

STOWE VILLAGE STRATEGIC STREET TREE PLAN

Town of Stowe

7/19/17 Draft



Introduction

The Stowe Conservation Commission with support from the Vermont Urban and Community Forest Program has developed this Stowe Village Tree Strategic Plan to provide clear direction and achievable goals for the preservation, protection, and enhancement of community street trees throughout Stowe Village. This plan provides the foundation for proper tree care, public engagement related trees, and policies to guide decision-makers and support high quality management, planting, and preservation of the Stowe's downtown street trees.

The primary goal of this strategic plan is to provide for robust, healthy, long-lived trees throughout Stowe Village.

Value of Community Trees

Community street trees improve the quality of life for Stowe's residents and visitors in a variety of ways. The most readily apparent benefit is the aesthetic value that trees provide a street, home, or public space. Along with this beauty is the functional benefit of providing shade along the streets in the summer and blocking wind to reduce heating costs in the winter. Unseen benefits of street trees include improvements in air quality and temperature regulation through reduction of the heat island effect. Trees can mitigate noise pollution and can improve water quality by controlling run-off. Additionally, community trees create opportunities for education, community engagement.

Communicating the benefits of community street trees

Though the benefits community street trees are well documented, these facts are meaningless unless they can be presented in a way that resonates with your audience. For every aspect of urban planning, economic development, and community development, trees can and should be a part of the discussion. While some local decision-makers need to see the raw numbers, others want to see the human impact. Including urban forestry in all levels of conversation ensures that the message is delivered and received in ways that are relatable to everyone. Examples of different messaging strategies are:

- Holding an Arbor Day celebration with a local grade school;
- Creating layered maps showing community tree canopy along with other valued indicators;

- Creating a historic tree preservation/awareness program;
- Develop a memorial tree walk;
- Developing a volunteer board to increase awareness and volunteerism in community;
- Showcasing urban forest benefits and impact on community webpages;
- Engaging youth in urban forestry awareness by creating a local disease and pest scouting group;
- Creating pamphlets to share community urban forest data and program news with residents – use library, public works, public meetings, etc. to distribute;
- Start a community-wide program such as ending volcano mulching, proper watering during summer, or what trees to plant after ash tree losses;

Stowe Village Street Tree Inventory

The Stowe Village Street Tree Inventory is included as Appendix A of this Plan.

Notable Threats to Village Street Trees

Invasive Forest Pests

Three highly invasive forest pest, the emerald ash borer (EAB), Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) and hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), are poised on Vermont’s doorstep to pack a crushing blow to Vermont’s woodlands and the wood products, maple sugaring, and tourism industries to which they are connected by a tight life line. Maples, ash, hemlocks and other host species that could be attacked by these pests make up nearly two-thirds of the trees in Vermont’s woodlands and urban forests. The 26.9 million trees in Vermont’s urban and community forests – along streets and in rights-of-way, parks, and public woodlots, provide millions of dollars of environmental, social and economic benefits annually.

While the hemlock woolly adelgid was detected in Windham County in 2007, the other two pests have yet to arrive in Vermont. Their introduction could have devastating impacts on Vermont’s urban forests. For example, all ash species native to Vermont (green, white and black) have no known resistance to attack by EAB. Unless treated with insecticides, most trees infested by EAB will die

within 2 to 4 years. Experience in Michigan and other states has shown that once EAB is detected in an area, more detections follow quickly and loss of ash trees increases rapidly over a few short years. If we can slow the spread of EAB and ash mortality, we can buy time for research to provide us with more options for managing EAB.

An EAB Preparedness Plan for Stowe Village is included as Appendix B of this Plan.

Public Tree Maintenance and Planting

The health of Stowe's village trees is directly related to ongoing maintenance. Implementing an annual tree inspection and maintenance program for Stowe's public trees is a worthwhile and important effort that will support the transition from a reactive to a proactive municipal tree program.

Of note is the importance of regular tree pruning to maintain tree structure and to reduce tree failure. Structural pruning of young trees establishes stable branch structure and ensures that the tree will have architectural integrity as it matures. Systematic crown cleaning of mature trees is also important; recent climate conditions have resulted in increased frequency and severity of storm events, creating an even more significant need for proper pruning of trees. Research has shown that it is cost effective to maintain well-pruned trees. Trees that are not well pruned will result in more mess and debris after a storm event – including overtime and extra equipment charges to deal with the post storm mess. Well-pruned trees are less likely to fail during storm events resulting in lower clean-up costs. Well cared for trees are also likely to live longer and continue to provide important benefits and services.

Goals

What are the overarching goals of this section of the plan? Choose 1-3 that are specific, attainable, and measurable. Examples might include:

1. Increase genera and species diversity of urban forest and overall forest canopy cover by establishing a systematic annual tree planting program.
2. Promote longevity of the urban forest by establishing a systematic and routine pruning schedule.
3. Increase in-house capacity to efficiently and effectively implement a municipal tree program.
4. Increase overall canopy cover via a public outreach campaign to encourage tree planting on private property.
5. Establish an emerald ash borer (EAB) preparedness plan.

Short-Term Action Steps

What are the specific short-term action steps that can be achieved within the timeframe of this plan? Make sure that these are specific and attainable; many can be drawn directly from the Public Tree Inventory Report. Examples might include:

1. Visit and assess potential tree planting locations.
2. Identify species that are over planted and potential replacement species that have similar qualities and performance that can be used instead.
3. Connect with local tree nurseries regarding desired tree species and future tree planting plans.
4. Ensure that all trees to be purchased shall be in compliance with The American Standard for Nursery Stock; this requirement shall be posted in all bidding documents.
- 5.
6. A Certified Arborist or the town Tree Warden will assess the XX trees identified as in need of monitoring during the inventory.
7. Acquire a set of the A300 Standards for Tree Care
8. Remove – and replace if appropriate – the XX dead trees previously inventoried
9. Plant XX new trees each year on public property.
10. Acquire/purchase a DBH tape or Biltmore stick for the use of the Public Works Dept. and/or Tree Warden. This will allow the City to track the growth of and help identify newly planted trees.
11. Train seasonal hires that will be in charge of tree mulching and watering in the summer in proper tree care.

Long-Term Action Steps

What are the specific short-term action steps that can be achieved within the timeframe of this plan? Make sure that these are specific and attainable; many can be drawn directly from the Public Tree Inventory Report. Examples might include:

1. Establish a community tree nursery with neighboring towns.
2. Assess overall canopy cover in (municipality name) through a GIS project or by using i-Tree Canopy; establish overall urban forest canopy goal.
3. Establish a 5-year pruning cycle for all public trees in the Village.
4. Revisit and update the tree inventory every 5 years.

Action Steps Table

Short-Term Action Steps					
Action Step	Targeted time of completion	Estimated associated costs	Date completed	Funds spent (\$)	Notes
<i>Public Tree Maintenance and Planting</i>					
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
<i>Operations, Funding, & Partnerships</i>					
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
<i>Community Outreach, Education, & Stewardship</i>					
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
Long-Term Actions Steps					
<i>Public Tree Maintenance and Planting</i>					
1.	Notes:				
2.	Notes:				
3.	Notes:				
<i>Operations, Funding, & Partnerships</i>					
1.	Notes:				
2.	Notes:				
<i>Community Outreach, Education, & Stewardship</i>					
1.	Notes:				
2.	Notes:				
3.	Notes:				