries	\$102,245
	Fringe	
	Indirect Costs	
	Volunteer Contribution (Rate can be found at www.independentsector.org)	\$9,370
	Other	
UCF Stewardship	Planting	\$479,575
	Pruning	\$138,325
	Removal	\$463,295
	Insect/Disease Management	\$6,235
	Stump Removal	\$6,425
	Other	\$6,000
	Training and Education (Municipal/County Employee)	\$21,000
	Training and Education (Volunteer)	\$5,255
	Public Outreach	\$950
	Other	
Total		\$1,238,675

Commemorative Tree Program

Our Commemorative Tree Program raises funds to be used exclusively for the purchase and planting of trees. It is separate from the budget since there is no way for us to predict how much we will receive in any given year. Three trees were planted in 2025 as part of this program. There are currently two trees requested for spring 2026 planting.

e. Equipment

The following lists the Borough-owned equipment used by our DPW to plant, maintain, and remove trees:

- Stump Cutters: 1998 Vermeer 630B, 2018 Vermeer SC362
- Brush Chippers: 2000 Vermeer 1800A, 2012 Vermeer 1800XL
- Loader: 2024 John Deere 544 model
- Mini Skid Steer: 2025 Ditch Witch SK900
- Aerial Bucket Trucks: 2001 International 62', 2025 Freightline 75'
- Backhoe: 2012 Case
- Multi-life Dump Truck: 2002 International

3. Community Engagement and Well-being

Community Engagement

Over the past few years, the Shade Tree Commission has expanded its public outreach via social media and on the Borough's website. In addition, it has strengthened and created new community programs to promote its work and to engage members of the community in ways that benefit the planting, care, and advocacy for trees in our borough. Three of our most notable programs are:

- 1) Metuchen Tree Time, begun in Spring 2024, which trains volunteers on proper pruning, and engages them to work alongside experienced volunteers to limb up trees to safe and healthy levels (above 6 ½' on the pedestrian side and 7' on the street side).
- 2) The Tree Ambassadors program, begun in Spring 2024, which works with teens in our borough to promote the wellness of trees and provide these ambassadors with the skills and wherewithal to identify, plant, and care for trees.
- 3) The Trees Count program, initiated in the Fall of 2025, saw more than forty volunteers turn out for volunteered geographic information (VGI) training and inventory sampling.

Overall, the Shade Tree Commission endeavors to promote awareness of the benefits of trees on both public and private property and to provide information on their proper care. Inform and engage the community to better address challenges that all trees face, such as diseases, insect infestations, salt runoff, and climate change. Specifically, these promotional activities will include:

- A. Facilitating and expanding the Tree Ambassadors program, a partnership between the Metuchen Shade Tree Commission and the Metuchen Board of Education, strengthens ecological sustainability in our community by increasing youths' understanding of and direct engagement with the role, needs, and benefits of our trees. The program includes instruction,

community engagement, and tree plantings.

- B. Expand the Metuchen Tree Time Program to include two events during spring in which we will train volunteers in proper pruning techniques, and use their skills and numbers to limb up trees to safe and healthy heights.
- C. Enhancing and expanding our Trees Count program to four events that will enable us to strengthen community ties, increase participating individual's knowledge of our trees, and improve the resilience of our tree resource.
- D. Continue our annual Arbor Day program, in which we partner with local Scouting America troops, and engage local organizations or houses of worship.
- E. Utilize the Borough's capacities, such as the website and social media as well as local media and events such as the Green Fair and the Farmers Market, and partner with entities, including the Environmental Commission, and the Garden Club of Metuchen to promote awareness and advocate for more trees.
- F. Redesign and update tree-related information on the Shade Tree Commission webpage of the borough website to encourage more use by the public. Currently, the Shade Tree Commission webpage includes the following information:
 - i. Community Forestry Management Plan
 - ii. Shade Tree Request Form
 - iii. Mission and Purpose of the Commission
 - iv. Commemorative Trees Program
 - v. Shade Tree Removal Permit Application

We work to keep the webpage navigable and with relevant, up-to-date information.

