



# Town of Brighton Forestry Plan

The Town of Brighton recognizes the grandeur and value of a healthy and abundant forest that is well managed, flourishing and diverse. It is a source of pride for its citizens and an example to others of a healthy and prosperous environment.





## Town of Brighton Forestry Plan Committee

### **Members**

Susan Boland  
Audrey Mck'. Fernandez  
David Harrison  
Inge Oberdoerster  
Erinn G. Ryen  
Mark Weider, Chairperson  
Jessie Werner

### **Staff**

Rick DiStefano, Planner, Town of Brighton

### **Consultant**

Andy Pleninger, Urban Forestry LLC



## Town of Brighton

Sandra Frankel, Supervisor  
Jill Vigdor Feldman, Town Board Member  
Sherry Kraus, Town Board Member  
Raymond Tierney III, Town Board Member  
James R. Vogel, Town Board Member



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## Executive Summary

Trees provide a unique connection to Brighton's past, present and future. In the past, the trees were an essential resource for Brighton's founding settlers. Later, they were an important aspect of Brighton during its era as an agricultural community. Today, the Town of Brighton is home to an extraordinary forest. The majority of trees are located on private property. However, there are many trees on Town property (Town trees). Lining residential streets and filling the Town's parks and open spaces, one can find a wide range of trees including rare and very old species.

The citizens of Brighton recognize and value the many benefits their community's trees offer. In fact, the Town's collective reverence of its trees resulted in the formation of the Town Tree Council in 2002, as well as the Town's distinction by the National Arbor Day Foundation in 2003 as an official "Tree City USA."

With the formation of the Tree Council came the charge to develop a comprehensive forestry plan. The purpose of the plan is to provide specific guidelines and policies on tree management for use by Town officials as well as Brighton homeowners. It is hoped that the plan will help ensure the protection, preservation and management of Brighton's fine forest for future generations.

### Tree Data

To understand how Brighton's trees can best be protected, preserved and managed, it is important to first understand the many factors that impact the condition of trees in our community, as well as the number of Town trees.

Factors that impact tree growth and health include climate and soil conditions, pollution, insect and disease, construction, and utility infrastructure.

The number of Town trees is not fully known. Partial tree inventory work performed in Brighton to date along with tree estimates of other neighboring communities provides an estimated range of Brighton's Town tree population. For example, it can be estimated that Brighton's 95.5 linear street miles are home to 6,600 to 10,300 Town street trees. However, to accurately, quantify Brighton's Town tree population, a comprehensive tree inventory is required. Such an inventory should be developed utilizing an electronic database. This database would enable crew members and inspectors to clearly identify trees by location and would serve as an extremely useful tool for decision making that pertains to tree planting, management and budgets.

### Summary of Policies

The Forestry Plan outlines the following Town policies that serve to guide the management and protection of Brighton's forest:

#### Service Delivery Policy

*Town staff will inspect a request for service, and if a hazardous condition exists, it will be acted on quickly. If there is not a significant risk to people or property, the work will be completed during the next forestry work task schedule for that forestry management unit.*

**Inspection Policy**

*The Town will periodically inspect Town trees for potential risks to public safety, and will take the appropriate action to mitigate the risk.*

**Tree Planting Policy**

*As the Town's budget allows, all Town trees that are removed shall be replaced. If a tree cannot be replaced in the same site, the replacement tree will be planted in an alternative site in the same geographic area.*

*When planting a tree on Town property, the species of tree to be planted shall be from the Town's Master Tree List, and will be planted in accordance with the Town's Arboricultural Standards and Specifications.*

*Tree planting requests will be considered in the order they were received and as funding allows. A resident or business may plant a tree on public property at his or her own expense with a permit approved by the Commissioner of Public Works.*

*No single tree species shall exceed 10 percent of the total population. A tree species that exceeds this population threshold will not be planted until the population level falls below 10 percent.*

**Tree Maintenance Policies**

*The use of pest control measures shall be limited to situations where a significant proportion of the population is threatened. The control measures used shall be environmentally sensitive and applied in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.*

*The Town will strive to prune each Town tree as required once every five to seven years. Routine and train pruning will be reserved for the rotational schedule of a forestry management area. If a tree branch represents a risk to people or property it will be pruned within six months.*

*The Town will only fertilize a Town tree if the tree is of special significance or there are special circumstances that warrant this measure as determined by the Commissioner of Public Works or Commissioner of Parks.*

*The Town will rely on help from residents in residential neighborhoods to water recently planted trees. The Town will water recently planted trees on commercial streets.*

**Tree Removal Policy**

*Only the Town or its authorized agent shall remove a Town tree. The Town will only remove a Town tree that is dead, dying or diseased or constitutes a hazard to life or property. Significant trees (30" or more in diameter) and healthy trees may be removed with clear and compelling cause (Appendix A - Standards for Good Cause Removal). All removals of Town trees are subject to the provisions of Chapter 175.8 of the Town Code.*

**Tree Protection Policy**

*No person shall cut, injure or harm a Town tree. No person shall excavate or fill within a radius of 15 feet of any Town tree without written approval from the Commissioner of Public Works. High visibility barriers shall be placed to safeguard trees within a work zone and/or other protective measures shall be taken as may be required by the Commissioner of Public Works.*

### **Other Agencies Policy**

*The Town will seek opportunities to work with other local, state and federal agencies to enhance and protect the health of the Town forest.*

### **Natural Areas and Wildlife**

*The Town does not manage the trees in natural areas for potential risks to public safety... Park goers enter these areas accepting the risk.*

### **Forestry Budget Estimate**

In the absence of a statistically valid tree count, it is extremely difficult to formulate reliable annual budget estimates for forestry management objectives in the Town of Brighton. The Town's 2004 forestry budget is approximately \$150,000. However, based on formulas involving workload and tree population estimates, annual costs to properly manage Brighton's forest are shown to range from \$176,200 to \$233,400.

Grant funding and donations by individuals and community organizations to assist with tree management activities are available and should be actively sought.

### **Summary of Planning and Management Goals and Implementation Strategies**

- 1.) Brighton residents become well informed about the Town's forestry program, proper tree care and are active partners.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- Community events to celebrate the Town's commitment to trees. For example, an annual Arbor Day ceremony
- Utilization of the Town website and newsletter to promote forestry policies and inform citizens of Town tree laws
- Creation of a brochure(s) detailing Town tree law, forestry policies, tree care tips, and exceptionally significant trees
- Annual review of the Forestry Plan by the Tree Council
- Appointment of a new Forestry Plan Committee to review and update the Forestry Plan in 10 years

- 2.) The Town maintains a complete inventory of all Town trees that is continually updated and is used to manage the Town's forest.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- Develop/acquire tree inventory software that will enable the Town to complete a Townwide tree inventory within six years
- Update the tree inventory on a regular basis

- 3.) The Town's community forest is healthy and safe, has a diversity of tree species and age, is aesthetically pleasing and provides economic and environmental benefits.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Amend the Town Code to authorize the Town to treat or remove trees on private property [only] in the event that they pose a significant threat to the health of the Town forest and to provide protections to significant and/or "historic trees"
- Develop a tree removal and pruning survey for Town trees
- Develop a rotational tree pruning program
- Implement a policy under which the number of tree plantings completed each year should exceed the number of tree removals

- 4.) The Town's forestry program is operationally and fiscally efficient.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Develop a forestry activity operational schedule
- Generate annual work activity summaries for optimum budget reporting and forecasting

- 5.) The Town is a partner with other governmental agencies, public utilities and the business community in the protection and enhancement of the community forest.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Take steps necessary to build partnerships with community organizations for tree management and protection activities
- Establish effective dialogue, communications and permit process with public utilities to effectuate utility's compliance with Town tree laws

- 6.) The Town's forestry program has sufficient financial resources to achieve the Plan's goals.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Create a tree planting trust fund to enable the Town to receive donations for tree planting
- Actively pursue grant funding on an ongoing basis to assist with forestry management activities

- 7.) The Town maintains its status as a "Tree City USA".

**Implementation Strategy:**

- To hold this prestigious title, the Town must implement a tree management plan that addresses the following four guidelines –

A.) A Tree Council must be in place to administer the Town forestry program

B.) A tree ordinance must be in place, serving as the legal authority defining the rights and responsibilities of homeowners and Town officials

C.) Annually, the Town budget must include \$2.00 per capita for tree care activities such as watering, pruning, pest control and removal

D.) The Town will observe an annual Arbor Day to promote community pride and awareness of the Town's tree resources

## Introduction

*In Brighton, we love our trees. Often, we take them for granted. And when tragedy strikes, such as Dutch elm disease or the devastating 1991 ice storm, we collectively mourn their loss.*

Trees protect and enhance our community in many ways. Some of the benefits of trees are tangible. For example, they provide energy savings by offering protection from winter winds and by providing shade in the summer. Trees clean our air and reduce noise pollution. Their roots help hold soil, reducing erosion during wet periods. Trees provide an important habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Trees provide important intangible benefits. They offer aesthetic beauty and a sense of peace. They contribute a forest flavor to the public and private spaces that make up the Town of Brighton. And perhaps most important of all, they are a living legacy, connecting us to our past and providing a vision for the future.

