

Community Trees

City of Ypsilanti

2022

Trees benefit the entire community, so all trees should be considered when examining the use of local laws and resources. This snapshot outlines how trees are managed in your community and is intended to encourage resident involvement in shaping future land use, resource management, and conservation policies.

Current Tree Canopy Cover: 25%

Tree City USA: Yes

Tree Ordinance: Yes

Dedicated Tree Funding: No

Tree Donation Program: Yes

Current Tree Inventory: 2012
(outdated)

Volunteer Program: No

Tree Maintenance: Internal

Tree Planting: Internal

Public Parks: 15, ~ 95 acres

Website: cityofypsilanti.com



STRENGTHS

Public Park System and Eastern Michigan University Campus

15 city-owned parks, totaling 95 acres. When combined with EMU's campus, this amounts to almost 20 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. About 10% of public trees are in City parks.

Citizen-Led Commissions

- The Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) ensures quality opportunities by fostering sustainable, community partnerships and volunteer activities.
- The Sustainability Commission (SC) advocates for the social, environmental, and economic health of the community and stewardship of natural resources.

Both commissions are citizen-led advisory groups with direct access to the City Council. They conduct public meetings, recommend policy, contribute to master plans, and facilitate partnerships with community organizations.

Robust Network of Street Trees

About 30% of the rights-of-way (ROW) are covered by tree canopy, including 105 different tree species, with about 56% defined as large-growing.

Tree Protection Plans for New Developments

A tree protection plan includes specific information on trees to be planted and trees designated for preservation, including how they'll be protected.

Tree Prioritization Across City Planning Documents

These documents include goals related to trees: City Sustainability Plan 2021, City Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2020-2025, Urban Forestry Plan 2012, City Climate Action Plan 2012. Example goals include: to preserve tree canopy in an equitable manner, invest in tree maintenance, reduce stormwater impacts, update street tree guidelines, and continue the City's Arbor Day Tree City USA designation.

CHALLENGES

Lack of Dedicated Funding

Funding is needed to support on-going tree planting and maintenance programs for city-owned trees. According to State law, the City has reached the maximum number of mills, leaving these activities to be funded via grants which still requires time and resources from City staff, local organizations, and volunteers. Budget constraints have resulted in a lack of young trees, leading to concerns about succession.

Low Public Tree Species Diversity

About 55% of public trees are maples. This lack of diversity leaves the public tree population susceptible to genus-specific diseases or pests.

Sidewalk Heaving Conflict

Property owners are responsible for the cost of adjacent sidewalk maintenance and must purchase a ROW Permit. The cause of uneven sidewalks may be the root system of public trees for which the City lacks sufficient funding to maintain. If a property owner wants a public tree removed, contact the Public Services Director.

OPPORTUNITIES

Sustainable Volunteerism

Develop long-term volunteer-led programs with regular follow up and direct lines of communication to citizen-led commissions.

Update Tree Inventory & Implement 2012 Urban Forestry Plan

Tracking how the public tree canopy changes over time will allow for data driven decision making, more accurate budgeting, adaptive management, and incentivize progress towards tree and sustainability goals. So far, budget has prevented implementation of some of the policies and recommendations.

Adopt a "Tree Preservation Ordinance"

To prevent the removal of trees that meet certain species, size, and health criteria on both public land and proposed private developments.

Adopt a PDR Ordinance for Preservation on Private Land

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) is a voluntary agreement that compensates property owners who accept a permanent deed restriction (through a conservation easement) on their land. Limited opportunities for this tool given development levels.

WHAT CAN I DO?



SPEAK UP

Fill vacancies on Commissions - including youth seats!



LEARN

Use this guide to review local ordinances and planning documents.



TEND A TREE

Plant or prune a public tree (contact the City).

See Resources on Back ►

City of Ypsilanti Ordinance Overview

The table below summarizes applicable forestry and landscape standards included in your local ordinances compared to elements typically included in robust programs. This brief overview does not examine the quality of each element nor how well it functions in practice. A more detailed document was provided to local staff and/or elected officials to provide guidance for future regulatory updates.

	Code/Ordinance Element	Yes	No	Location
Public	Responsible Party for Tree Planting, Maintenance, and Removal	●		Sec. 110-33, -35, -36, -39, -52
	Tree Board/Commission/Department and Duties		●	
	Tree Canopy Guidelines		●	
	Dead/Diseased Tree Removal	●		Sec. 110-50
	Tree Planting	●		Sec. 110-36, -37, -38, -41, -42
	Tree Preservation		●	
	Tree Removal/Maintenance	●		Sec. 110-47, -51(a,b), -54
	Permit Required for Work on Trees	●		Sec. 110-35
Development	Mutilation of Trees Prohibited	●		Sec. 110-43, -44, -47, -49
	Tree Planting, Preservation, Maintenance, and Replacement	●		Sec. 122-630, -631, -633, -636, -638
	Tree Removal		●	
	Landscape Plan Required, Inclusion of Trees and Vegetation in Site Plans	●		Sec. 122-631
	Parking Lots: Tree Planting	●		Sec. 122-684 (a-d)
	Woodlands: Tree Preservation		●	
General	Plant Material Guidelines: Species, Size, Spacing	●		Sec. 122-632
	Landscaping Standards and Tree Requirements: Greenbelts, Berms, Planting Screens, Fences, etc.	●		Sec. 122-432(a)(6), -630, -634(d)(2)
	Approved/Suggested Species List	●*		Sec. 122-632(e)
	Prohibited Species List (ROW, Parks, Street Trees)	●*		Sec. 110-52
	Tree Maintenance and Sidewalk Repair on Private Property	●		Sec. 110-45, -46; Sec. 94-226
Promote Use of Native Species		●		

KEY * = Ordinance partially fulfills criteria and/or could be improved or made more accessible.



Municode The "Code of Ordinances City of Ypsilanti, MI" is available at Municode, a searchable, online database of municipal codes organized by chapters, articles, divisions, and sections. Find any ordinance by using the search bar at the top. As new ordinances are adopted, they may not be reflected immediately on Municode. Visit the City's website to find new updates.



What's a Tree Ordinance?

An ordinance is a law issued by a local government. Tree ordinances establish official policies for how a community wants to maintain its trees and establishes legal protection.

Example Types of Tree Ordinances

Street/Park Tree: Addresses planting, maintenance, and removal of trees within the ROW or parks. May include private trees if they impact public interest or pose a public hazard.

Tree/Woodland Protection: Conserves desirable trees, tree canopy, or historic trees on public and private property. May require a permit to remove, encroach upon, or prune protected trees.

Landscape/Buffer: Establishes requirements, such as number, placement, and types of suitable trees. May require trees in parking lots or buffer strips to protect needs of adjacent property owners (noise and views) or water quality (riparian buffers).

RESOURCES

For more information, visit washtenawcd.org/communitytrees

- Community Maps
- Tree Ordinance Development
- Tree Board Information
- Tree Benefit Facts
- How to Plant a Tree
- And More!