- G. Develop a social media program that will encourage homeowners to properly plant and maintain trees on their property.
- H. Develop a social media program in collaboration with the tree ambassadors to educate residents on the ordinance requiring permitting for the removal of trees on private property and requirements concerning care for public trees on the ROW on their property.
- I. Promote the Commemorative Tree program to help raise funds for more tree plantings by creating promotional material and publishing via above media.
- J. Promote volunteer (primarily in concert with the Environmental Commission) and Scouting America plantings at the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve, Centennial Park, as well as other borough properties through partnerships, promotional materials, and the use of social media.
- K. Reinstate and maintain the borough's status as a Tree City USA.

Urban Forest Benefits

Metuchen has a high composite Tree Equity Score of 93/100. This score is very good, though there is variation between one section of the borough, which scores 99 and another that scores 87. Overall, reviewing the canopy distribution reveals disparities requiring intervention over the course of the five year period described in this plan. The most significant indicators of inequities relate to minority populations, children and seniors, and heat disparity. These indicators are most notable in two census block groups, 340230020003 and 340230020002 which are adjacent to each other as noted in their lower Tree Equity ratings; moreover, they are recognized as Overburdened Communities per [NJ Environmental Justice Law criteria](#).

- Census Block Group 340230020003 has a rating of 87 and a canopy coverage of 32%. Within this census block group, people of color comprise

56% of the population, children and seniors represent 43%, and there is a heat disparity of +9° F. Since 2017, this Census Block Group has seen a relative canopy change of -4.7%.

- Census Block Group 340230020002 has a rating of 89 and a canopy coverage of 33%. Within this census block group, people of color comprise 41% of the population, children and seniors represent 36%, and there is a heat disparity of +8.4° F. Since 2017, this Census Block Group has seen a relative canopy change of +2.3%.

Based on these data, these two census block groups require the most significant investment from the Borough of Metuchen to improve their community health benefits relative to other sections of our municipality.

Increasing the canopy in the aforementioned census block groups will help significantly with heat mitigation since these blocks are recorded as having slightly higher heat disparity levels (the range in our borough is from +5.3° F to +10.7° F). Further additions to our canopy in other sections will also address these concerns, increase the health and well-being of all residents, and improve pedestrian safety. Metuchen is a very walkable community, which is committed to a “complete streets” infrastructure, providing sidewalks on all streets to enable mobility throughout the borough. Increased canopy improves walkability, particularly in the summer months.

Moreover, shade trees provide significant assistance in our stormwater management. Based on the guidance of our [Stormwater Management Plan](#), updated in 2021, we have noted that alterations should be made to Article 41 to include provisions that we shall “preserve selected trees to enhance soil stability and landscaped treatment.” In addition, Article 43 of our code states that “Particular consideration shall be given to individual trees with a diameter at breast height of four inches or greater, stands of trees” and Article 46 details the relevance and importance and shade trees, in particular the use of native trees, in our community.

Finally, as noted above, Metuchen has many allées of London planes that were planted early in the 20th century, primarily on Main Street and Amboy Avenue, and there are significant amounts of Pin oaks planted in the same period in the Radio section, the area within three blocks of Tommy's Pond in the southwest section, along with some American lindens which line Linden Avenue in the northeast section. These allées have provided significant aesthetic value; however, we recognize that these monocultural plantings are detrimental to a healthy biome. As we move forward, we plan to integrate a greater variety of species and genera to ensure strengthen ecological health while maintaining and enhancing the aesthetic value of our shade trees.

4. Plan Implementation

a. Elements, Objectives, and Action Items

Goal 1: Collect, store, update and utilize tree data for effective program administration and implementation.

Element 1 – Tree Resource Data Management

Objective 1 – Update comprehensive tree inventory for borough.