Recognizing the importance of trees as a community asset, the Brighton Town Board created the Tree Council in 2002, and charged it with the task of drafting a Town Forestry Plan which would establish policies for the preservation and enhancement of the Town's tree resources. "Town" trees are trees that are located on the Town rights-of-way along Town streets and on Town owned properties. The Forestry Plan is intended to serve as a set of guidelines and policies for the Town staff, boards and committees in implementing and enforcing Brighton's ordinances affecting trees. Forestry Plan policies are also intended to serve as recommendations to private homeowners in planting and maintaining trees on their properties.

As envisioned by the ordinance authorizing the development of the Forestry Plan, the policies set forth in the Plan are intended to cover a wide range of subjects, including:

- 1.) Pruning of Town trees for tree health and public safety
- 2.) Preservation and management of mature trees
- 3.) Tree removal
- 4.) Planting new trees
- 5.) Diversification of tree species
- 6.) Protection of trees from damage by construction projects by utility, street and sidewalk maintenance

## The History and Legacy of Trees in Brighton

*Long before there was Brighton, the land along the Genesee River and Lake Ontario was covered in deep forests. Native Americans of the Iroquois Nation viewed the forests as a gift from the Creator and a lifeline for survival. They used the forests and fields for gathering nuts and berries, planting crops, and harvesting wood for building shelters. The abundance of life in the forests and fields sustained them. The forests were greatly appreciated.*

When the first European settlers came and explored the area, they too noticed the wealth of the land. One of those earliest settlers, Hamlet Scranton, wrote in 1812 that “the country is very pleasant and fertile, timbered with red, white and black oaks and lots of chestnut trees.” The settlers gathered nuts for food from butternut trees along the Genesee River. Nuts continue to be gathered from trees along the river.

According to historic legend, this dense forest actually saved Rochesterville, as this area was once known, from destruction. Rochesterville was just a log cabin settlement of 300 people. In May 1814, a British battle ship anchored at the mouth of the Genesee River with a mission to conquer the settlers. The Americans had only 33 people and 20 horses to defend their land. The morning of the battle was very foggy and the Americans decided to take advantage of the weather to trick the British. The 33 men and 20 horses marched in circle in and out of the foggy, dense forest. The British, not knowing how many troops they faced if they were to attack, decided it was not worth the risk and sailed on to the east. The forest, with the help of Mother Nature and some quick thinking, had saved the settlement.

The new settlers were accustomed to larger scale farming than the forest clearings would allow. Thus, they began clearing the land, cutting and uprooting forests. These large agricultural fields have changed the landscape of Brighton for almost 200 years. By the time Town of Brighton held its first Town meeting in 1814, agriculture had become the main occupation for Brighton residents. This farming landscape continued to define the lay of the land in Brighton until well after World War II.



*In the late 1800s, Brighton farmers were known to gather at this old tree located at today's Twelve Corners.*

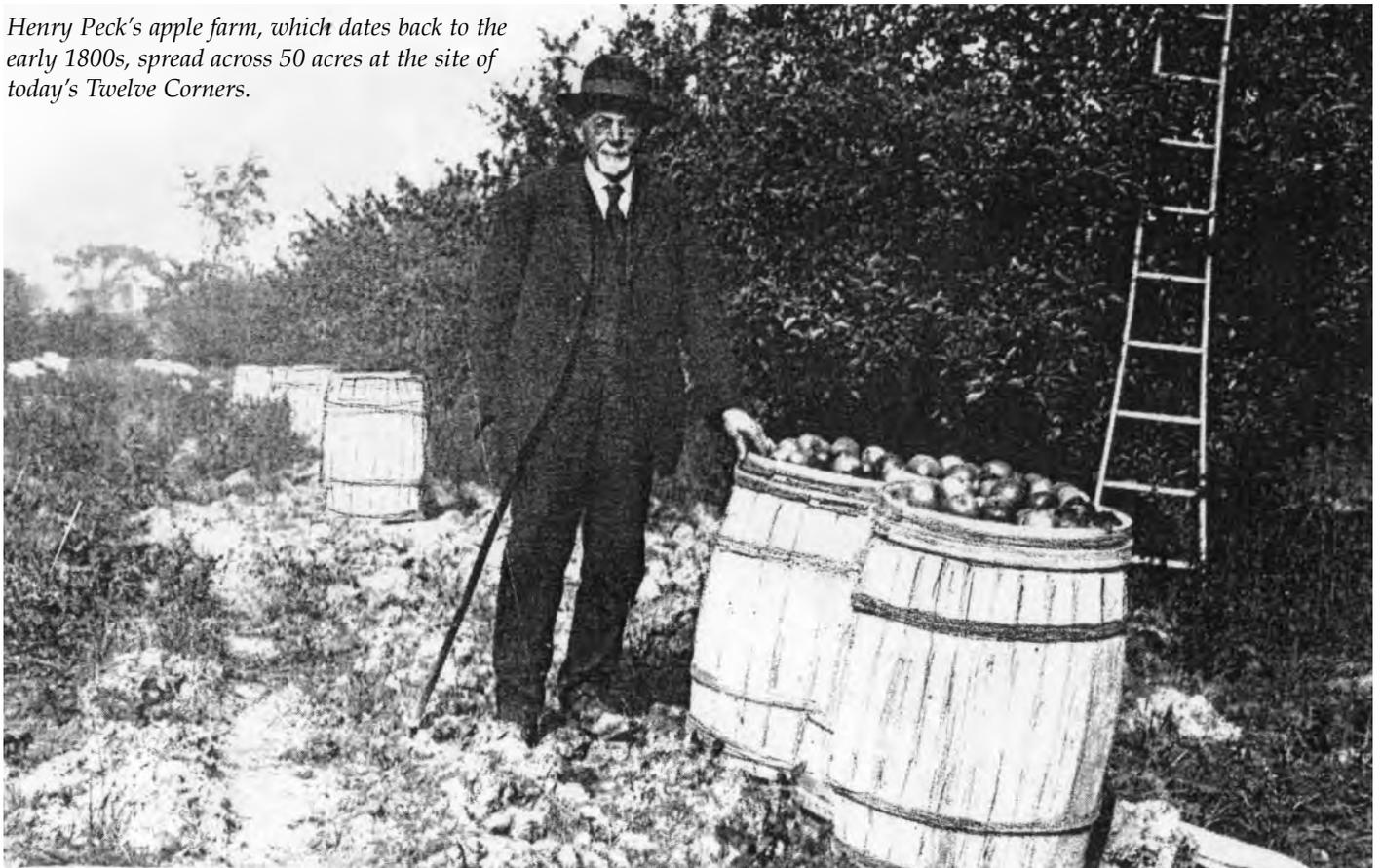
The settlers in Brighton also used the local clay deposits along Cobbs Hill and between Elmwood and Westfall roads for brick making. The trees of Brighton played an important role in the brick making industry, serving as a ready source of fuel for brick-making kilns. The American chestnut, which grew abundantly in Brighton, was especially valuable because it burned very hot and clean with very little smoke. This made the wood ideal for use in the brick kilns.

The chestnut trees also provided a great deal of ready food. All one had to do was beat the squirrels to them! Chestnuts were eaten whole or used in flours. Unfortunately, a great blight hit the area's chestnut trees in the mid 1920s, killing whole forests at a time. (This is one reason why we no longer plant just one species of tree in a neighborhood. This way no future blight could wipe out all the trees in one area.)

Visionary citizens in the early years of the Town knew the aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits of tree in neighborhoods. Josiah W. Bisell was a town nurseryman involved in the growing and selling of trees. In 1840 he acted on behalf of citizens by planting street trees along East Avenue. Shortly thereafter, other streets and lawns in Brighton were planted with shade trees such as elms, horse chestnuts, maples, oaks, and linden trees. The legacy of this pleasant, beautiful and healthy living environment generated by trees of Brighton continues to nourish our souls and protect our neighborhoods.

The Town's recent acquisitions of additional parkland in the 1990s, including Corbett's Glen, Persimmon Park, and Stowel Park, and its success in being named a "Tree City USA" in 2003 reflect the desire of its citizens for Brighton to remain a green and forested town.

*Henry Peck's apple farm, which dates back to the early 1800s, spread across 50 acres at the site of today's Twelve Corners.*



## Visit Historic Trees of Brighton

*When you visit our parks, study the trees. Read them a living history. Remember that some of these very same old trees knew the Native Americans, lived with the settlers and watched over all the births and changes in Brighton.*

Residents recognize that parts of Brighton should remain serene islands of wild habitat where birds, fowl, deer, fox, raccoon, rabbit and other wildlife can thrive. This park like setting is truly a miracle of conservation in the middle of urban life. It deserves to be protected and preserved as a legacy for future generations of wildlife and for our citizens.

