



# **Pennington Borough** **Community Forestry** **Management Plan**

## **2026 through 2035**

Prepared by Pennington Borough Shade Tree Committee, Pennington, NJ  
Kate Fullerton, Chair, Beatrice Anduze-Faris; Meredith Moore; Gabriel Rosko, LTE - TRAQ;  
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## Table of Contents

- I. Introduction and Background
  - a. Mission Statement
  - b. Liability Statement
  - c. Community Overview
    - i. Overview
    - ii. Community Map
    - iii. History, Accomplishments, and Barriers to Success
  - d. Urban Forest Structure, Composition, and Trends
  - e. Overall Program Goals
  - f. Plan Connections and Other Considerations
- II. Community Forestry Program Capacity
  - a. Community Forestry Program Administration
  - b. Partnerships
  - c. Training Plan
  - d. Statement of Tree Budget
  - e. Equipment Budget
- III. Community Engagement and Well Being
- IV. Plan Implementation
  - a. Elements, Objectives, and Action Items
  - b. Activity Schedule
- V. Appendices
  - a. Appendix 1: Training and Education
  - b. Appendix 2: Ordinances
  - c. Appendix 3: Tree Resource Management
  - d. Appendix 4: Annual Accomplishment Reports

## Municipal/County Information

Municipality	Borough of Pennington
County	Mercer County
Address	30 North Main Street Pennington NJ
Contact Name and Title	Gian Paolo Caminiti, Borough Administrator
Phone #	609-737-0276
E-mail	administrator@penningtonboro.org
Organization Name	Borough of Pennington
Mayor's Signature	_____
Date of Management Plan Submission	_____
Time Period Covered in Management Plan	2026-2035

### ***Official Use Only Certification***

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

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

# **Community Forestry Management Plan - 2026-2035**

## **Section I: Introduction and background**

- a. Mission Statement:** To ensure the viability and sustainability of Pennington's forests and shade trees for the economic, aesthetic, health and environmental benefits they provide to Borough residents.

**b. Liability Statement:**

Trees in Pennington provide a desirable aesthetic addition to the landscape. Properly maintained, they add to the economic and environmental vitality of the Borough. Safe trees require constant vigilance and care. Even where excellent long-term planting of the right trees in the right place and good maintenance prevail, it is inevitable that trees mature and eventually need replacement.

Pennington Borough has a proven record of good maintenance and vigilance provided by a continuous survey of hazardous conditions and is committed to continuing its proactive programs to ensure public safety. Pennington's Shade Tree programs, while comprehensive and effective, are still constrained by a fixed budget that limits the amount of proactive and restorative work accomplished. It is the intent of this plan to focus available resources on the greatest needs and continue to emphasize healthy trees with the commensurate reduced risks to public safety.

The Pennington Borough Shade Tree Committee (PSTC) considers that continuing existing programs and initiating the additional actions identified in this plan will elevate public support for plan implementation and effectiveness. The actions taken as a result of this plan will demonstrate that continued resources for well cared-for trees are beneficial to the environment and to public safety.

It is acknowledged that, even with a vigilant proactive shade tree program, not all hazardous conditions can be predicted. However, existing programs of good maintenance and care reduce the possibility of failure. Through implementation of this plan and continuance of the existing high quality programs, the Pennington Borough Shade Tree Committee will demonstrate its devotion to expending reasonable levels of resources in a prudent manner to reduce the number of tree-related accidents. Pennington will, thereby, reduce its exposure to liabilities and increase public safety.

**c. Community Overview:**

**i. Overview:**

The community overview portion of this section remains, for the most part, unchanged from both the 2006-2010 and 2011-2015 plans and is included for its historic and continuity value.

Pennington, which had the honor of being named the Best Town for Families by New Jersey Family Magazine in 2015, is located in the central part of New Jersey in Mercer County. Pennington emerged as a small crossroads community in the 1720s, and was then known as Queenstown. The name was changed to Pennington in 1747 and incorporated as the Borough of Pennington in 1890. Most of the present Borough was farmland from the early settlement period through late 19th century. The Borough is 0.99 square miles in size or 633.6 acres. Pennington Borough had a population of 2,798 citizens in the 2023 American Community Survey.

The Pennington Park and Shade Tree Commission was organized on January 13, 1915. The first goal was to maintain Kunkel Park (7 ac.) for group picnic grounds. During this time, church, youth, and civic groups from the greater Trenton area came by trolley to enjoy the park. The Shade Tree Commission guided the establishment of street trees as the Borough was built up and new streets were established.