Action Items:

- a) Fall 2025 - Conduct volunteer training and undertake sampling VGI inventory of street trees throughout borough, including county ROWs, but excluding parks.
- b) Winter 2025 – Use STC meeting to explore the pros and cons of adopting ArborPro or similar tree application to expedite and strengthen inventory capabilities (includes demonstration).
- c) Spring 2026 – Apply for NJUCF grant for ArborPro or similar tree application to expedite and strengthen inventory capabilities.
- d) Fall 2026 - Conduct volunteer training and undertake VGI inventory of public street and park trees in northwest section.
- e) Fall 2027 - Conduct volunteer training and undertake VGI inventory of public street and park trees in northeast section.
- f) Fall 2028 - Conduct volunteer training and undertake VGI inventory of public street and park trees in southeast section.
- g) Fall – 2029 - Conduct volunteer training and undertake VGI inventory of public street and park trees in southwest section.
- h) Annually - Document all trees planted or removed throughout the borough as part of ongoing community efforts.

Objective 2 – Utilize tree inventory data to inform strategic planning and systematize pruning schedule to ensure that each tree >6" DBH is pruned to reduce risk hazard and improve safety.

Action items:

- a) Annually – Use accrued data to report hazardous and potentially hazardous trees to DPW and borough administrator.
- b) Annually – Target plantings, including species and location, the right tree in the right place, based on data results.
- c) Annually – Use data to schedule preventative tree pruning starting in the northeast section, proceeding to clockwise so that each section has comprehensive maintenance once every four years.
- d) Annually – Identify trees with insect infestations and/or disease to determine appropriate interventions

Goal 2: Integrate more fully the role of shade trees in community planning and engagement.

Element 1: Increase Community Forestry Program Capacity

Objective 1: Improve community partnerships to increase program capacity.

Action Items:

- a) Annually - Collaborate with the Metuchen Board of Education to continue sustainability projects.
- b) Winter/Spring, Annually – Coordinate with Metuchen Board of Education to continue and expand Tree Ambassadors program.
- c) Spring, Annually – Reach out and partner with a congregation and/or community non-profit to organize and facilitate Arbor Day planting.
- d) Annually – Coordinate with zoning and planning departments to ensure that permitting, planning, master plan revision, and development projects strengthen our urban forest.
- e) Annually – Coordinate with Environmental Commission in mutually beneficial ways, reinforcing “open space preservation, water resources management, air pollution control...soil and landscape protection...and protection of flora.”

Objective 2: Continue and enhance professional development.

Action Items:

- a) Annually – Send two DPW members to education and training events related to tree planting, young tree pruning and care, and maintenance, to help with our action item of preventative maintenance and community planting.
- b) May, October, Annually - Send two Shade Tree Commissioners to CORE Training.
- c) Send Shade Tree Commission members to training (CEUs) related to inventory management, pruning, tree planting etc. to ensure effective implementation of Tree Time and Tree Count action items, as well as to ensure quality execution of commission responsibilities.

Element 2: Strengthen Shade Tree Commission Governance and Guidance

Objective 1 – Create Standards for Tree Plantings, Protection, and Maintenance

Action Items:

- a) Spring 2026 - Draft ordinance concerning tree planting specifications.
- b) Fall 2026 – Send tree specification ordinance to council for approval.
- c) Fall 2026 - Draft ordinance concerning tree care service contractor registration.
- d) Spring 2027 – Send tree care operator registration ordinance to council for approval.
- e) Spring 2027 - Draft update to ordinance concerning shade tree protection to encompass removal of invasive vines, prohibit the planting of similar vines, and adopt standards for trunk protection.
- f) Fall 2027 – Send ordinance update concerning shade tree protection to council for approval.
- g) Annually – Review ordinances related to Shade Tree Commission roles and responsibilities, Trees, and Shade Tree protection, and land use for revision.

Objective 2 – Integrate urban forestry into borough planning.

Action items:

- a) Fall 2025 → Spring 2026 – Coordinate and engage with zoning and planning officials as part of Master Plan revision process to ensure that urban forestry is intrinsic to development goals and land use planning.
- b) Spring 2026 → Spring 2027 – Coordinate and engage with county infrastructure officials to plan and implement shade tree and shrub designs for Middlesex Greenway trailhead.
- c) Annually – Coordinate and engage with commissioners of the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve Commission, Middlesex County Infrastructure Department (which includes parks), and the Metuchen Environmental Commission to plan and implement native tree and shrub plantings in the Metuchen portion of the Barnes preserve.
- d) Spring 2026 → Fall 2027 – Coordinate and engage with county infrastructure officials and Borgen Construction to plan and implement shade tree and shrub designs for county parkland adjacent to the Barnes Preserve.
- e) Spring 2026 → Spring 2027 – Partner with DPW and the borough zoning and planning offices to recommend, plan and implement shade tree and shrub plantings for renovation of Olmezer Park and the grounds of Borough Hall.