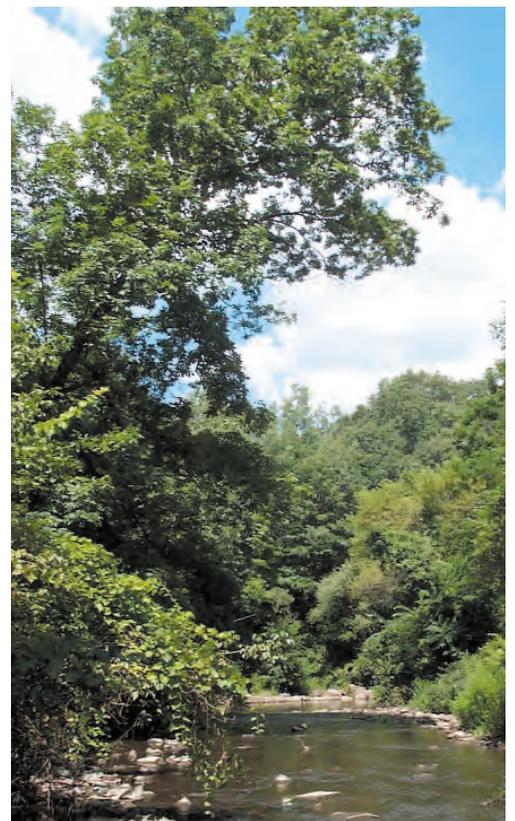
The oldest trees in Corbett's Glen offer a vision of what our first forests may have looked like. Trees here are large, dense and include young and old forest types. Young forest trees found here include ash, willow and poplar in the basins. Old forest varieties include black oak, white oak and hemlocks on the slopes.

Buckland Park was actually a large farm right up until the 1990s. Many residents remember the cows and cattle grazing in these fields. Baseball fields are now cut out of these very same cow pastures. A double row of gnarled, twisted pear trees running between the two farm houses still stands. These are the pear trees for which Pear Alley is named. This is a living heritage of our farming community. It is said that, "He who plants pears is planting for his heirs." In spring, you may enjoy the soft white blossoms of the pears. In summer, you can see their large, attractive fruits which were enjoyed by the farm family. If you're lucky, you may even see the deer or wild turkeys that still live on the land and eat the pears.

At Persimmon Park you can discover the unusual persimmon trees for which the park is named. Persimmons do not usually grow wild in upstate New York. So how did these persimmon trees end up in Brighton?

Perhaps one of the many nurserymen in the area grew them for his stock to sell, or perhaps an avid home gardener decades ago tried his luck at growing a seedling in his back yard. The experiment was successful.

Persimmon trees grow plum-sized fruits that turn a light yellow-orange color in the late summer and early fall. They are extremely sour until a frost hits them. The chill of the frost ripens the fruits so they become as tasty as they are beautiful. Look for the persimmon trees on the upland end of the park just east of Eldridge Avenue, off Highland Avenue. You can recognize them by the unique elongated checkerboard of their bark.



*Corbett's Glen*

*Enjoy our trees. Visit our trees.  
Love our trees. Protect our trees.*

## Factors Affecting Forest Health

Regional environmental conditions dictate the species of trees that will thrive in Brighton and our region. Localized environmental conditions also have an impact on tree health. The daily activities of maintaining the infrastructure in an urban area also have an impact on tree health. Understanding these influences is an important element to effectively manage and preserve our forest.

### Plant Hardiness Zones

Plants have evolved to survive and flourish in the conditions of their native environment. Cold temperature extremes are one of the most important variables that dictate which plant species can survive in a region. The United States Department of Agriculture publishes plant hardiness zone maps across the country. The Rochester area is classified as Zone 6a, 0 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit. Plant species must be able to tolerate these temperature extremes to flourish in our area. Typically hardiness zones are colder as one travels from south to north. The Rochester area is unique because of the influence of Lake Ontario on its weather. The Lake moderates the cold temperature extremes of our winters. If you travel 30 miles south of the Lake you will find colder winter temperature extremes and thus colder plant hardiness zones. As a result, plant species native to the mountains of Tennessee will thrive in our environment. However, they will not survive a few miles south of our region. This broadens the number of plant species that can be planted in our landscape.

### Soils

Plants also have evolved to thrive in different types of soils. Soil pH (acid or alkaline) is a limiting factor for some tree species. Drainage and soil texture are the other influencing factors. The soils in Brighton are primarily clay in texture, poor drainage and alkaline in pH. As a result, plants that prefer acidic, well-drained loamy soils should be avoided as a general rule. There may be localized deposits of different soil types and conditions in the Town. For example, the sandy soils of Pinnacle Hill represent a localized soil condition. Identifying such areas may provide an opportunity to use tree species with specific soil needs.

The volume of soil available for a tree to grow in will impact tree health. Trees absorb nutrients and water from the soil. Thus, in limited conditions a large tree species will not have sufficient nutrients and moisture to sustain growth. Smaller tree species should be used in sites with limited soil volume.

### Urban Environmental Influences

Pollution is a problem in urban areas. The use of deicing salts on roadways causes the most significant large scale problem for tree health. As a result, tree species tolerant of salt should be used along roadways or areas where salts might drain into the soils and root zones of trees in Brighton.

Radiant heat from sun baked pavement and buildings causes drought stress by drawing the moisture out of trees. The limited soil volume available in urban areas also predisposes trees to drought stress. Drought tolerant species should be planted in sites with these conditions and supplemental watering should be used to mitigate drought stress.

### Insect and Disease Pests

Insect and disease pests can have a major impact on tree health. Dutch elm disease devastated the American elm in the 1960s and 70s in our area. Tar spot, a fungal leaf disease on the Norway maple has caused significant stress on tree health in the last several years. Emerging imported insects have caused significant tree losses in recent years. Recently, the Asian long horned beetle caused significant maple tree losses in the New York City area, prompting federal officials to quarantine the area and remove thousands of trees. The emergence of the Emerald Ash borer, a boring insect that prefers ash trees, in the Michigan area has prompted similar action and concern in recent years.

Controlling insect and disease pests with pesticides has historically proven to be ineffective on a large scale basis. Concerns regarding the impact of such treatments upon the environment and people also call into question the appropriateness of using these measures. Control measures, removing diseased trees, or pesticide applications area also very expensive.

Insect and disease pests are typically tree species specific. The most cost effective and practical methodology to mitigate the potential impact from insect and disease pests is to plant a diversity of tree species. The population of one tree species should also be limited to less than 10% to limit potential losses. The use of monocultures (one species of tree on a street or area) should be avoided.

### Storm Events

Storm events cause significant tree damage and losses. The frequency and severity of these events have increased over the past 10 years. Ice storms struck our area in 1991, 1997 and 2003. High wind events have also hit our area with increasing frequency. Wind storms cause immediate tree losses. More significantly though, is the loss of branches and leaf area, which reduces a tree's ability to produce energy. Major branch loss may lead to the decline of individual trees, particularly if the tree was in poor condition prior to damage. Less significantly damaged trees become stressed as they work to replace lost branches and close wounds.

Damaged trees recover more quickly with restoration pruning than with no pruning. Preventative maintenance pruning can help minimize damage from storms. The majority of branches damaged by these events are defective. Defective branches such as decayed or weakly attached branches can be pruned from trees, thus avoiding more devastating damage caused by the branch being ripped from the tree.

### Construction

Construction is the number one killer of trees. The most obvious losses are the result of clearing trees for new development. The less obvious losses are the result of root damage caused by severing of roots or the compaction of the soil caused by heavy equipment driving on root zones of trees.

Street trees are subject to damage from various activities. The maintenance or installation of underground utilities can cause root damage. Reconstruction of streets or sidewalks can cause root damage. The impact of these types of damage is often not seen until three to five years after the project is complete.

Much of this type of damage is avoidable. Alternative construction practices are available to minimize this impact, and adequate tree protection measures can be taken during construction to help prevent damage. In some cases it is more prudent to remove the tree because of the condition of the tree or because alternative construction practices are not implementable or too costly. A qualified arborist should be used to review the potential impact to trees by various activities and to evaluate the merit of preservation of individual trees.

### Utility Pruning

Power distribution lines provide the energy to power our workplaces, homes and infrastructure. Tree branch failures onto power distribution lines disrupt the power and may create a risk of injury to people.

Utility pruning works to minimize these power disruptions and potential safety risks caused by downed power lines. This type of pruning is not aesthetically pleasing and shortens the lifespan of trees by subjecting them to frequent and extensive pruning. Proper utility pruning, however, minimizes the impact on tree health while working to maintain the distribution of power. Chapter 175 of the Town code has provisions to help balance the need for safe power distribution and tree health.

## **Brighton's Forest Today**

The Town of Brighton is a forest? The view from the top of Pinnacle Hill or aerial photographs of Brighton reveal an abundance of trees with only glimpses of houses and buildings. The majority of Brighton's trees grow on yards and in green spaces. Some trees line our streets. It is the Town's responsibility to manage the care and protection of trees located on Town rights-of-way and property (Town trees).