John A. Kunkel was instrumental in developing the North East section of Pennington in the late 1800s. William P. Howe developed the South end of Pennington around 1910, planting 2,500 shade trees along his newly developed streets. With this long history, it is not surprising that Pennington is a town noted for its trees. Borough residents boast of the small town ambiance, always adding, "and we have beautiful trees too." A well-maintained community forest just doesn't occur by accident. Pennington's success is a result of the long line of concerned and dedicated members of the Shade Tree Committee, an enthusiastic municipal workforce, and the support of local residents.

The roadsides as well as most yards within Pennington's nearly 1 square mile area, are heavily tree-covered. The canopy or tree cover approximates 70%. The tree canopy not only creates an aesthetic appeal, but also adds environmental and health benefits such as summer cooling, buffers to winter winds, dust filtration, carbon sequestration and oxygen production. As with any living resource, change is inevitable and the health and sustainability of a community forest needs attention. This ten-year plan is designed to focus the Shade Tree Committee's work for the benefit of Pennington's trees. The primary focus is on the municipality's trees along streets and open spaces.

A quick glance at Pennington's trees reveals a healthy, growing, and well-maintained resource. Soils in the Borough tend to be poorly drained with an occasional shale outcropping. The soils are fertile but have some limitations to the growth of trees. Thus it is a priority of today's Shade Tree Committee to add species diversity to the landscape.

In 2025, Pennington Borough is in the process of updating its Master Plan and accompanying Elements. Reading through the revised Master Plan and the Borough Open Space Plan, it is evident that trees and open spaces are important to the Borough's residents. The Pennington Shade Tree Committee is interested in

maintaining the small town atmosphere of Pennington. Actions in this plan will augment the efforts of the Master Plan, Environmental Resource Inventory, Conservation of Natural Resources Plan, and Open Space Plan. The goals listed in this Plan are also referenced in the Environmental Resource Inventory in support of these policy goals. The positive environmental impact of tree growth in the Borough is expressed throughout these documents. Keeping the Pennington Shade Tree Committee involved in the tree care recommendations will benefit the Borough.

The Borough is nearly fully developed. The following tables from the 2023 Reexamination Report; Borough of Pennington, New Jersey, prepared by the Borough Planning Board (with the assistance of Jim Kyle, P.P., A.I.C.P., of Kyle+McManus, Borough Planning Consultant) provide a summary of land use in the Borough.

#### **Area of Zoning Districts, 2023**

<b>Zone District</b>	<b>ACREAGE</b>	<b>% OF TOTAL</b>
R-80 Residence Zone	254.3	40.8
R-100 Residence Zone	201.4	32.3
Apartment Townhouse Residence Zone	8.6	1.4
Office Residence Zone	4.2	0.7
Town Center Zone	11.3	1.8
Town Center Buffer Zone	5.5	0.9
Highway Business Zone	24.0	3.8
Office Building Business Zone	27.1	4.3
Professional Office Zone	4.5	0.7
E-1 Education Zone	33.6	5.4
E-2 Education Zone	20.5	3.3
Mixed Use Zone 1	4.4	0.7
Mixed Use Zone 2	8.3	1.3
Mixed Residence Zone	16.2	2.6
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>623.9</b>	

<b>Property Tax Class</b>	<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>Total Properties</b>	<b>Total Acreage</b>
1	Vacant	53	24.3
15A	Public School Property	2	17.2
15B	Other School Property	4	11.8
15C	Public Property	26	26.7
15D	Church and Charitable	17	14.0
15E	Cemeteries	4	5.5
15F	Other Exempt	8	37.7
2	Residential	890	319.4
4A	Commercial	57	59.5
4B	Industrial	2	7
4C	Apartment	2	1.2
5A	Railroad Class 1	7	15.1
4B	Railroad Class 2	5	0.7
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>1,077</b>	<b>540.2</b>





### **iii. History, Accomplishments and Barriers to Success:**

The Department of Public Works of Pennington Borough works diligently to maintain the street trees in Pennington along with trees in Borough Parks. During the last 30 years, Pennington Borough consistently has had at least one certified arborist on staff. The Pennington Shade Tree Committee supports the Borough in maintaining this staffing.

Pennington has benefited from State tree planting grants in 2016 and 2018 and a tree removal grant in 2017, allowing the Borough to remove more than two dozen at-risk trees.

The implementation of the 2016-2021 Community Forestry Management Plan has been a challenging and rewarding experience. Not every objective was achieved, but significant accomplishments were made. Many of the objectives remain ongoing.

