



THE TOWNSHIP TREEBUNE

State of Our Urban Forest

Ferguson Township actively manages over 4,800 street trees, in addition to the thousands of trees located within Township-owned parks and natural areas. In order to obtain an accurate representation of our tree resource, the Township recently conducted a street tree inventory and a tree canopy assessment. The findings were instrumental in completing Ferguson Township's five-year Urban Forestry Management Plan.

Tree Inventory Findings

Of the 4,800 street trees, 95% were rated in good condition. Of the 86 various species identified, the most common were honey locust, red maple, and little leaf linden. Using tree diameter as a relative measurement of age, our urban forest is relatively young, with 78% of trees under 12" in diameter. Currently, the biggest threats to street trees are lawn mower and string trimmer damage to tree trunks and improper mulching techniques (mulch volcanoes). Results suggest the Township should increase age and species diversity in order to improve the quality and resilience of our urban forest.

Canopy Assessment Findings

In 2020, the Township completed a tree canopy assessment to determine canopy change from 2008 to 2019. Records indicated there was a 1.6% increase in overall Township canopy cover since the previous survey in 2008. The Township's percent canopy is an impressive 47%, which is higher than the state average of 40.7%. However, within the growth boundary, a 6% increase with 31% canopy cover was experienced, still below the national average of 33% for metropolitan areas. Tree canopy is increased as a result of the development of agricultural land and planting of street and landscape trees. According to assessment results, 48% of the Township is suitable for additional tree canopy.

2023-2028 Urban Forestry Management Plan

In early 2023, the Ferguson Township Tree Commission and the Township Arborist worked exhaustively to revise and adopt a new Urban Forestry Management plan. The document is represented through a number of these goals:

- Continue to earn the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA accreditation and Growth Award
- Increase canopy coverage and identify planting opportunities throughout the Township
- Increase species diversity to improve forest resilience to storms and pathogens
- Improve community support, participation, and tree knowledge through education and outreach
- Develop a proactive maintenance plan, including routine inspections and cyclical pruning schedules

Please remember, a permit is required to perform work on Township owned street trees. These trees are generally located in the Right-of-Way between the sidewalk and curb. Some Rights-of-Way are not easily identifiable. A call to the Township can help you identify the responsible party.

If you have any questions regarding your street trees, email the Township Arborist at arborist@twp.ferguson.pa.us or call (814) 238-4651.