How many Town trees are there? We do not know, but it is important to know the number of trees, their condition, species composition and maintenance needs to effectively manage Town trees. A tree inventory is the ideal methodology to provide the needed information.

### **Tree Inventory Goals**

In general, municipalities conduct tree inventories for two primary objectives. The first is to clearly identify the location of municipal trees to enable crew members or inspectors to easily locate specific trees for work or future inspections. The second objective is to provide useful information for planning, management and budgeting decisions. For this reason, it is critical that the inventory data be both easily consolidated and manipulated via a user-friendly software system.

While the Town of Brighton has collected tree inventory information for some 2,414 street trees located in the northern portion of the Town, the data is incomplete and is not filed in a database that offers meaningful analysis.

### Tree Inventory

A complete, well-designed tree inventory is the optimum tool to effectively manage Town trees. Knowing the exact number of trees and their maintenance needs facilitates the development of annual work plans and budgets. Data about the age and condition of trees serves as a reliable resource for projecting future needs. For example, if the majority of trees are in good condition, management costs would be less than if the trees were in poor condition. Completing a tree inventory is a significant expense. It must be also maintained and periodically updated, otherwise, the data will become obsolete.

#### Estimates of Brighton’s Town Tree Population

Tree inventories of other neighboring communities offer statistics that can be used to develop estimates for communities of similar character. For example, the villages of Fairport, Hilton and Webster; and the cities of Rochester and Syracuse are municipalities of traditional urban design. That is, they feature tree-lined streets with trees situated between the sidewalk and curb. Brighton has neighborhoods of this similar design. However, the Town also has many streets of a more suburban design. That is, no sidewalks or street trees.

#### Street Trees

Research shows an average of 148 tree planting sites per linear street mile in sample communities (Table 1). On average, tree stocking (the number of trees/the number of possible tree planting sites) in these communities is 73%. This means of the 148 sites per mile, approximately 108 trees can be found. The Town of Brighton is home to 95.5 linear miles.

Table 1 Community Tree Populations						
	Rochester	Syracuse	Fairport	Hilton	Webster	Average
Trees/Sites/Mile	150	150	159	131	148	148
Stocking Rate	76%	47%	80%	85%	77%	73%

Using the average of 148 tree-planting sites per mile, it can be estimated that Brighton may have 14,100 tree sites along its streets. This is highly unlikely. Using the 73% stocking rate, Brighton may have approximately 10,300 street trees (Table 2). The 47% stocking rate shows that Brighton would have about 6,600 street trees.

Table 2 Brighton Street Tree Estimates		
	High Tree Population Estimate	Low Tree Population Estimate
Trees/Sites/Mile	148	148
Stocking Rate	73%	47%
Estimated Number of Trees	10,300 trees	6,600 trees

### Park Trees

Rochester and Syracuse park tree inventories show an average of 10 trees per acre. This figure includes managed areas only (active). It does not include natural areas (passive). Park tree information was not available for the other communities previously mentioned.

The Town of Brighton is home to approximately 215 acres of park land – 85.1 acres of active and 115.9 passive. At an average of 10 trees per acre, there would be an estimated 851 park trees on active park lands. There are countless trees in natural areas throughout the Town.

These estimates give us a glimpse of the possible numbers of Town trees in Brighton. However, they do not give us all the information we need, and we cannot place a high level of confidence in the estimates due to the differences in character between these comparative communities and Brighton. We don't know the species composition. However, it is most likely predominantly maples, similar to these other communities in our area. Estimating the condition of the Town trees based on these communities is problematic because variance of ages of trees and maintenance practices. Some estimates can be developed for the maintenance requirements of the trees and this will be reserved for the budget estimates section of the plan.



*Antlers Avenue's beautiful trees create a picturesque canopy.*

## Guidelines for Managing Brighton's Forest

The following are the Town's policies (noted in italic) guiding the management and protection of Brighton's forest. The Town Code Chapters 175 and 66 detail the legislation and authority directing the Town's activities, responsibilities and requirements. Many of the policies are abridgements of language in the code. Standards and specifications detailing how forestry related work activities are completed and quality of service are detailed in the Town's Arboricultural Standards and Specification document.

### Vision Statement

*The Town of Brighton recognizes the grandeur and value of a healthy and abundant forest that is well managed, flourishing and diverse. It is a source of pride for its citizens and an example to others of a healthy and prosperous environment.*

### Service Delivery

Town residents may make requests for forestry activities such as pruning, planting or removal. Service requests will be honored in accordance with the policies detailed below.

*Town staff will inspect a request for service and if a hazardous condition exists, it will be acted on quickly. If there is not a significant risk to people or property, the work will be completed during the next forestry work task schedule for that forestry management area.*

### Inspections

Inspections of Town trees are completed for various purposes. At the request of a resident, the Town will inspect a Town tree. Periodic inspections are completed to identify potential risks to people and property, and Town trees are pruned or removed to mitigate the risks.

*The Town will periodically inspect Town trees for potential risks to public safety, and will take the appropriate action to mitigate the risk.*

### Tree Planting

In a natural forest, trees lost are replaced by saplings growing from seed on the forest floor. In urbanized communities, people must plant trees to maintain desired tree population levels. The Town is dedicated to maintaining and ideally increasing the Town tree population level.

*As the Town's budget allows, all Town trees that are removed shall be replaced. If the tree cannot be replaced in the same site, the replacement tree will be planted in an alternative site in the same general area.*

While certain tree species thrive in our climate and in stressful urbanized conditions, others do not. A tree that is not planted properly will not thrive and realize its optimum lifespan.

*When planting a tree on Town property, the species of tree to be planted shall be from the Town's Master Tree List and planted in accordance with the Town's Arboricultural Standards and Specifications.*

Residents may request a tree be planted on public property. Residents and businesses may also plant a tree at their own expense.

*Tree planting requests will be honored in the order they were received and as funding allows. A resident or business may plant a tree on public property at his or her own expense with a permit approved by the Commissioner of Public Works.*

Storms, insects and disease can cause significant tree losses. These natural events can target or cause losses of specific tree species. We can't control these events. However, by limiting the population levels of each tree species in the forest, we can limit the total impact caused by these events.

*No single tree species shall exceed 10 percent of the total population. A tree species that exceeds this population threshold, will not be planted until the population level falls below 10 percent.*

### Tree Maintenance

Tree maintenance helps reduce tree related risks, maintain or improve tree health and battle harmful insects and disease. Insect and disease control can also cause unintended damage to the environment.

*The use of pest control measures shall be limited to situations where a significant proportion of the population is threatened. The control measures used shall be environmentally sensitive and applied in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.*

Periodic tree pruning reduces tree related risks, potential storm damage and promotes vigorous growth and good tree structure. Pruning activities are typically divided into three types: priority pruning, routine pruning and train pruning. Identifying and pruning of trees with branches that represent a risk to people or property is termed priority pruning. Routine pruning is a periodic pruning of a mature tree to promote growth and good tree structure based on a planned schedule. Train pruning is pruning young trees to promote good tree structure.

All of the Town trees in Brighton need to be pruned on a regular basis. It is not practical to prune all of the Town's trees at the same time. Pruning a portion of the Town's trees each year in an area is termed rotational pruning. This is the most efficient and cost effective methodology to prune the Town's trees.

*The Town will strive to prune each Town tree once every five to seven years. Routine and train pruning will be reserved for the rotational schedule of a forestry management area. If a tree branch represents a risk to people or property it will be pruned as soon as practical, but within six months.*

In a natural forest, leaves and organic matter break down into nutrients that are absorbed from the soil through the roots of trees. In urban areas leaves and organic matter are cleaned up and hauled away thus urban soils are not as nutrient rich as natural forest soils. Periodic fertilization of trees in urban areas may be beneficial. However, it is cost prohibitive to fertilize all of the Town trees in Brighton. There may be specific trees or situations that may warrant fertilizing a public tree or trees.

*The Town will only fertilize a Town tree if the tree is of special significance or there are special circumstances that warrant this measure as determined by the Commissioner of Public works or Commissioner of Parks.*

Newly planted trees require watering through the summer months to survive. Trees absorb water from the soils through the trees roots. Transplanted trees typically lose up to 75% of their root zone and thus a significant proportion of their ability to absorb water.

*The Town will rely on help from residents in residential neighborhoods to water recently planted trees. The Town will water recently planted trees on commercial streets.*

### Tree Removal

Each year, trees die or decline to a point that they need to be removed. Because Town trees in essence belong to the citizens of Brighton, the decision to remove a tree should only be based on a sound arboricultural reason and not on personal preferences. With the exception of removals of high risk or hazardous trees, the removal of Town trees should be managed so as not to result in any significant loss of tree canopy in any given neighborhood. Furthermore, because much of the Town's beauty and character are attributable the Town's large numbers of mature trees, the preservation and management of mature trees are specific goals set forth in its "Preservation of Trees Local Law." To implement these goals, the decision on whether to remove a mature tree should not be used on the fact that there will be increased costs to the Town in maintaining and preserving the tree if it remains.