Goal 3: Create and maintain a thriving, healthy, and resilient urban forest.

Element 1: Create new opportunities for tree plantings

Objective 1: Increase community canopy to minimum of 40%, focusing especially on areas with low canopies.

Action items:

- a) Coordinate with County Infrastructure department to plan and implement the planting of native shade trees and shrubs on the County Trailhead for the Middlesex Greenway located on Middlesex Avenue, ensuring that this parcel should be designed to enhance canopy coverage.
- b) Enhance and increase tree plantings at the Metuchen library grounds and the adjacent Martin Luther King, Jr. park.
- c) Assist in planning, designing, and physical renovations of the grounds of Olmezer Park and the grounds of Borough Hall to ensure that tree and shrubbery plantings are integrated effectively to increase canopy coverage.
- d) Coordinate with Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve Commission to increase plantings of native trees within the confines of the preserve and the adjacent park space being created as part of the redevelopment of the Gulton tract.
- e) Improve plantings in and around the downtown plaza to lower area surface temperature.

Objective 2: Work with partners to create new opportunities for open space which include planning and planting trees and shrubs in areas that are currently impervious surfaces and to increase stormwater retention.

Action items:

- a) Assist in planning, designing, and physical creation of the new Thomas Mundy Peterson Park located on Main Street to ensure that tree and

shrubby plantings are integrated effectively to increase canopy coverage.

- b) Coordinate with zoning and planning to initiate efforts to repurpose public parking lots in the downtown area to become passive recreation areas that provide opportunities to plant microforests or tree plantings that significantly increase canopy coverage in the downtown area.
- c) Explore further opportunities to increase tree planting locations in areas that are currently impervious.

Objective 3: Increase tree plantings in census blocks identified as having significantly lower canopy coverage.

Action items:

- a) Winter/Spring 2026 - Note vacant locations on streets, municipal parks, and other public properties in these census blocks to determine suitability and locations for tree plantings.
- b) Spring/Fall 2026-2027 - Coordinate and complete plantings in identified locations.

Objective 4: Fulfill requests for tree plantings from residents and property owners.

Action items:

- a) Annually, Ongoing - Ensure that tree planting requests are documented on a rolling basis.
- b) Annually, Ongoing – Fulfill tree planting requests and, whenever possible, prioritize requests in the following order
 - i. canopy need (in census blocks with lower canopies),
 - ii. removal/replacement,
 - iii. new requests in areas with a more sufficient canopy

Element 2: Preventative Maintenance

Objective 1: Initiate and coordinate preventative maintenance program to reduce risk and improve safety using inventory data and geographic location (focusing on one section at a time)

Action Items:

- a) Spring → Fall 2026 – Implement preventative tree interventions, focusing on pruning, in northeast section.
- b) Spring → Fall 2027 - Implement preventative tree interventions, focusing on pruning, in southeast section.
- c) Spring → Fall 2028 - Implement preventative tree interventions, focusing on pruning, in southwest section.
- d) Spring → Fall 2029 - Implement preventative tree interventions, focusing on pruning, in northwest section.
- e) As needed – conduct preventative maintenance when apprised of the need for it.

Element 3: Tree Planting Management

Objective 1: Ensure newly planted trees have proper preparation, maintenance, and care to ensure their health and diminish risk.

Action Items:

- a. Bi-annually – The head of DPW to inspect trees prior to installation to ensure that they meet bid specifications.
- b. Bi-annually – Shade Tree Commissioners inspect trees post installation to ensure quality control
- c. Bi-annually – Install gator bag upon new tree installation.
- d. Bi-annually – Notify and encourage resident to water their new trees.
- e. Bi-annually – Remove gator bags in the fall to prolong life of the equipment and reduce risks created through excess trunk bark moisture. Replace in spring as needed.