Annual accomplishment reports are included in Appendix 4. Highlighted achievements during the 2016-2025 plan period include:

1. Effective and efficient administration and meeting of the Shade Tree Committee.
2. Attendance at the Shade Tree Federation meetings, including maintenance of CORE trained people. The PSTC remains up-to-date on continuing education units.
3. Maintenance of a Shade Tree Committee portion of the Borough website.
4. Continued press attendance at PSTC events, as publicity shifted from a local printed newspaper to a hyper-local online newspaper.
5. Promotion of the Pennington Memorial Tree Planting Program.
6. Maintenance of the Pennington Shade Tree Inventory and Assessment is now handled by the Pennington Department of Public Works rather than the PSTC. This allows the Borough to update tree inventory in real time.
7. During the 2016-2025 period:
  - Trees Planted = 224
  - Trees Removed = 259
  - Memorial Trees Planted = 19
  - Programs and Events
    - i. Arbor Day
    - ii. Pennington Day

On the resource side, Bacterial Leaf Scorch disease has invaded all of Pennington's stately Pin Oaks. The Shade Tree Committee created a list of 80 at-risk Pin Oak trees in 2016. A number of these trees were removed with the aid of a State

tree removal grant. In addition, the Committee is aware of the Emerald Ash Borer invasion in the region and is monitoring its impact locally.

The overall benefits to Pennington for following the third Community Forestry Plan included:

- A strong partnership with the New Jersey Forest Service Community Forestry Program.
- Training opportunities at New Jersey Shade Tree Federation meetings.
- Opportunity to engage consultants to assist in planning.
- Opportunity to receive grant funds.
- Increased liability protection.
- Having a plan of work to guide PSTC focus and efforts.
- Setting and reaching tree planting and maintenance goals.

The municipal tree resource has not changed significantly over the past 10 years. Our tree resource as quantified via inventory continues to be monitored, and was found to be in good condition. Ongoing challenges during the past 10 years include:

- Pin Oaks continue to be compromised by BLS in Pennington. As a result, we are no longer planting Pin Oaks.
- The increasing difficulty of planting large trees along the street edge when there is a small planting area or wires above. Residents often complain of the sidewalk impacts of the tree roots.
- The continued threat of Emerald Ash Borer in the region.
- Assumed threat of Beech Leaf Disease.

#### **d. Urban Forest Structure, Composition and Trends:**

In reviewing the Tree Inventory data, Pennington Borough has a total of 51 different species of trees planted on Borough-maintained property. Over the past twenty years, the Pennington Shade Tree Committee has advocated for greater consideration of the trees selected for each planting location. Smaller ornamental trees need to be used due to overhead wires. Pin Oaks are prone to bacterial leaf scorch, and should not be considered for street tree planting. There are other tree species that are not considered optimal for Pennington streets that the Shade Tree Committee is advocating for phasing out of use in the Borough. At the same time, there is an interest in enhancing the tree species diversity to support the overall health of the Borough trees. In a cost saving effort, the Borough has begun assessing the health of trees

during street repaving projects and including the cost of removing and planting trees in the street repaving funding.

To reiterate the Street Tree trends in Pennington Borough:

- 1) Right tree, right location.
- 2) Remove inappropriate trees, plant appropriate trees.
- 3) Add diversity of tree species.
- 4) When repaving streets, assess trees. Remove and replace when appropriate.

The remainder of this section will focus on the required basic implementation steps regarding:

- Tree Inventory and Assessment
- Tree Risk Assessment and Management
- Tree Planting
- Tree Maintenance and Care

### **Tree Inventory and Assessment:**

Due to the limited geographical scope of our tree plantings, our trends are based on survivability rates, and on the opportunity to plant the appropriate tree in a correspondingly appropriate location. The PTSC has completed an inventory of all the trees we are responsible for in the Borough and in so doing, have endeavored to diversify with respect to the exclusion of localized monoculture. With such a limited space for trees that we can control, it is relatively easy for us to identify any future trends and act accordingly.

The PSTC continues to update its inventory of trees of Borough responsibility. The data was originally produced by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension and modified by ForesTree Consultants. Inventory includes location, tree statistics (height, DBH, % Deadwood, Species), a general condition class (good, fair, poor, dead), and comments such as an assessment of bacterial leaf scorch in oaks and sidewalk conflicts. The database is maintained by the Pennington Department of Public Works. Public Works employees can enter real-time status updates into the database from the field. Reports can be generated and customized to satisfy nearly any need the PSTC may have. The database is available for the PSTC to use in planning and in support of budget requests.

The data from the inventory can be invaluable in assessing and understanding the needs of the Borough's tree resources. Managing the database includes making changes, additions, and deletions as necessary to keep the information up to date.