*Only the Town or its authorized agent shall remove a Town tree. The Town will only remove a Town tree that is dead, dying or diseased or constitutes a hazard to life or property. Significant trees (30" or more in diameter) and healthy trees may be removed with clear and compelling cause (appendix A - Standards for Good Cause Removal). All removals of Town trees are subject to the provisions of Chapter 175.8 of the Town Code.*

### Tree Protection

Trees in urbanized areas are exposed to various forms of damage. Vandalism can be a problem. Construction activities, however, are the number one killer of trees. Excavations to install or repair underground utilities or to install sidewalks or make street repairs can sever roots causing significant damage or death. Compaction of the soil by heavy equipment or filling soil over the root zones of trees can cause root death. These types of damage are avoidable and cause unnecessary tree losses.

*No person shall cut, injure or harm a Town tree. No person shall excavate or fill within a radius of 15 feet of any Town tree without written approval from the Commissioner of Public Works. High visibility barriers shall be placed to safeguard trees within a work zone and/or other protective measures shall be taken as may be required by the Commissioner of Public Works.*

### Other Agencies

Numerous agencies in the community impact the health of the Town's forest. For example, the State and County maintain roads that bisect the Town. Rochester Gas and Electric maintains gas lines and prunes trees to maintain power distribution. Working with these agencies often brings challenges due to the differences in responsibility. There are also opportunities to work on projects that will enhance the health of the Town forest.

*The Town will seek opportunities to work with other agencies to enhance and protect the health of the Town forest and will acquaint these agencies with the requirements of the Town tree laws.*

### Natural Areas and Wildlife

Approximately 116 acres of natural parkland in the Town is left to Mother Nature to manage. Dead trees serve as perches for birds of prey to survey their next meal. Cavities in trunks and limbs serve as homes for birds and mammals. These trees would most likely be removed if they were located along our streets because of the threat they may pose to many people and property. In these natural areas, however, we accept a little more risk in order to enjoy interacting with nature.

*The Town does not manage the trees in natural areas for potential risks to public safety... Park goers enter these areas accepting this risk.*



*The Town of Brighton is home to approximately 116 acres of natural parkland.*

## Community Involvement and Education

*The definition of a successful urban forestry program varies from community to community. However, managers and scholars agree there are specific factors that are common to communities with sound urban forestry programs.*

Robert Miller, author of *Urban Forestry, Planning and Managing Urban Greenspaces* writes: "Communities where forestry has continued to do well were those communities where good management was supported by a long term program of maintaining public support through information and education programs. Nighswonger (1982) describes a successful community forestry program as one that is cost-effective, involves people in the community, stimulates community prides, is well planned and is educational.

Community involvement and education programs are therefore equally important to other management activities to effectively manage Brighton's forest.

Community involvement can take many forms, and some examples already exist in Brighton. For instance, this Plan was developed with the assistance of a volunteer citizen committee, the Forestry Plan Committee. Community volunteers organize annual Arbor Day ceremonies.

Community involvement can be expanded to include assisting the Town with management activities. Neighborhood tree planting projects can be organized and completed by volunteers. Volunteers can complete pruning of young trees. Watering newly planted trees is a critical task that can be completed by residents.

Community involvement helps build a sense of ownership of the Town's trees and community spirit.

Public education programs aim to fulfill two objective. First, is to educate Town residents of Town forestry policies and to notify Town residents of planned forestry activities. Second is to educate Town residents about proper tree care practices.

Most complaints from the public regarding local government activities arise because residents were not informed about a planned activity. Work on street trees often requires time on a resident's property which can be disruptive to their daily routine. Thus, it is important to educate residents why activities are being completed, to what standard and when those activities are being completed.

More trees exist on private property than on Town property. Informing residents of proper tree care practices will help promote proper tree care on their own properties that, in turn, will improve the health of the Town's total forest population. An educated resident will also have a better understanding of why the Town uses various tree management techniques.

Programs to identify historic trees and unusual specimen in a community are another method to celebrate a community's past and educate the community of the benefits trees provide.

Informed and involved Brighton residents will help to build a strong sense of community, as well as improve the value that our trees add to the community.

## Forestry Budget Estimate

A forestry budget is the sum of costs to complete various forestry work activities. In order to develop an accurate estimate, the numbers of trees must be quantified, and the number of work activities required. In the absence of statistically valid Town tree management information for the Town of Brighton, it is not possible to formulate accurate tree count estimates, annual forestry workloads and therefore budget estimates with a measurable level of confidence. We can however look to other local communities where tree inventories have been conducted for assistance.

Forestry workloads include three major work activities – tree removal, pruning, and planting. Estimates for the town of Brighton forestry workload will be developed for the estimated Current and Annual workloads. The Current Workload Estimate is the anticipated time frame for workload following the completion of a tree inventory or work survey. The Annual Workload estimate is the anticipated time frame for an annual workload following completion of the Current Workload.

### Tree Removal

Each year Town trees die or decline to a point that they need to be removed. In communities with an active annual program to identify and remove problem trees, an annual tree removal percentage becomes predictable. Communities that do not have an annual program to identify tree removals typically have a higher percentage of the population that needs to be removed.

### Tree Pruning

Pruning activities are typically divided into three categories – priority pruning, routine pruning, and train pruning.

Annual identification and pruning of Town trees with branches that represent a risk to people or property is termed “priority” pruning. As with tree removals, communities that do not have an annual program to identify priority pruning needs typically have a higher percentage of the population requiring priority pruning.

“Routine” and “train” pruning are periodic pruning based on a planned schedule. Ideally, each mature tree (6 inches in diameter or larger) in the population should be pruned once every 5 to 7 years, and young trees (1 to 5 inches in diameter) should also be pruned once every three years. In the absence of a tree inventory, the number of trees in this diameter range is unknown. Thus, for the purposes of this Plan, an estimate will be developed to prune each tree once every 7 years. One-seventh of the trees will be scheduled for pruning each year to spread the cost over this time period (termed rotational pruning).

When projecting a budget for pruning additional costs generally required for maintenance of older, mature trees needs to be a factor, since maintenance and preservation of the Town’s mature trees are specific goals in its Town tree law.

Tree Planting

Tree planting estimates will be based on a one for one replacement of trees removed plus 5% to account for transplant losses to maintain the current tree population level. Ideally, it is desirable to set annual tree planting goals that are higher in number than the annual removals to begin to plant trees in vacant sites and increase the community’s tree population.

**Current Workload Estimate**

Street Trees

Statistics from the sample communities were used to develop priority pruning and tree removal estimates.

<b>Table 3 Pruning and Tree Removal Estimates</b>						
	<b>Rochester</b>	<b>Syracuse</b>	<b>Fairport</b>	<b>Hilton</b>	<b>Webster</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Trees/Sites/Mile</b>	150	150	159	131	148	148
<b>Stocking Rate</b>	76%	47%	80%	85%	77%	77%
<b>Removals</b>	1%	8%	4%	3%	3%	4%
<b>Priority Prunes</b>	3%	13%	19%	6%	6%	9%

<b>Table 4 Current Workload Estimates</b>		
	<b>High Estimate Brighton</b>	<b>Low Estimate Brighton</b>
<b>Trees/Sites/Mile</b>	148	148
<b>Stocking Rate</b>	73%	47%
<b>Estimated # of Trees</b>	10,300	6,600
<b>Removals</b>	412	264
<b>Priority Prunes</b>	927	594
<b>Routine Prunes</b>	1,471	943
<b>Plantings</b>	434	275

In these communities, an average of 4% of street trees are scheduled for removal and 9% of the trees require priority pruning (Table 3).

Using this average removal rate, an estimated 412 street trees in Brighton should be removed and 434 plantings should take place (Table 4).

An estimated 927 street trees would require priority pruning to remove problematic limbs and 1,471 trees would be routine pruned each year.

Using the minimal tree stocking rate of 47% proportionately reduces the estimates (Table 2). Under the low estimate formula, there are approximately 6,600 trees, requiring annually 264 removals, 275 plantings, 594 priority prunes, and 943 routine prunes.

Park Trees

Trees are generally under less environmental stress in parklands than trees situated along streets. As a result, the Plan will use the lower end of workload statistics to estimate the current workload figures. A 3% removal rate translates into an estimated 26 tree removals and 27 tree plantings. A 6% priority pruning rate translates into an estimated 51 trees requiring priority pruning.

**Annual Workload Estimates**

The City of Rochester has a progressive urban forest management program including annual priority pruning and removal surveys, re-inventorying and a six-year rotational routine maintenance program. Rochester's removal and priority pruning figures will be used to develop the annual estimates for the Town of Brighton.

Street Trees

Using an annual removal rate of 1% would result in approximately 66 to 103 trees requiring removal each year (Table 5). Using a 3% annual priority pruning rate results in about 198 to 309 street trees requiring priority pruning each year.