- f. Bi-annually – Donut mulch new trees to drip line
- g. Bi-annually – Educate homeowners on proper mulching of all trees,
- h. Bi-annually – Review tree mulch and make corrections, as necessary.

Element 4: Tree Removals

Objective 1: Prompt removal of dead and diseased trees to reduce risk and improve safety.

Action items:

- a) Bi-annually – Use inventory data to identify potentially hazardous trees, focusing on those with the greatest risk
- b) Annually, Ongoing – Remove dead and diseased trees within six months of notification and review.
- c) Annually, Ongoing – Coordinate with PSE&G to address and remove hazardous trees in powerlines.
- d) Bi-annually – Create small tree removal work list for DPW to address and remove.

Element 5: Disaster Planning

Objective 1: Ensure storm readiness, response, and recovery

Action items:

- a) Winter 2025 - Create and maintain a list of licensed tree contractors who can be engaged to assist in storm response efforts.
- b) Weather Dependent - Head of DPW on-call to assess emergency storm-related large tree calls such as uprootings and/or splits/cracks.
- c) Weather Dependent - Head of DPW in coordination with Borough Administrator on-call to facilitate immediate contracting of large tree emergency work from existing list of tree care companies.

Goal 4: Improve and maintain stewardship, community engagement, and professional capacity to benefit our urban forest.

Element 1: Improve and Maintain Stewardship

Objective 1: Engage in measures that ensure conscious and effective stewardship of our urban forest

Action items:

- a) Annually – Continue reporting requirements for CFMP.
- b) Winter 2025 – Achieve recognition of Tree City USA status
- c) Annually 2026 onward – Maintain Tree City USA status
- d) Fall 2026 – Research potential to participate in New Jersey Big and Heritage Tree Registry
- e) Spring 2027 – Coordinate with local landscape architects and arborists to create the basis for a Metuchen Shade Tree Master Plan
- f) Annually - Promote mayoral Arbor Day proclamation.
- g) Annually - Apply for CSIP or other grants to implement the tree planting plans. Work with other Borough entities to research grant possibilities and to complete and submit requests for grants.
- h) Ongoing, Annually – Research and employ best practices in forest maintenance in municipal parks and properties.

Element 2: Community Engagement

Objective 1: Strengthen public engagement and support for our community's urban forest.

Action Items:

- a) Spring, Annually - Host annual, open town hall style/stakeholder meetings at the library to allow community members to provide input for urban forest issues and management.

- b) Annually - To improve inclusiveness and equitability among members of our community who are currently marginalized or who face communication gaps (e.g., those who are not proficient in English, have limited mobility, or experience impaired vision or hearing).
- c) Spring, Annually - Host community events that promote and celebrate urban forest resources, including Arbor Day.
- d) Spring, Summer, Fall, Annually - Conduct outreach to ensure participation in community events, including but not limited to Tree Ambassadors, Tree Time, and Tree Count programs.
- e) Quarterly - Post updates on our webpage and social media accounts.

Objective 2: Increase public capacity to strengthen and maintain our urban forest.

Action items:

- a) Spring – Implement new cohort of four-week Tree Ambassadors program in collaboration with high schools in and around the borough.
- b) May, annually – Conduct Tree Ambassadors “we speak for the trees” community programming at Metuchen Library and grounds.
- c) May/June, annually – Coordinate volunteers for Tree Time instruction and trimming of shade trees.
- d) Summer/Fall, annually – Coordinate and train volunteers for Trees Count events concerning tree identification, measurement, general condition evaluation, site conflict evaluation (sidewalk lifting, wires, etc.)
- e) Annually – Encourage and organize other community events in tandem with the Environmental Commission to promote the benefits of our urban forest.

Objective 3: Respond quickly and efficiently to residents’ requests and concerns.

Action items:

- a) Ongoing – Improve documentation and information on commission webpage.
- b) Ongoing - Feature request forms prominently on Shade Tree Commission webpage
- c) Bi-Monthly – Review requests for tree removals, plantings, and trimmings and coordinate with DPW and the borough administrator.
- d) Quarterly – DPW compile statistics and report to Shade Tree Commission on tree removals, trees planted, and trees trimmed.