Information on planting spots, hazardous trees, trees to be removed, trees to be pruned, species diversity, sidewalk problems, elevation needs, insects, diseases, and defects have all been recorded and can be utilized in program planning and implementation, budget justification, and grant applications.

The Pennington Department of Public Works maintains a Shade Tree Inventory Database. The Department of Public Works reports on the database to the Shade Tree Committee as needed.

### **Tree Risk Assessment and Management:**

Pennington's trees are continually monitored by PSTC members, Public Works Department employees, and Borough residents. Additional, comprehensive information is now available as a result of the tree inventory. Since the inventory was completed the most hazardous conditions have been addressed. We have assessed the most hazardous conditions identified in the tree inventory, and we have taken steps to remove all infected trees to monitor the growing presence of bacterial leaf scorch.

The PSTC continues to identify hazardous conditions and create work plans to address them as funding permits. The Public Works Department does its best with its allocated limited resources to respond to the most serious cases.

### **Tree Planting:**

The PSTC has an objective of planting one tree for every tree it removes each year. Appropriate planting spots need to be identified, letters sent to residents, trees ordered and planting arrangements made. The tree inventory identifies planting spots and should facilitate this planning. Grant money from the New Jersey Forest Service is occasionally available to support tree planting. Serious thought has been given to diversifying species selection, especially in the face of Bacterial Leaf Scorch, Fire Blight, Emerald Ash Borer and pear maturity failures.

### **Tree Maintenance and Care:**

The Borough of Pennington has removed more than 250 trees since 2016. A stated goal of previous plans was to establish a 5-year pruning cycle. This goal is still valid. The goal has been improved by using the tree inventory data. During the update to the tree inventory in 2017, each tree was assessed for pruning and elevation needs. Many trees did not need pruning. Utilizing the inventory data and keeping it up-to-date can focus available resources on the highest needs and save money over the long run. The PSTC is working in concert with the Public Works Department to allocate a portion of its budget each year to tree maintenance and care based on a plan prepared annually utilizing input from the inventory, DPW employees, residents and PSTC members. The Chairperson or their designee will facilitate preparation of this plan in

time to be supportive of budgeting requests. Between 2016 and 2025 the Department of Public Works spent 213 hours pruning Borough street trees.

**e. Overall Program Goals:**

**Goals:** Pennington has a long history of caring for its trees and has an active shade tree program. The Borough of Pennington Shade Tree Committee (PSTC), has established the following goals for 2026 through 2035.

**Goal 1:** Sustain the health and vigor of Pennington's trees in order to preserve the intrinsic local character.

**Goal 2:** Provide and maintain a continuous public education of the importance of trees, and a tree awareness program in the Borough.

**Goal 3:** Maintain public safety by reducing hazardous trees and conflicts.

**Goal 4:** Maintain a computer database to help manage the Borough's trees.

**Goal 5:** Zero net loss of existing tree canopy.

**Goal 6:** Support training for Pennington Shade Tree Committee members and Borough employees and ensure sustainability of the PSTC.

**Goal 7:** Establish a Borough tree nursery.

**f. Plan Connections and Other Considerations:**

The goals and mission of the Shade Tree Committee are expressed in many other policy documents of Pennington Borough. The Environmental Resources Inventory, revised in 2024, references the goals of the Community Forestry Management Plan. The Conservation of Natural Resources Plan Element and the Community Facilities and Services Plan Element reference the importance of tree growth for the Borough. In 2021, Pennington Borough approved a resolution that municipal operations would become carbon-neutral by 2035. The 2024 Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Element of the Master Plan outlines several goals to achieve this resolution. A key action item for these goals is to maintain, or grow, the tree canopy in Pennington Borough. Through these elements of the Borough Master Plan, Pennington Borough has expressed a strong desire to perpetuate healthy trees

throughout the region. Borough residents have supported the efforts of the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space since 2020.

In 2024, Pennington adopted a Tree Removal and Replacement ordinance as required by the State. This ordinance regulates the removal and replacement of trees on private property, as these trees impact the environmental health of the Borough.

In 2020 Pennington Borough purchased open space adjacent to the local elementary school to create an arboretum and outdoor learning space. The Arboretum Committee has worked to clear the space of invasive plants and nurture native plants. The Committee is also designing name signs and informational QR codes for the trees.

