



SOMERVILLE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Main Street Trees Review
October 7, 2024

SOMERVILLE, NJ
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION





Mission Statement

The Somerville Environmental Commission's mission is to

— EDUCATE • ADVOCATE • PROMOTE —

best policies and practices for the Borough's environment, and the health and safety of its residents.



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General Information

Main Street Trees

- ~85 Trees along 0.75 miles of NJ Route 28
- War Memorial (western boundary) to Fire Engine #1 (eastern boundary)
- Majority planted 15-20 years ago
- ~60% Honey Locust, 30% Asian Zelkova, 10% Japanese Tree Lilac or Callery Pear
- Protection fences and buried electrical utility wires on western Main St. allows larger tree species
- No fences and overhead electrical utility wires along eastern Main St.



Recent Assessments

Main Street Trees

- 2014 Tree Health and Location Survey, by Cole & Assoc.
- 2017 Streetscape Tree Replacement Plan, by Cole & Assoc.
 - Reviewed by Somerville EC and DSA
- 2018 Tree Survey and Report, by Kevin Scibilia, LTE
- 2019 Tree Walk, by Dean Marzocca, LTE
- 2023 Capital Improvements Plan, by Arterial
- 2024 Tree Survey and Report, by Paul Cowie, LTE
 - Forthcoming, upon contract

Somerville Street Trees, May 21, 2018					
Number	Street	Species	DBH (4.5')	Codes	Comments
198	W Main	zelkova	4"		prune to clear sign
196	W Main	honey locust	26"		
192 a	W Main	honey locust	4"		prune to clear bldg. and light
192 b	W Main	honey locust	24"		prune to clear bldg.
180?	W Main	honey locust	22"		prune to clear bldg., prune deadwood, remove fence
166	W Main *	honey locust	24"		prune to clear bldg., prune deadwood over road
164	W Main	honey locust	8"		prune to clear bldg.
154	W Main	honey locust	24"		prune to clear bldg. and deadwood
150 a	W Main	honey locust	4"		prune to clear walk
150 b	W Main	honey locust	8"		prune to clear bldg.
140	W Main	honey locust	30"		prune sprouts to trunk, prune to clear bldg.
130	W Main	honey locust	22"		remove fence
126	W Main	honey locust	18"		
118	W Main	honey locust	24"		prune to clear bldg., prune deadwood
100	W Main	honey locust	4"		
94	W Main *	honey locust	20"		prune to clear bldg., remove fencing, prune over roadway
92	W Main	honey locust	8"		prune to clear bldg.
90	W Main	honey locust	16"		prune sprouts to trunk
84	W Main	zelkova	8"		
80	W Main	honey locust	18"		prune sprouts to trunk, prune to clear bldg., prune deadwood
78	W Main	zelkova	16"		prune over roadway
72	W Main *	honey locust	22"		extensive bark dieback on west side reduce weight on west stem
64	W Main	honey locust	8"		prune to clear bldg., prune over walk
62	W Main	honey locust	10"		prune to clear bldg., prune deadwood
56	W Main	honey locust	20"		prune sprouts to trunk
50	W Main *	honey locust	16"		prune deadwood, trunk over street hit by trucks
40	W Main *	honey locust	16"		prune deadwood, trunk over street hit by trucks
30	W Main	Japanese tree lilac	3"		tree stressed, remove clogged grate for more water



Current Conditions

Main Street Trees

- Majority in good condition
- Pruning needed to remediate some conditions
- Some have reached or are nearing “Limited Remaining Life Expectancy” and should be removed
- Heaving pavers are a tripping hazard
- Tree fences remain and protect trees, but are large and obstructive



Current Conditions

Main Street Trees

- Recent plantings in past 3-5 years are in poor condition
- Eastern Main St. is missing tree fences/grates
- New development properties are placing few and undersized trees for the area



What's next?

Main Street Trees

- Update tree inventory and assessment
- Create and implement long-term tree service plan
- Create plan to reset heaving pavers and replace or remove tree protection fences
- Adopt tree replacement construction specifications
- Update approved species list
- Ensure Planning Board is vetting approved trees
- Follow 2023 Capital Improvements Plan as guide



DOWNTOWN SOMERVILLE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

Somerville, NJ

August, 2023



Short Term Plan – Recommendations

Main Street Trees

Next 12 months

DPW

- ✓ Remove ivy – *completed*
- Begin necessary pruning at advice of consultant LTE
- Remove and replace priority dead or unsafe trees

EC

- ✓ Compile list of replacement tree species for review with DSA and Administration – *completed*
- Finalize best practices for removal and replacement with help of LTE – *ongoing*
- Compile list of replacement tree fence and grate options

Council to Budget

- Hiring of consultant Licensed Tree Expert (LTE)
- Replacement plan of 3 – 5 trees / year

1 to 3 years, Fall 2025 – Fall 2027

EC and Administration

- Remove and replace 3 – 5 trees / year with as needed technical assistance from LTE
- Develop urban forestry plan with LTE

Administration and DSA

- Budget and perform removal of tree fences and suitable replacements
- Budget and perform sidewalk paver repairs
- Create Adopt-A-Tree program with EC

DPW

- Manage replacement and removal operations
- Implement long-term tree service plan at advice of LTE



Long Term Plan – Recommendations

Main Street Trees

3 – 10 years, Fall 2027 – Fall 2034

Administration and EC

- Budget for consultant LTE to conduct tree assessment every 3 – 5 years
- Take actions based on consultant LTE recommendations

DPW

- Manage replacement and removal operations
- Prune trees as necessary
- Remove ivy as necessary

EC

- Re-assess lists of replacement tree species, best practices for removal and replacement, replacement tree fence and grate options



Conclusion

- Street trees enhance mental health, provide shade, and create **more walkable, vibrant streetscapes**
- They improve air quality, **reduce stormwater runoff**, and **lower temperatures** in our town
- Healthy street trees **beautify our town**, increasing property values, attracting visitors who support businesses, and reduce energy costs overall

Interested in getting involved or want to learn more?

Reach us over email, social or through the Borough's administrative offices.

Public meetings begin at 7:00pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month in the Somerville Civic Center at 24 Robeson Street. **All are welcome!**

EnvironmentalCommission@SomervilleNJ.org

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