Tree Risk Management Program Planning and Design - A Ten Step Approach

Step 1. Assess the tree resource
Step 2. Review current tree management practices
Step 3. Assess fiscal and human resources available to manage the tree resource
Step 4. Identify program goals
Step 5. Formulate a tree risk management strategy
Step 6. Prioritize inspection and corrective action needs
Step 7. Select a tree risk rating system
Step 8. Write a comprehensive tree risk management program policy
Step 9. Implement a tree risk management strategy
Step 10. Evaluate and revise

Risk Management Workgroup
A workgroup will be formed by the Shade Tree Commission to oversee the risk assessment and assist in the process.

Mature Tree Care Workgroup
The Shade Tree Commission will form a workgroup to identify, evaluate, inventory and oversee the care of the significant mature trees within the city. The workgroup will select the method of assessment to reduce the increasing risk of over mature trees in the Historic District. (This objective is described in the Mature Tree Care section under Objective # A).

Review of the Risk Management Plan
In January of each year all of the hazardous tree complaints from the previous year will be reviewed. Trends in tree decline, species with high risk development, and areas within the city that have high rates of Risk development will be evaluated according to the USDA Guide to Urban Tree Risk Management (NA-TP-03-03).

Review of the Long-Term Methods of Risk Reduction
Decisions on long-term methods of risk reduction will be addressed. Methods of maintaining a mature tree canopy within the city while maintaining age and species diversity will be reviewed. Preliminary planting, pruning, and removal forecasts will be made, based on the information available. (This objective is described in the Mature Tree Care section under Objective # B).

Objective # B   The Shade Tree Commission will provide training to ensure that all of the shade tree members are adequately trained in tree risk assessment.
Tree Risk Assessment Training
A training session will be held to educate the workgroup and any interested members of the Shade Tree Commission on the methods of risk assessment and hazardous tree classification that can be used. (This objective is described in the Training section under Objective D).

Objective # C   The Shade Tree Commission members will each perform a tree risk assessment in their district.
Tree Risk Assessment
A Tree Risk Assessment will be performed by each Shade Tree Commission member in their assigned district. The method of assessment used will be based primarily on the method outlined in "Urban Tree Risk Management: A Community Guide to Program, Design and Implementation, USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area, (NA-TP-03-03)"

Removal of Hazardous Trees and Pruning for Risk Reduction
Trees that present a severe Risk or trees that have been identified for immediate removal in the risk assessment will be addressed and contracted separately. Trees that require removal or pruning for Risk reduction will be grouped according to recommendations by the workgroup and contracted to a tree service company.

7.   STORM DAMAGE ASSESSMENT RELATED TO TREES CSIP #7

Existing Programs, Policies, and Procedures
After a severe weather event the Shade Tree Commission members assess their districts and work with representatives of the Public Works Department, Emergency management and private contractors to address all of the damage and respond immediately. No changes are recommended for this process at this time

Goals
The Shade Tree Commission will continue with the existing storm damage assessment procedures and develop additional procedures for extreme storm damage situations.

Objectives
Objective # A   The Shade Tree Commission will cooperate with Emergency Management to implement an Emergency Management Plan.

Objective # B   The Shade Tree Commission will cooperate with the Public Works Department review the NJ DEP 'DISASTER DEBRIS MANAGEMENT PLANNING TOOL KIT FOR NEW JERSEY MUNICIPALITIES' to develop an Emergency Debris Management Plan and secure a location for approval as a temporary staging area for vegetative debris.

Objective # C   The Shade Tree Commission will meet with the Emergency Management coordinator to review Emergency Routes, critical paths, supervision, and all other emergency plan priorities

8.   TREE MAINTENANCE and REMOVALS

Existing Programs, Policies, and Procedures
The Shade Tree Commission will continue with the current tree maintenance program
1. Evaluate the requests for pruning that have been received in service requests
2. Review any recommendations for pruning or removal from the Inventory
3. Review the tree maintenance needs for the upcoming year, including the pruning and watering of young trees
4. Determine the actual amount of pruning to be done
5. Separate the work into work that will be done by volunteers or the municipality and work that will be contracted out
6. Schedule the work that will be done in house
7. Request bids from at least 3 tree service companies for the annual work that needs to be contracted out. Include specifications for the work to be performed from the ANSI A-300 Pruning Standards and require all pruning to be done within those standards.
8. Oversee all work performed to insure that it performed properly.

Goals
The Shade Tree Commission will continue with a tree maintenance program that maximizes public safety relative to public trees while maintaining a tree canopy while maintaining a balance between long term development of the community forest and budgetary limitations.