## **Section II: Community Forestry Program Capacity**

### **a. Community Forestry Program Administration:**

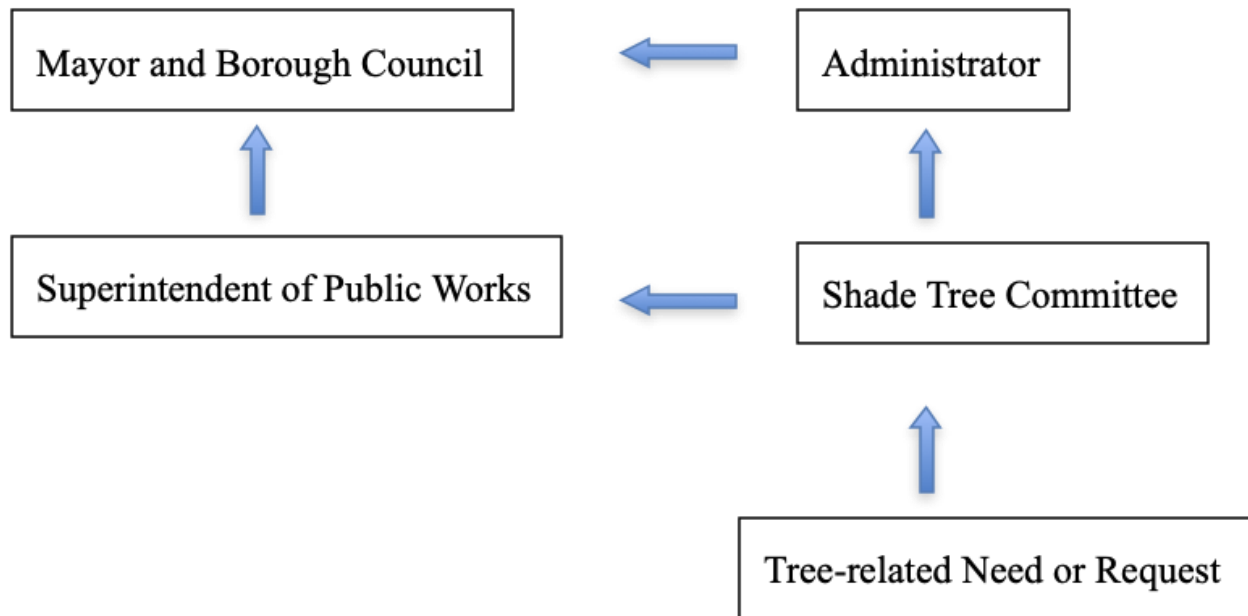
The Pennington Shade Tree Committee (PSTC) is responsible for overseeing the management of the Borough's trees. The 2025 membership of the Committee is: Kate Fullerton (Chair - Member); Beatrice Anduze-Faris (Member); Meredith Moore (Member); Gabriel Rosko (LTE - TRAQ - Member); Andrew Seeder (Member); Cécile Vidican (Member); Dan Rubenstein (Council Liaison). The PSTC reports to the Mayor and Borough Council. The Public Works Department conducts or directs any work on the Borough's trees with guidance and coordination with the PSTC.

In 2015, the PSTC updated the process for resolving the concerns of residents about the shade trees planted along their property. Since then, Borough staff have worked with the Pennington Shade Tree Committee to revise the official process for reviewing residents' concerns regarding municipal trees. A form was created for residents to complete bringing attention to a municipal tree. A Public Works employee who is a Certified Arborist conducts an on-site review of the tree first, then the Licensed Tree Expert member of the Shade Tree Committee reviews the tree, followed by a CORE-trained member of the Shade Tree Committee. If the work that needs to be done is beyond the ability of the Pennington Department of Public Works, the work will be put out to bid to be completed by local tree service companies.

The link between the PSTC and the other agencies of the Borough has always been strong and included in the Master Plan. Pennington is essentially built out. The parks have been established and open space has been allocated. Linkages between the Planning Board and PSTC should be constantly nurtured to protect existing trees especially during housing upgrades and redevelopment. It would be a good exercise to

review site plan requirements for tree protection during redevelopment and housing upgrades.

### Organizational Chart



#### b. Partnerships:

The PTSC partners with several groups including:

- The Environmental Commission: a meeting with the Chair of the Commission was held on November 18, 2024 to review common goals.
- The Recreation Committee
- The Communications Committee of the Borough Council: A representative of the Shade Tree Committee attends the Borough Communications meetings, held three times a year.
- The Pennington Boy Scout Troop #44 which helped in the arboretum in preparation for the June 7, 2025 Dedication.

#### c. Training Plan:

Some training is required by the State and some training topics are identified by individual PSTC members' assessment of their needs and interests. Training is usually limited by available time, interest, money, and/or opportunities.

