

2025 Tree Advisory Commission Annual Report

My name is Ed Ryan, and I am Chairman of the Tree Advisory Commission. I joined the TAC in December 2024 and assumed the role of Chairman in April 2025.

Thank you for the opportunity to report to you about the work of the Tree Advisory Commission in 2025.

The Tree Advisory Commission (or TAC) meets once a month to review City Tree Work Permit Applications that are received from city residents and property owners. Residents can request that “City Trees” (between the road and the sidewalk in front of their property) be pruned, removed, or newly planted. In 2025, TAC reviewed 35 applications.

If an application is approved, TAC sends a recommendation for tree work to the Public Works Department. The Director of Public Works, and the City Administrator decide whether they can do the work themselves or if they need to put out a request for bids.

TAC never approves a request for the removal of a tree unless it is necessary; causing property damage, has outgrown its location, or is presenting a safety concern.

Based on our application review:

- TAC recommended that 10 trees be pruned, and another 10 trees be removed due to public/private safety concerns,
- TAC approved 10 applications for new trees, which have already been planted or will be scheduled for planting once trees from the approved tree list become available,
- TAC denied 5 applications.

A major focus of TAC is to identify areas for future tree planting to complete Historic New Castle’s tree canopy. TAC uses the guidelines from the Arbor Day Foundation for “Right Tree in the Right Place”. These are cultivars, smaller canopy trees that will grow to 20-30 feet instead of 70-100 as currently seen in the city.

In 2025, TAC planted approximately 30 trees:

- 9 trees on Delaware Street between 6th and 7th Streets,
- 9 trees on 5th Street near the Library,
- 12 trees in various locations on East 2nd and East 3rd Street, and on West 4th Street.

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Our focus of future tree planting will be streets to the west of Delaware Street. Depending on the willingness of residents, the availability of trees on the TAC Recommended Tree List, and the amount of money allotted by the city, the goal will be to plant or replace 25 – 30 trees per year.

On going, TAC will be facing significant new challenges to reaching our stated goals. Specifically. In 2025, approximately 800 donor financed, or volunteer hours were devoted to fixing sidewalks as a result of tree removal, preparing new tree pits, planting trees, and maintaining new trees.

In adherence with Tree City U.S.A. standards, a certified Arborist should be available for consultation and new tree pruning. Currently those services are provided by Norman Lehr, Gateway Nursery Certified Arborist, also at donor expense.

This donor funding will not be continued going forward, which means that TAC will incur additional expenses from, or allocation changes to our current budget.

TAC currently has no open positions. TAC members have completed FOIA training and do not have a need for additional training at this point.