

A five-year plan towards completing a tree canopy in Historic New Castle and becoming a Delaware Tree Friendly Community

Cataloguing the mature tree canopy

Cataloguing of recent tree planting

Assessment of the quality of TAC tree sidewalk recommendations

Budgeting costs for planting trees, tree removal and general tree maintenance

Specifying locations for future tree planting

First Tree Advisory Commission (TAC) five-year plan

Although the TAC of Historic New Castle, DE. has been meeting regularly regarding tree matters in the village for several decades, the emphasis on tree removal has made it unnecessary to promote a tree plan beyond a year.

In the past few years, the implementation of a significant fall and spring planting effort supported by grants, contributions and larger city council budgets made it clear that there is a need for a long-range plan that details the condition of the present city treescape and clarifies the decisions that need to be made to re-establish a full tree canopy. Below is a **draft of** a five-year plan that will put the village on the path to becoming one of Delaware's Tree Friendly Cities.

Cataloguing the mature tree canopy

Identify the older stock of trees by species, size, age, condition, and location in the town's historic area.

The town's historic area includes a town square and 4 streets divided into east and west by the main street, Delaware Street. This area includes many different tree species. The predominate species are older sycamores, maples, oaks, Zelkova's and ashes, that are within TAC's purvey, which is "trees planted on town sidewalks."

Many of the trees are relatively mature, but vary considerably in condition due to age, disease, insect infestation, lack of pruning or over-pruning as a result of being "in the wires." In general, a care program has been peripatetic to non-existent.

All the older trees will be identified by species/cultivar, location, numbered and digitally entered into a data base. This will permit easy access to information that will help with decisions about tree removal, pruning or general tree care including treatment of diseases or insect infestation.

Cataloguing recent tree recommendations by TAC

Identify the newer trees that have been planted in the past 8 years by species, size, age, condition, and location in the town's historic area.

In the past decade, about 200 trees have been planted along Delaware Street and the east side of Delaware Street. These trees will be digitally catalogued according to species/cultivar, location, and numbered.

Using the information gathered in step 2 and general observation, there will be an annual assessment of the 12 trees on the TAC recommended tree list.

To this point, three tree cultivars have been tried on the sidewalks that have not produced satisfactorily while 12 are presently alive and well. But having a carefully prepared set of observations for a new tree data base will substantially improve decisions about keeping or rejecting certain tree cultivars.

Determining the Costs Associated with Planting Trees, Removing Trees, and Maintaining Trees

A yearly budget request will be submitted to City Council based on a five-year projection of the number of trees that can be planted, the number of trees that may require removal, and the number of trees requiring maintenance.

The number of trees that can be planted is largely determined by how many trees the city maintenance crew can water. On the face of it, the watering schedule agreed to by TAC and city maintenance, planting trees at the rate of about 25 per year seems doable. Trees need assistive watering for 3 years and then usually are considered established. So over 5 years TAC should consider presenting a yearly budget for about 125 trees. At roughly \$375. per tree planted, each yearly budget would include \$12k for tree planting.

Although difficult to guesstimate, about the same amount of money will be allocated for tree removal. Trees up to about 10" c can be removed by city workers. Larger trees are removed by regional companies, chosen by bid.

To this point, it appears that tree care, that is fertilizing, pruning and mulching, receive little TAC consideration. Many trees require regular pruning in the first few years. Fertilizing stressed trees should be a priority at the end of each growing season. It's at that time that two applications of liquid fertilizer called "Ocean from Bioplex will be administered. This will be repeated in the spring before foliage breaks and then, about a month later. The product will be easy to apply by the city crew as part of the watering plan.

Finally, triple shredded mulch will be applied twice yearly.

Identifying areas for Future Tree Planting

The focus of the future planting of trees will include the west side of Delaware Street and the far east end of the historic area.

What is known is after eight years, 80+ trees have been planted along Delaware Street. Seventy additional trees have been planted on the east side of town and only 9 on the west side. So, one major focus for future tree planting in the city will be the west side of Delaware Street. Depending on the willingness of neighbors, the availability of trees on the TAC recommended Tree list, and money allotted for tree planting, the goal will be to plant 15-18 trees per year on the west side.

Another area in the historic part of the city that requires attention is the far east side. This is a second entry point into the village, from the Wilmington direction. The entry begins with the Trustee property, transitions into Chestnut Street. and eventually east 2nd Street (which has almost no trees for half of the block.) The goal will be to plant 5 trees per year along this second pivotal entry route into the city.

Between the third and the fourth year of the above plan, TAC will fill out the necessary forms to attempt to become one of Delaware's Tree Friendly Communities. As of this date, there are 21 areas in Delaware designated as "Tree Friendly" with a ranking of Tree Friendly, bronze, silver, gold or platinum.

First entry of TAC document- Five Year Plan
6-11-2023