**Required Training:**

CORE training is required by the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Act for municipalities seeking approved status under the Act. The purpose of CORE training is to familiarize persons with the background of community forestry and Shade Tree Committee, the legal aspects of managing trees, recognition of hazardous tree conditions and state planning and implementation assistance. To gain and retain approved status a municipality must have at least two CORE-trained persons: one volunteer (usually the Chairperson) and one municipal employee (ideally someone from Public Works responsible for trees).

It is the intent of the PSTC to maintain at least the minimum CORE training requirements. Current CORE-trained municipal employees are Morris Fabian, Gabrielle Canavera and Rick Smith from the Public Works Department. CORE-trained elected official: Nadine Stern. CORE-trained volunteers: Cecile Vidican, Meredith Moore and Gabriel Rosko, CTE (members). Gabriel Rosko has been TRAQ-certified since 2015.

In addition to CORE training, there is a continuing education requirement of 8 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) per year. Any individual can obtain these credits for the municipality, not just those persons who are CORE-trained. These credits can be most easily obtained by attending the Shade Tree Federation Meeting in October each year. There are also periodic training opportunities produced by the New Jersey Forest Service. The PSTC has consistently earned the required CEUs throughout 2016-2025.

**d. Statement of Tree Budget:**

Pennington's shade tree budget from municipal funds has averaged about \$20,000 per year, including a portion of the Public Works salaries, during 2020-2025. However, that number dropped in 2015 because of a decision to allocate the time of the Public Works employees in a different manner. This number has largely been due to an increase in equipment maintenance and tree removal costs in 2021-2023.

The value of volunteer time is estimated to be approximately \$6,600 per year. Annual reports and 'Tree City, USA' applications all indicate significant effort by the volunteers including timely and well-written newspaper articles, on-site inspections, inventory and data recording, Arbor Day, coordination of tree planting and attendance at about 10 shade tree Committee meetings annually.

It is anticipated that resources for this 10-year plan will be similar to the past. Every fall, PSTC will prepare a budget request based on the needs quantified in the inventory. Pruning needs, maintenance and removals are exceeding the capacity of the



Borough employees and current budget. One of the benefits of a current tree inventory is the capability of communicating factual information in support of budget requests.

### Estimated Annual Budget Summary

The Pennington Shade Tree Committee Budget for the past five years has varied due to the need for tree removals and education. The budget includes Tree Purchasing, Contracted Tree Work, Education and Public Outreach.

Statement of 5-year Tree Budget		CFMP Budget				
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Stewardship	Planting	\$3,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
	Pruning and Removal	\$7,345	\$13,045	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$10,000
	Equipment Maintenance	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Education and Outreach	Licenses/Dues/Education	\$1,150	\$1,150	\$1,150	\$1,150	\$350
	Public Outreach	\$200	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$150
Total Budget		\$13,195	\$20,695	\$27,650	\$27,650	\$15,000

Statement of 5-year Tree Budget		CFMP Budget				
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Stewardship	Planting	\$2,550	\$2,700	\$2,850	\$3,000	\$3,150
	Pruning and Removal	\$20,400	\$24,500	\$26,500	\$28,500	\$30,000
	Equipment Maintenance	\$2,040	\$2,080	\$2,100	\$2,150	\$2,200
Education and Outreach	Licenses/Dues/Education	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200
	Public Outreach	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150
Total Budget		\$26,340	\$30,630	\$32,800	\$35,000	\$36,700

Outside of unforeseen circumstances, the PSTC tries to remain within \$2,000 of the previous year's budget.

**e. Equipment Budget:**

The Borough used to have a bucket truck, but when it became too old to use safely, the Borough chose to not replace it. Due to the lack of the bucket truck, the Borough contracts out for all major tree maintenance work. The Borough has a dump truck, backhoe, and chipper for use for tree maintenance and planting. The Borough Department of Public Works uses both gas and electric chain saws to trim Borough trees, as well as regular shovels, rakes, pruners, and blowers. The Borough also uses several gators to assist in watering newly planted trees. Pennington Borough is working on switching from diesel to electric powered equipment.

## **Section III: Community Engagement and Well-being**

### **Public Meetings and Website**

The PSTC meetings are open to the public and therefore can be a community resource for municipal tree concerns. The PSTC has ample educational information on its section of the Borough website in order to provide homeowners with up-to-date information and knowledge about tree care:

- Proper pruning of newly planted and young trees
- Mulching
- Watering
- Species recommendations for yard plantings and species not apt for yard plantings
- Species to create habitat for songbirds and other wildlife
- Identification and treatment for most common insects and diseases
- Planting methods
- Sidewalk/Tree root conflicts.

