

WESTWOOD SHADE TREE COMMITTEE 2023-2024 OPERATIONS PLAN

PURPOSE & INTENT OF OPERATIONS PLAN:

The Westwood Shade Tree Advisory Committee (WSTC) was created to provide guidance on the planting, maintenance, education, and preservation of all Borough trees. Our mission is to plant as many new trees as possible within the Borough, while maintaining and expanding the Borough’s tree canopy, and to educate the community on the value and importance of trees.

PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of this Operations Plan are supported in existing Borough policies and plans as well as by Westwood residents.

- **Accessibility and Health:** To provide a safe, accessible, and inviting walking environment, following universal design principles.
- **Environment:** To protect and expand a healthy urban forest.
- **Efficiency:** To preserve existing assets— both street trees and sidewalks—and use resources wisely.

These goals will be met by achieving the following objectives.

- Acquire requisite CEU units annually for NJUCF accreditation and complete all necessary NJUCF application documentation including an annual Community Forestry Management Plan.
- Retain healthy, mature, and appropriately sited trees whenever possible, while ensuring mobility.
- Increase the urban canopy by planting new Borough trees with a beginning goal of 1:1 ratio (dependent on DPW labor capacity and time availability) – the goal of one new Borough tree planted for every Borough tree removed. The loss of any shade tree is a loss to the entire community and, as such, should be avoided except when removal is necessary for reasons of safety, public necessity, or unavoidable development.
- Provide residents with options for the repair of sidewalks damaged by street trees with sustainable, innovative solutions to preserve trees where feasible.
- Explore strategies that enhance neighborhood aesthetic, reduce lifecycle costs, and allow sidewalks and substantial trees to coexist.
- Assess the appropriateness of street trees based on established criteria, including species, location, planting space, maintenance, past and current conflicts, and proximity to public and private structures and infrastructure.
- Work with the Borough’s Department of Public Works (DPW) to schedule tree pruning and removal (when no other practicable alternatives exist) in phases to enable continued canopy coverage.
- Communicate to property owners the importance of proper tree maintenance and encourage the planting of Borough trees within the 10’ easement on the property owners’ side of the sidewalk.

SUGGESTED TREE LIST

The WSTC recommends that all new Borough trees be selected with the approval of the WSTC in coordination with the Westwood Department of Public Works, and be from the diverse varieties noted in the latest *NJ Tree Foundation’s Urban Tolerant Trees* and *Utility Friendly Trees* lists. These include:

Tall Trees	Medium Trees	Small Trees
American Elm	Blackgum	Serviceberry
Zelkova	Littleleaf Linden	Japanese Snowbell
Ginko	Freeman Maple	American Hornbeam
Pin Oak	Sycamore Maple	Eastern Redbud
White Oak	Red Maple	Trident Maple
Swamp White Oak	Red Horse-chestnut	Hedge Maple
Chestnut Oak	European Hornbeam	Amur Maple
Willow Oak	Hackberry	American Smoketree
	Katsura	Winter King Hawthorn
	Yellowwood	Persian Parrotia
	American Hophornbeam	Japanese Lilac Tree

THE WSTC RECOMMENDS:

- Adoption of a beginning goal of 1:1 replacement policy under which the Borough would plant one tree for each tree they remove from Borough property or the right-of-way (dependent on DPW labor capacity and time availability).
- Any excess trees beyond the number of trees requested by homeowners, may be planted in Borough owned “orphan lots” with priority given to residential areas, the commercial and downtown zones where not restricted, and finally Borough owned buildings such as the Fire House, Recreation Center, and Borough Hall, that border residential areas. If no appropriate planting space is available in these commercial and downtown streetscapes, then the excess trees will be planted in public parks.
- Adoption of the industry standard tree pruning cycle of five to seven years for all street trees by 2030.
- All healthy trees determined by the Borough arborist and the DPW Superintendent requested for removal (save for emergency situations) be reported to the WSTC. Removal of dead trees does not require WSTC permission, but those removals must be reported in writing on a monthly basis in a method to be determined by the Borough Administrator for our records.
- All newly installed sidewalks adjacent to Borough trees have a layer of washed gravel under the sidewalk pavement as research has found that a washed gravel layer under the sidewalk pavement may reduce damage by tree roots. The open-graded gravel does not hold water, and the lack of soil and nutrients in the voids discourages root growth while supporting the pavement. WSTC understands this gravel is an extra cost, which is why the WSTC plans for an adoption of a sidewalk replacement program for those Borough sidewalks damaged by tree roots.
- All new trees be planted in accordance with the nationwide best practices for tree planting including the provision of certain minimum volumes of soil that are useable by the tree for root growth (e.g., the soils contain nutrients/organic matter and some degree of void space to accommodate air, water, and root growth), deer wrap, short-term maintenance (primarily watering), and regular monitoring for health.
- Coordinate all new tree plantings with existing utilities as Westwood is a developed Borough, and there are very few locations where trees could be installed without such coordination.
- Promote ways for residents to identify and manage the Spotted Lantern Fly to keep Borough populations down.
- Schedule removal of all infected Borough ash trees.
- Pruning of street trees to address visibility problems rather than removal whenever possible.
- Applying for NJUCF, NJ Tree Federation, and other such organizational grants once NJUCF accreditation is acquired.
- Continued education of WSTC members and assigned DPW personnel.
- Expansion of social media presence and community educational outreach programs to promote new tree plantings that add to our Borough’s canopy.