Element 3: Education and Training

Objective 1: Continue to meet CEU and CORE accreditation requirements. Ensure that at least four people (3 STC and 1 DPW) are CORE trained.

Action items:

- a) Bi-annually - Send members of STC to CORE training
- b) Annually - Ensure that at least two people (one commissioner and one DPW) have a combined minimum of 8 CEUs each year. Track CEUs and recommend courses.

Objective 2: Ensure that DPW workers complete a minimum of three training courses per year in areas related to arboriculture, including but not limited to proper use of equipment, BMPs of pruning, planting, and tree removal.

Action items:

- a) Annually - Plan/coordinate DPW employee training in NJUCF approved courses.
- b) Annually - Plan/coordinate DPW employee training in CAANJ courses.

Goal 2: Integrate more fully the role of shade trees in community planning and engagement.

Element 1: Increase Community Forestry Program Capacity

Objective 1: Improve community partnerships to increase program capacity.

Action items:

	2025				2026				2027				2028				202G			
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
a) Collaborate with the Metuchen Board of Education to continue sustainability projects.	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
b) Coordinate with Metuchen Board of Education to continue and expand Tree Ambassadors program.	█	█			█	█			█	█			█	█			█	█		
c) Reach out and partner with a congregation and/or community non-profit to organize and facilitate Arbor Day planting.		█				█				█				█				█		
d) Coordinate with zoning and planning departments to ensure that permitting, planning, master plan revision, and development projects strengthen our urban forest.				█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
e) Coordinate with Environmental Commission in mutually beneficial ways, reinforcing "open space preservation, water resources management, air pollution control...soil and landscape protection...and protection of flora."	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

Objective 2: Continue and enhance professional development.

Action Items

a) Send two DPW members to education and training events related to tree planting, young tree pruning and care, and maintenance, to help with our action item of preventative maintenance and community planting.	█	█		█	█	█	█		█	█	█		█	█	█		█	█	█	
b) Send two Shade Tree Commissioners to CORE Training.		█		█		█		█		█		█		█		█		█		█
c) Send commissioners for CEU training related to inventory management, pruning, tree planting etc. to ensure proper implementation of Tree Time and Tree Count action items, and quality execution of commission responsibilities.		█		█		█		█		█		█		█		█		█		█

Element 4: Tree Removals

Objective 1: Prompt removal of dead and diseased trees to reduce risk and improve safety.

Action items:

	2025				2026				2027				2028				202G			
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
a) Use inventory data to identify potentially hazardous trees, focusing on those with the greatest risk																				
b) Remove dead and diseased trees within six months of notification/review.																				
c) Coordinate with PSE&G to address and remove hazardous trees in powerlines.																				
d) Create small tree removal work list for DPW to address and remove.																				

Element 5: Disaster Planning

Objective 1: Ensure storm readiness, response, and recovery

Action items:

	2025				2026				2027				2028				202G			
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
a) Create and maintain a list of licensed tree contractors who can be engaged to assist in storm response efforts.																				
b) Head of DPW on-call to assess emergency storm-related large tree calls such as uprootings and/or splits/cracks (as needed: weather dependent)																				
c) Head of DPW in coordination with Borough Administrator on-call to facilitate immediate contracting of large tree emergency work from existing list of tree care companies. (as needed: weather dependent)																				

	2025				2026				2027				2028				202G			
	Jan-Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec
<i>Element 3: Education and Training</i>																				
Objective 1: Continue to meet CEU and CORE accreditation requirements. Ensure that at least four people (3 STC and 1 DPW) are CORE trained.																				
Action items:																				
a) Send members of STC to CORE training																				
b) Ensure that at least two people (one commissioner and one DPW) have a combined minimum of 8 CEUs each year. Track CEUs and recommend courses.																				
Objective 2: Ensure that DPW workers complete a minimum of three training courses/year in areas related to arboriculture, including but not limited to proper use of equipment, BMPs of pruning, planting, and tree removal.																				
Action items:																				
a) Plan/coordinate DPW employee training in NJUCF approved courses.																				
b) Plan/coordinate DPW employee training in CAANJ courses																				

5. Appendices

Appendix 1. Municipal/County Information Form

Appendix 3. Five-Year Budget (included above)