The PSTC distributes existing information about tree care to Borough residents, especially new homeowners. The Committee does this by coordinating with the Pennington library, which provides welcome bags to new residents. These bags include a bookmark with a QR code to the Borough Shade Tree website.

Much of this information is in print and available from the International Society of Arboriculture, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, and the NJ and US Forest Service; however, these materials are not free. A grant from the NJ Forest Service would enable the PSTC to accomplish this task. It is our goal to provide these information packets as hand-outs at Pennington Day, as well as to provide a link on our Borough website.

## **Public Outreach**

The PSTC conducts an annual Arbor Day program for elementary school children in Pennington and participates in the Pennington Day street fair and community event. At its booth, PSTC members hand out leaflets and freely offer shade tree advice. Many times a free tree, such as a native ornamental, can be won through a Guess the Age of the Tree Competition. The Borough Tree Guide, "Request for Attention to Municipal Tree" form, and information about the Memorial Tree Program are shared at these events.

## **Memorial / Honorary Tree Program:**

From 2016 to 2025, the Borough planted 19 memorial or honorary trees. This program is well known within the Borough and continues to operate successfully. The PTSC will continue this program in the 2026-2031 period.

## **Tree City USA:**

Tree City USA is a program created by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the New Jersey Forest Service to recognize municipalities of all sizes. The Tree City program is a national award given to small towns, townships, counties, and cities in recognition of outstanding stewardship in dealing with the community's tree resources. Pennington has achieved Tree City USA status annually for the past 37 years, making Pennington one of the longest-serving Tree Cities in the state. The rewards for Pennington for maintaining Tree City status are:

- Signs for community entrances.
- A Tree City USA flag.
- A walnut-mounted plaque.
- Recognition of stewardship and the gratitude of future generations.

## **Section IV: Plan Implementation**

### **a. Elements, Objectives, and Action Items:**

Pennington has a long history of caring for its trees and has an active shade tree program. The Borough of Pennington Shade Tree Committee (PSTC), author of this plan, has developed the following goals and objectives for 2026 through 2035.

**Goal 1:** Sustain the health and vigor of Pennington's trees in order to preserve the intrinsic local character of Pennington.

### **Objectives of Goal 1:**

- To maintain 80-90% tree canopy in the Borough.
- To identify insect or disease problems and initiate corrective actions.
- To identify historic or specimen trees that require special care and protection.
- To influence and advise on tree maintenance by utility companies and others.
- To encourage the diversification of species and age class distribution of the Borough's trees.
- To ensure planting the appropriate trees in the right location.
- To continue aggressive monitoring for Bacterial Leaf Scorch (BLS).

**Goal 2:** Provide and maintain a continuous public education of the importance of trees, including through a tree awareness program in the Borough.

### **Objectives of Goal 2:**

- To continue the Memorial Tree program as an educational program on the environmental and social benefits of trees.
- To provide information to homeowners on Borough website concerning proper tree care, including BLS, planting, pruning, mulching, watering, fertilization, insects and diseases, sidewalk conflict with roots, and song bird habitat creation.
- To provide at least two articles per year to local media outlets, such as Hopewell Valley Express and MercerMe.
- To create informational content such as a regular seasonal article, like an "Ask the Arborist" column, in a print or online local news publication that provides homeowners with information on steps that can be taken at particular times of year to improve tree health, and short videos of this information posted to the Borough website.
- To coordinate and cooperate with the Pennington Parks and Recreation Commission.
- To conduct an annual Arbor Day Program and tree planting at Pennington's public elementary school in connection with the Borough's Tree City USA activities.
- To provide opportunities for students to actively participate in the stewardship and awareness of Pennington's trees through a big tree search, tree planting or help with street tree data collection.
- To participate in Pennington Day street fair and community event by manning a booth to distribute information about the care and maintenance of trees, aided by a Tree Ring Competition and handouts of tree seedlings.
- To educate residents on the cost benefit of shade trees on local property values.

- To continue to meet the requirements for designation as a Tree City USA, sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the NJ Community Forestry Program.

To achieve Tree City USA status there are requirements and standards that must be met by the Borough. These are:

- A Tree Board or Department.
- A Community Tree Ordinance.
- A Community Forestry Budget with at least \$2 per capita devoted to trees.
- An Arbor Day observation proclamation.