<b>Table 5 Annual Street Workload Estimates</b>		
	<b>High Estimate Brighton</b>	<b>Low Estimate Brighton</b>
<b>Trees/Sites/Mile</b>	148	148
<b>Stocking Rate</b>	73%	47%
<b>Estimated # of Trees</b>	10,300	6,600
<b>Removals @ 1%</b>	103	66
<b>Priority Prunes @ 3%</b>	309	198
<b>Routine Prunes</b>	1,471	943
<b>Plantings</b>	108	69

Park Trees

Applying the same rates to the park tree population results in an estimated 9 park trees that would need to be removed each year with 10 tree plantings and 26 trees requiring priority pruning.

## Budget Estimates

Is the Town's current budget sufficient to adequately manage Brighton's urban forest? Cost estimates to manage Brighton's urban forest will be developed based on the high and low tree population and workload estimates developed in the resource analysis. Unit costs for each work activity are based on average contract costs provided by two local tree services. In preparing this document, four contractors were previously solicited for estimates. Two responded to the request. Estimates received fall within expected cost ranges for our area with one exception. The range of pruning estimates varies by upwards of \$50 per tree. A properly structured contract should return a cost per tree on the lower end based on the history of municipal bids for lump sum bids in our area.

### Current Estimated Workload Budget

The estimated budget figure to complete what may be the Town's total current workload after completing an inventory or tree removal and priority pruning survey for the low tree population estimate is approximately \$269,000, and for the high population estimate, approximately \$395,400 (Table 6).

Maintenance pruning (rotational pruning) was omitted from this estimate because priority pruning and removals should be completed prior to implementing a rotational routine pruning program. The cost of completing a tree removal and priority pruning survey (risk survey) was included for planning efforts.

The survey to identify priority pruning needs and tree removals should include prioritizing those needs. This will facilitate developing a work plan to complete the workload based on the Town's annual budget priorities.

**Table 6  
Current Workload Estimates**

	High Estimate Brighton	Unit Cost	TOTAL COST	Low Estimate Brighton	Unit Cost	TOTAL COST
Estimated # of Trees	11,150			7,450		
Survey			\$6,000			\$5,000
<b>Removals</b>						
Street	412	\$448	\$184,576	264	\$448	\$118,272
Park	26	\$423	\$10,998	26	\$423	\$10,998
<b>Priority Prunes</b>						
Street	927	\$114	\$105,678	594	\$125	\$174,250
Park	51	\$140	\$7,140	51	\$140	\$7,140
<b>Plantings</b>						
Street	433	\$175	\$75,775	275	\$175	\$48,125
Park	27	\$195	\$5,265	27	\$195	\$5,265
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>			<b>\$395,400</b>			<b>\$269,000</b>

Estimated Annual Budget

Approximately \$233,400 would be needed to manage the high population estimate of Brighton's workload. Approximately \$176,200 would be required to manage the low population estimate for Brighton's urban forest (Table 7). The Town's current annual forestry budget is approximately \$150,000.

**Table 7  
Annual Workload Budget Estimates**

	High Estimate Brighton	Unit Cost	TOTAL COST	Low Estimate Brighton	Unit Cost	TOTAL COST
Estimated # of Trees	11,150			7,450		
Risk Survey			\$6,000			\$5,000
<b>Removals</b>						
Street	103	\$448	\$46,114	66	\$448	\$29,568
Park	9	\$423	\$3,807	9	\$423	\$3,807
<b>Priority Prunes</b>						
Street	309	\$114	\$35,226	198	\$125	\$24,750
Park	26	\$140	\$3,640	26	\$140	\$3,640
<b>Routine Prunes</b>						
Street	1,471	\$57	\$83,847	943	\$65	\$61,295
Park	122	\$110	\$13,420	122	\$110	\$13,420
<b>Plantings</b>						
Street	108	\$175	\$18,900	69	\$175	\$12,075
Park	10	\$195	\$1,950	10	\$195	\$1,950
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>			<b>\$212,900</b>			<b>\$155,500</b>

### Grant Funding Opportunities

Grants are available each year to help fund community forestry projects. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation administers the grants. One grant program is funded with the federal dollars that New York State receives annually for its urban forestry program. The State's Environmental Protection Fund administers grants for another program. Grant availability and amounts awarded vary each year depending on passage of the final State budget.

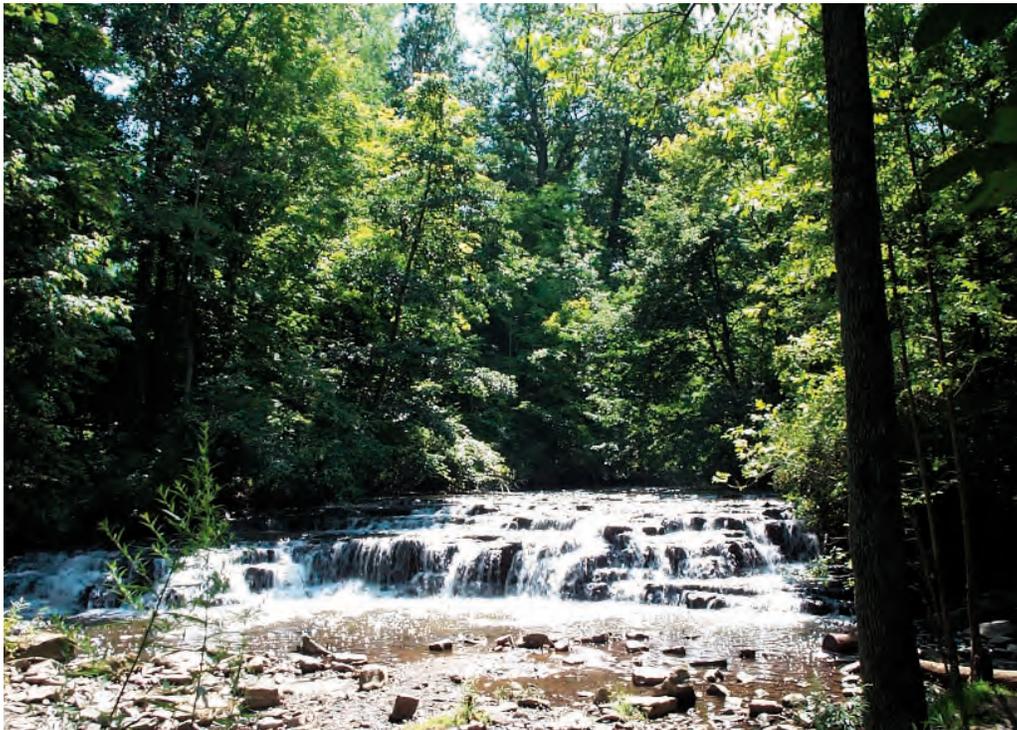
Governor George Pataki has proposed a new grant program in the 2004 budget proposal. he proposes using \$500,000 of New York State Energy Research and Developmental funding to finance tree planting projects. The details of the program are yet to be released.

### Private Donations

Individuals, organizations, companies and corporations are another source of revenue willing to assist in funding forestry program activities. This is particularly true for tree planting projects. However, projects such as tree inventories, tree risk surveys and cost sharing for tree pruning and removal have been funded by utility companies.

Rochester Gas and Electric has also funded community forestry projects in our area to help communities improve their management programs including tree inventories, tree risk surveys and cost sharing for tree pruning and removal needs.

Many communities establish trust funds to receive private donations. It is important that these funds also include a program to recognize the donors.



*Funding sources from grant programs and private donations can be effectively used to offset costs associated with urban forestry activities.*

## Challenges, Goals and Objectives

The Forestry Plan Committee identified the challenges facing the Town to effectively manage and protect our forest. These challenges are described in the following narratives.

Comprehensive goals, short and long range goals and annual objectives were developed to address these challenges and guide the Town's efforts over the next 10 years. The comprehensive goals define the endpoints, where we would like to go and what it will look like when we get there. The annual objectives and implementation strategies provide a roadmap to move toward or achieve the comprehensive goals.

### Education and Community Involvement

**Challenge:** The residents of the Town need to be informed of the Town's forestry policies and forestry work activities. An opportunity exists to educate the residents of the Town in proper tree care. Opportunities also exist to involve residents in management projects such as pruning young trees. It would be desirable to provide residents with a choice of tree species when planting adjacent to their homes.

### **Comprehensive**

**Goal:** The Town's residents are well-informed about the Town's tree laws, the Town's forestry program, the value of trees, proper tree care and are active partners in the forestry program.

### **Annual**

**Objective:** Hold an Arbor Day ceremony each year.

### **Implementation**

**Strategies:**

- Organize and hold an event celebrating the completion of the Town's first Forestry Plan by Year 1.
- Publish the Town's forestry policies on the Town website by Year 1.
- Publish the Town's forestry policies in the Townwide newsletter by Year 1.
- Explore the feasibility of including tree care tips for residents in the forestry brochures or look for other methods to inform residents on proper tree care practices by Year 3.
- Develop a program to solicit donations for tree planting in the Town by Year 4.
- Develop and publish a brochure or series of brochures detailing the Town's forestry policies by Year 4.
- Develop a program to identify and catalogue large, unique and historic trees in the Town by Year 4. Consider amendments to Chapter 175 of the Town Code to provide additional protections to these trees, regardless of whether such trees are owned by the Town or in private ownership.
- Develop a work activity notification program using the Town's various media by Year 5.
- Appoint a Forestry Plan committee and begin reviewing and developing a new 10 Year Forestry Plan by Year 9.
- The Forestry Plan will be reviewed and a new plan developed by Year 10.