Objectives
Objective # A   The Shade Tree Commission will continue with the current tree maintenance program

Objective # B   The Shade Tree Commission will continue with the Young Tree Pruning Program to maintain the recently planted trees throughout the city. This program will focus on pruning all of the new trees to promote the most desirable tree for their location.
   Young Tree Pruning Program

1. Review the planting records the past 5 years to determine the approximate number and locations of all of the young trees.
2. Determine the actual amount of pruning to be done
3. Oversee the young tree pruning performed by the municipal employee to insure that it performed properly.

Objective # C   The Shade Tree Commission will maintain the current sidewalk repair program to reduce the conflicts between trees and sidewalks.

    Sidewalk Maintenance Program

(This objective is described in the Sidewalk Maintenance Program (CSIP #13) section under Objective #A)

Objective # D   The Shade Tree Commission will continue to improve and implement a long-term plan for the care of over-mature trees that are in high priority areas and significant to the community. The plan will optimize the balance between tree health, maintenance costs and budgetary constraints and include funding considerations and community support.

    Mature Tree Care Maintenance Program

(This objective is described in the Mature Tree Care program section, CSIP #15, under Objective # B)

9.   INSECT and DISEASE MANAGEMENT CSIP #9

Existing Programs, Policies, and Procedures
The need for a proactive insect and disease program has been limited in the past. However, the need has increased and will be addressed.

Goals
The Shade Tree Commission will monitor the community forest to identify and control insect and tree disease problems such as Gypsy Moth, Southern Pine Beetle, and Bacterial leaf Scorch.

Objectives
Objective # A   The Shade Tree Commission will contact an arborist to develop a comprehensive plan for the increasing tree loss due to Bacterial leaf scorch.

Objective # B   The Shade Tree Commission will assess the risk to the community forest from Emerald ash beetle and southern pine beetle.

10.   Wildfire protection CSIP #10

The City of Cape May does not have any large forested areas or public areas that are susceptible to forest fire. The Shade Tree Commission has no jurisdiction over the wetland areas or other open areas that may be susceptible to minor brush fires. No plans have been reviewed or developed for wildfire protection at this time.

11.   Tree Planting Plan CSIP #11

Existing Programs, Policies & Procedures
The Shade Tree Commission has maintained a proactive tree-planting program. The recent planting projects have increased the tree population throughout the City of Cape May. The Shade Tree Commission is included in the planning and implementation stages of development with regard to the planting, maintenance, and removal of trees. The Shade Tree Commission will continue to cooperate with the Planning Board by reviewing new projects and providing recommendations.

Goals

The Shade Tree Commission will continue to maintain a proactive tree-planting program with planting projects that have increased the tree population throughout the City of Cape May.

Objectives

Objective # A: The Shade Tree Commission will continue to maintain a proactive tree-planting program with planting projects that have increased the tree population throughout the City of Cape May.

The Shade Tree Commission will determine the number of trees that should be planted in the upcoming year, considering budget constraints, available resources, and the optimum number of young trees that should be planted in the community forest to maintain a balanced diversity in age range.

The Shade Tree Commission will review the list of open planting spaces and select locations based on planting priority and age diversity.

The Shade Tree Commission will select the most suitable tree for each site from the Optimum Tree Species List, matching the open space specifications with the optimum tree characteristics.

Objective #B: The Shade Tree Commission will locate and assess every possible planting site selected streets that have an over mature tree canopy.

Objective #C: The Shade Tree Commission will update the list of the optimum tree species for the community to reflect changes in the local environment, insect and disease concerns, and additional tree species that may be acceptable for use in Cape May.

Objective #D: the Shade Tree Commission will investigate new and specialized planting methods to plant trees in difficult planting sites.

The Shade Tree Commission will examine all possible planting methods that will allow for the establishment of a mature London Plane or similar large tree in the selected locations.

12.   TREE RECYCLING CSIP #12

Existing Programs, Policies & Procedures

The City of Cape May has a leaf recycling program for recycling. Brush, leaves and Christmas trees are recycled into the environment. The Public Works Department is responsible for the recycling program for recycling leaves. The city also has a tree recycling program for recycling trees that are left by the curb. All material is recycled back into the environment.

Goals

The Shade Tree Commission will continue to maintain an effective tree, brush and leaf recycling program.

Objectives

Objective # A   Brush, leaves and Christmas trees are recycled into the environment by providing the composted material to the local farmers and homeowners. No changes to this program are recommended.

13.   SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM CSIP #13

Existing Programs, Policies & Procedures

The City of Cape May has an active sidewalk repair program that is funded through multiple sources. The program includes a 50% cost share for sidewalk replacement when the damage is caused by municipal trees. A requirement in this program is that the Shade Tree Commission oversees the removal and installation of the new sidewalk to ensure that the