**Goal 3:** Maintain public safety by reducing hazardous trees and conflicts.

**Objectives of Goal 3:**

- To continue the program of detection and remediation of hazardous trees and ensure that hazardous trees identified by borough residents, STC members or municipal employees are documented, evaluated and ranked for corrective action.
- To maintain tree trimming of the lower limbs of street trees for pedestrian safety.
- To inspect trees for hazardous conditions after storm events, and remediate as necessary
- To identify tree/sidewalk conflicts and to pursue corrective action by the homeowner or municipality.
- Enforce borough ordinance regarding tree removal.
- To maintain a tree risk assessment and corrective action plan for the Borough.

**Goal 4:** Partner with the Department of Public Works to maintain a computer database to help manage the Borough's trees.

**Objectives of Goal 4:**

- To use appropriate computer programs to record and display accumulated tree data year by year.
- To utilize data to profile the Borough's trees.
- To utilize the data to produce a plan for maintenance, replacement, and planting of the Borough's trees.
- To utilize the data to diversify the species of the Borough's trees.
- To monitor trends in insect and disease problems.
- To use the inventory data to support grant applications.

- To continue to keep inventory up to date by entering new trees planted, trees removed and trees pruned.
- To develop a tree data report form for use in keeping the database up-to-date.

**Goal 5:** Zero net loss of existing tree canopy.

**Objectives of Goal 5:**

- To plant a tree for every tree lost.
- To establish an annual objective for tree planting based on inventory data.
- To focus on increasing diversity of planting stock.
- To continue to publicize the existing Memorial Tree Program, to allow for more trees to be planted.

**Goal 6:** Support training for Pennington Shade Tree Committee members and Borough employees and ensure sustainability of the PSTC.

**Objectives of Goal 6:**

- To attend annual Federation of Shade Tree Commissions meetings.
- 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 support the training of all members of the Shade Tree Committee.
- To increase the knowledge and capabilities of Borough employees in tree care by attending at least one training session sponsored by Rutgers, the NJ Forest Service, or Federation on an annual basis.
- To utilize Borough events for the recruitment of new members.

**Goal 7:** Establish a Borough tree nursery.

**Objectives of Goal 7:**

- To identify requirements such as size, access and utilities for tree nursery
- To continue to search for an appropriate location for a tree nursery.
- To seek state or other funding to start up and maintain the nursery.

The Borough of Pennington's Shade Tree Committee plans to continue the evolution of its excellent programs of assistance and stewardship during the next 10-year period.

The Borough's public education, awareness and outreach programs are established and have had positive impacts and rewards. Ongoing programs will be continued and augmented as described in Section VII. Pursuing Tree City, USA designation annually, continuing Arbor Day celebrations, promoting Pennington's Tree Guide, soliciting contributions to the Memorial Tree fund, newspaper articles and participation in Pennington Day are all worthy and productive outreach objectives.

The PSTC acknowledges and recognizes the value of continuing education training and has a good record of attending the annual Shade Tree Federation meetings every fall. Morris Fabian, from the Department of Public Works, has been CORE-trained and acts as liaison to the PSTC. The training section of this plan, Section VI, outlines training needs for the PSTC to address. This responsibility is that of the Chairperson or their designee. Most successful training programs follow an annual plan prepared by a committee or designated lead person.

## b. Activity Schedule

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
<b>Tree resource maintenance including:</b>										
Tree Risk Assessment, Pruning and removal, Planting site identification, new tree planting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>PSTC organization including:</b>										
Re-appointment of Chairperson and members as required, Membership recruitment.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Training:</b> Annual CEUs and new CORE training if required.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Community outreach including:</b>										
Arbor day event, Pennington Day booth.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

<b>Reporting:</b> file annual accomplishment report and Tree City USA application.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Work to complete the new Arboretum in the Borough.</b>	X	X								
<b>Pursue goal of establishing a tree nursery in the Borough.</b>		X	X	X						
<b>Establish a tree nursery in the Borough</b>				X	X	X				
<b>Use trees from tree nursery for shade trees in Borough</b>							X	X	X	X



## **Section V: Appendices**

### List of Appendices

#### **Appendix 1) Training and Education**

##### CORE trained members

Cecile Vidican  
Kathryn Dunham  
Michael Rheinhardt  
Paul Morin  
Suzen Witcher  
Gabriel Rosko  
Mary Wagner  
Richard Sperry  
Meredith Moore

#### **Appendix 2) Ordinances**

Ordinance establishing Shade Tree Committee, Chapter 13-1  
Tree Removal and Replacement, Chapter 197

#### **Appendix 3) Tree Resource Management**

Tree Inventory  
Request for Attention to Municipal Tree  
Request for Memorial Tree

#### **Appendix 4) Annual Accomplishments Reports**