### Planning and Management

**Challenge 1:** The Town does not have a complete inventory of Town trees. The existing inventory information is also dated and difficult to summarize for meaningful analysis. The absence of accurate and valid management information about the Town's tree population limits the Town's ability to develop sound management plans and accurate budget.

#### **Comprehensive**

**Goal:** The Town maintains complete inventory of all Town trees that is continually updated and is used to manage the Town's forest.

#### **Implementation**

**Strategies:**

- Develop and solicit a request for proposals to complete a Town tree inventory and provide tree inventory software by Year 5.
- An inventory of Town trees will be completed by Year 6.
- The Town has a computer software program designed to assist in managing the Town trees and is integrated with the Town's Geographic Information System by Year 6.
- The Town tree inventory is updated on a regular rotational schedule starting in Year 7.

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**Challenge 2:** Periodic tree diseases and insect pests may pose a significant threat to the health of the Town's forest. Presently, there is no measure in the Town code authorizing the Town to require the treatment or removal of a diseased tree on private property that poses a significant threat to the health of the Town's forest. More trees are planted on private property than on public property. Therefore, the authority to deal with a diseased tree is an important tool to effectively manage these potential threats. Furthermore, the Town should establish a liaison to the Cornell Cooperative Extension to receive early warnings of any diseases or pests.

It may be beneficial to the health of the Town's forest to broaden Chapter 175-11 to require tree services to provide an industry certificate of competency in order to retain a permit to work within the Town. The goal of such a measure would be to increase the quality of work being completed by tree services thereby improving the health of the Town forest.

Trees can present a risk to people and property. A Townwide program to identify Town trees that represent a risk to people and property and mitigate those risks needs to be completed on a regular basis.

Periodic pruning improves tree health by reducing damage caused by storm events. Storm events have become more frequent and fierce in recent years. Pruning young trees promotes good branching structure that leads a more healthy and structurally strong tree in the future.

#### **Comprehensive**

**Goal:** The Town's community forest is healthy and safe, has a diversity of trees and age, is aesthetically pleasing and provides economic and environmental benefits.

**Implementation****Strategies:**

- Investigate revising the Town Code to authorize the Town to remove/treat a tree on private property that poses a significant threat to the health of the forest by Year 1.
  - The Town has completed a priority pruning and tree removal survey by year 1
  - Develop a budget and work plan to address the needs identified in the priority pruning and tree removal survey by Year 2.
  - The Town has begun implementation of the work plan to address the needs identified in the priority pruning and removal survey by Year 3.
  - Investigate requiring tree services to provide proof of competency as part of the registration process as required by Chapter 175-11 by Year 5.
  - The Town has developed a program to identify and reduce tree related risks on a regular basis by Year 5.
  - A Townwide rotational tree pruning program is implemented by Year 8.
  - The number of tree plantings completed each year exceeds the number of tree removals by Year 8.
- 

**Challenge 3:** Opportunities exist to improve the Town's forestry operational and fiscal efficiency. Forestry work activities are identified in two ways – by request from the public or others, or through proactive inspections. Proactive inspections or work surveys are the most efficient methodology to identify work. Systematically inspecting each street or park ensures all work is identified. The Town should also be divided into geographic management areas. This organizes the work by geographic area, minimizing travel time for work crews. The lack of an operation schedule also leads to inefficiencies. Work tasks are not matched to the most effective personnel and equipment thus work crews are not as efficient as they could be and as a result it is more costly.

The use of hourly contracts is less cost efficient than using lump sum contracts. While in-house staff and contractors can effectively complete forestry work tasks, they are not being utilized based on their strengths. Additional staffing will be required or outsourcing of the workload will be required to meet the current forestry workload demand.

It is important to be able to measure the effectiveness of management activities on a regular basis. This requires accurate and timely management information. The failure to track annual forestry work activity figures hinders the Town's ability to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town's management program. The lack of written activity procedures leads to inconsistency and inaccuracy in data collection and recording.

**Comprehensive**

**Goal:** The Town's forestry program is operationally and fiscally efficient.

**Annual**

**Objective:** Generate annual work activity summaries for the past budget year and projections for the coming budget year.

**Implementation**

- Strategies:**
- Develop a forestry activity operational schedule and divide the Town into forestry management areas by Year 1.
  - The Town will write activity procedures for data collection and recording, and forestry work activities by Year 2.
  - Complete an analysis of the Town’s forestry workload, staffing and assignments, and outsourcing to identify the most effective and efficient methods to meet workload requirements by Year 3.
- 

**Challenge 4:** Numerous agencies work in the Town that may have an impact on the health of Brighton’s forest. The State and County have roads and facilities that traverse the Town. Maintaining these facilities requires excavations and the use of heavy equipment that may damage trees. The State and County’s priorities are often different than the Town’s and may lead to conflicts in decision making on capital improvement projects.

Utility companies must maintain their facilities that deliver sources of power and communication that fuel our economy and daily lives. The pressures to develop our open spaces may lead to tree losses through land clearing or failure to follow tree protection measures. Natural disasters require a coordinated response of all agencies in the Town to effectively manage these periodic events.

Chapter 66 of the Town Code was written to minimize the potential impact to trees, wildlife habitat and the environment on new development projects. The definition of a tree and woodlot, however, are poorly defined, hindering the effectiveness of this measure. Chapter 175 of the Town Code includes provisions to protect Town trees from construction damage.

**Comprehensive**

**Goal:** The Town is a partner with other governmental agencies, public utilities and the business community in the protection and enhancement of the community forest.

**Annual**

**Objective:** Apply goals and policies set forth in the Forestry Plan to identify opportunities to build partnerships in managing and protecting the forest.

**Implementation**

- Strategies:**
- Amend the Town Code Chapter 66 definitions of a “tree” and “woodlot” to better reflect standard forestry measurement practices by Year 1.
  - The Town will develop a forestry emergency response plan by Year 3.

**Challenge 5:** Numerous priorities vie for the limited financial resources of the Town. It may require additional resources to achieve the goals of this Plan. Opportunities exist to retain grant funding to assist the Town with forestry management projects. Other agencies working in the Town may partner in funding projects.

**Comprehensive**

**Goal:** The Town's forestry program has sufficient financial resources to achieve the Plan's goals.

**Annual**

**Objective:** Seek and obtain grant funding on an ongoing basis to assist in funding forestry management projects.

**Implementation**

**Strategies:**

- Develop a budget and work plan to address the needs identified in the priority pruning and tree removal by Year 2.
- Create a tree planting trust fund to facilitate acceptance of donations for planting trees by Year 4.
- Develop a budget and work plan to address the needs identified in the tree inventory by Year 7.

Tree City USA

**Challenge:** On July 23, 2003, the National Arbor Day Foundation (NADF), in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and National Association of State Foresters, designated the Town of Brighton as a “Tree City USA”. This status recognizes the Town’s commitment to manage and protect the beautiful trees that canopy our parks and neighborhoods. Tree City USA status encourages communities such as the Town to implement a tree management plan. Communities must meet the following four standards to maintain Tree City USA status:

- 1.) A Tree Council must be in place to administer the Town forestry program
- 2.) A tree ordinance must be in place, serving as the legal authority defining the rights and responsibilities of homeowners and Town officials
- 3.) Annually, \$2.00 per capita for tree care activities such as watering, pruning, pest control and removal must be included in the Town budget
- 4.) An annual Arbor Day ceremony must be observed to promote community pride and awareness of the Town’s tree resources

According to Town Councilwoman Sherry Kraus, who introduced the “Preservation of Tree Local Law” in 2001, “To live in a community that has been designated as a ‘Tree City USA’ is an honor that should make every Brighton resident proud and might help others realize that the protection and preservation of our beautiful foliage is a goal that requires shared community vision and a great deal of dedication.”

**Annual**

**Objective:** The Town will maintain Tree City USA status each year.

**Appendix 1**  
**Removal of Significant and Healthy Trees**

REMOVAL OF TREESUNDER SECTION 175.8 OF THE BRIGHTON TOWN TREE ORDINANCE

The tree ordinance is intended to preserve and protect town trees. In the case of significant trees (30" or more in diameter) and healthy trees, the cause for removal should be clear and compelling.

1. Dead, Diseased and Hazardous Trees

- a.. PUBLIC HEARING - The Town Commissioner of Public Works may remove any dead, diseased or hazardous tree without going to public hearing unless the tree is a "significant tree" (thirty inches or more in diameter), in which case, except for emergency work, the removal of the tree must go to the Town Board for a public hearing to determine if the Commissioner has shown good cause for the removal.
- b. REMOVAL OF TREE - Only the Commissioner of Public Works or his duly authorized agent may cut down, remove or destroy a town tree. However, in the case of a tree that is determined by the Commissioner to be dead, diseased or hazardous, a permit may be issued to a private homeowner to remove the tree at the homeowner's expense.
- c. NOTICE OF PROPOSED REMOVAL TO NEARBY PROPERTY OWNERS - Except for emergency work (such as the removal of a hazardous tree), thirty days prior written notice of a proposed removal of a town tree must be made to owners of the adjoining property on which the tree is located, or, in the case of the proposed removal of a significant town tree (thirty inches or more in diameter), notices need also to be sent to the owners of the property directly across from and contiguous to the adjoining property on which the tree is located. Any noticed property owner disagrees with the removal of the tree, that property owner will have thirty days from receipt of the written notice an opportunity to request that the Commissioner reconsider the proposed removal of the tree.
- d. REFERRAL TO TREE COUNCIL - The Commissioner may refer any proposed tree removal to the Town Tree Council for its review and recommendation. The Commissioner may also retain the services of a professional arborist for a determination regarding the health, hazard and/or value of the tree.

2. Healthy Trees

- a. Removal of Tree - Only the Commissioner of Public Works or his duly authorized agent may cut down, remove or destroy a healthy town tree. (Note that a homeowner may not be issued a permit to remove a healthy tree.)
- b. Notice of Proposed Removal - Thirty days prior written notice of a proposed removal of a town tree must be made to the owners of the adjoining property on which the tree is located, or, in the case of the proposed removal of a significant town tree (thirty inches or more in diameter), notices need also to be sent to the owners of the property directly across from and contiguous to the adjoining

property on which the tree is located. any noticed property owner disagrees with the removal of the tree, that property owner will have thirty days from receipt of the written notice an opportunity to request that the Commissioner reconsider the proposed removal of the tree.

- c. Referral To Tree Council - The Commissioner may refer any proposed tree removal to the Town Tree Council for its review and recommendation. The Commissioner may also retain the services of a professional arborist for a determination regarding the health, hazard and/or value of the tree.
- d. Public Hearing - The removal of any healthy tree, regardless of whether the tree is or is not a significant town tree (thirty inches or more), cannot be removed unless the Commissioner of Public Works finds that there is good cause for the removal of the tree and such recommendation has been found by the Town Council in a public hearing to be supported by good cause.
  - i. "Good Cause" - In determining whether there is "good cause" for the removal of a town tree, the Commissioner shall take into account the following factors. Good cause does not exist unless the factors supporting removal clearly and convincingly outweigh the factors against removal.
    - a. Quality of tree - The size, species, health, aesthetic qualities and value of the tree should be evaluated. The higher the quality of the tree, the greater the required showing to support removal of the tree.
    - b. Impact of tree removal on neighborhood tree canopy - Would the removal of the tree impact negatively impact on the overall tree canopy of the neighborhood or of the properties near the tree? Is the tree part of a planned design, such as a row of streetscape trees planted to enhance the street or neighborhood? Is the tree positioned as a "gateway" tree at the entry of the street?
    - c. Are there compelling reasons for the removal? - Removal of a tree (or trees) as part of an overall town pk re-design or as a necessity for a public works project could be a compelling reason for removal of the tree. Request by a homeowner for removal of a tree because the homeowner did not wish to rake the leaves would not be a compelling reason.
    - d. Are there other alternatives to removal of the tree - Can the problem be solved without removal of the tree?
    - e. Will there be a material hardship to the town or to the adjoining property owner if the tree is not removed?
    - f. If the removal is requested on the basis of material hardship, is the hardship a self-created hardship?

- g. Will the removal of the tree be in conflict with other town actions such as zoning board or planning board approvals based upon preserving or safeguarding the tree?

Example 1

The town is re-designing a park with a landscaping plan that will require the removal of trees in order to implement the new landscape design. The design takes into account the preservation of significant trees and other valuable landscaping features. In such case, there would be good cause for the removal of healthy trees.

Example 2

A town road project requires road work that will require the removal of a town tree. All alternatives for a re-design of the road project and/or measures to mitigate the impact on the tree have been evaluated and no alternatives are feasible to save the tree. In such case, there would be good cause for removal of the tree.

Example 3

A homeowner requests the removal of a town tree adjoining his property because he no longer wishes to rake the leaves or clean up the droppings from the tree. Such would not constitute good cause for removal of the tree.

Example 4

A homeowner builds a pool in the backyard of his corner lot within a short distance of a town tree. The homeowner received a variance from the Zoning Board to build the pool upon the condition that the excavation for the pool not injure the roots of the tree and that the tree be safeguarded in all respects. The homeowner now requests removal of the tree because the leaves and debris from the tree are dropping into his pool and detrimentally impacting his family's use of the pool. There would not be good cause for removal of the tree.

Example 5

A homeowner has had to modify her home to accommodate a disabled member of her household. The existing garage has been converted into a downstairs bedroom and a handicap ramp has been constructed to the porch. As a result, the homeowner needs to add a garage extension to the house and relocate the driveway in a manner which is presently blocked by a town tree. There is not sufficient front yard space to allow for a redesign of the driveway to avoid the tree. The tree is of below average quality and the neighborhood is otherwise well-treed. The removal of the tree will not be in conflict with a town zoning board decision granting a variance for the addition of the garage. Good cause for the removal of the tree has been shown.

- e. PROCESSING OF PRIVATE HOMEOWNER REQUEST FOR REMOVAL OF TREE -

Upon receiving a request from a homeowner to remove a Town tree, the Commissioner shall require that the homeowner compensate the Town for the cost of a professional arborist to make an independent evaluation of the health, quality and value of the tree. If it is ultimately determined by the Town that good cause has been shown for removal of the tree, the homeowner shall (1) pay the cost of a contractor retained by the Town to remove the tree and (2) reimburse the Town for the appraised value of the tree.

**Appendix 2**  
**Implementation Strategies**  
**and**  
**10 Year Timeline**

**Annual Objectives:**

- The Town will maintain Tree City USA status each year.
- Hold and Arbor Day ceremony each year.
- Generate annual work activity summaries for the past budget year and projections for the coming budget year.
- Apply the goals and policies set forth in the Forestry Plan to identify opportunities to build partnerships in managing and protecting the forest.
- Seek and obtain grant funding on an ongoing basis to assist in funding forestry management projects.
- Review of the Forestry Plan by the Tree Council.

**Year 1 Implementation Strategies:**

- Organize and hold an event celebrating the completion of the Town's first Forestry Plan.
- Publish the Town's forestry policies on the Town website.
- Publish the Town's forestry policies in the Townwide newsletter.
- Investigate revising the Town Code to authorize the Town to remove/treat a tree on private property that poses a significant threat to the health of the forest.
- Amend the Town Code Chapter 66 definitions of a "tree" and "woodlot" to better reflect standard forestry measurement practices.
- Develop a forestry activity operational schedule and divide the Town into forestry management areas.
- Complete a Townwide priority pruning and tree removal survey.

**Year 2 Implementation Strategies:**

- Develop a budget and work plan to address the needs identified in the priority pruning and tree removal survey.
- The Town will write activity procedures for data collection and recording, and forestry work activities.

**Year 3 Implementation Strategies:**

- Explore including tree care tips for residents in the forestry policy brochures or look for other methods to inform residents on proper tree care practices.
- The Town has begun implementation of the work plan to address the needs identified in the priority pruning and removal survey.
- Complete an analysis of the Town's forestry workload, staffing and assignments, and outsourcing to identify the most effective and efficient methods to meet workload requirements.
- The Town will develop a forestry emergency response plan.

**Year 4 Implementation Strategies:**

- Develop a program to solicit donations for tree planting in the Town.
- Develop and publish a brochure or series of brochures detailing the Town's forestry policies.
- Develop a program to identify and catalogue large, unique and historic trees in the Town.
- Create a tree planting trust fund to facilitate acceptance of donations for planting trees.

**Year 5 Implementation Strategies:**

- Develop a work activity notification program using the Town's various media.
- Develop and solicit a request for proposals to complete a Town tree inventory and provide tree inventory software.
- Investigate requiring tree services to provide proof of competency as part of the registration process as required by Chapter 175-11.
- The Town has developed a program to identify and reduce tree related risks on a regular basis.

**Year 6 Implementation Strategies:**

- An inventory of Town trees will be completed
- The Town has a computer software program designed to assist in managing Town trees and is integrated with the Town's Geographic Information System.

**Year 7 Implementation Strategies:**

- Develop a budget and work plan to address the needs identified in the tree inventory.
- The tree inventory is updated on a regular rotational schedule.

**Year 8 Implementation Strategies:**

- A Townwide rotational tree pruning program is implemented.
- The number of tree plantings completed each year exceeds the number of tree removals.

**Year 9 Implementation Strategy:**

- Appoint a Forestry Plan committee and begin review and development of a new 10 year Forestry Plan.

**Year 10 Implementation Strategy:**

- The Forestry Plan will be reviewed and a new plan developed.