

NJUCF Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP) Guidelines Guidance

1. Tips & Items to Consider for a Successful CFMP

- Try to think about the long term. In terms of your community, your tree resource, and other elements that influence urban forest management: what do you have? Where would you like to go? How might you get there, and what resources might you need? How can you build capacity to optimize the quantity, quality, and efficiency of the management necessary to reach your goals?
- Think of this Management Plan as a whole, not as individual sections. This way, you will facilitate management of your urban forest through identifying and incorporating resources, connections, partnerships, and common threads that comprise your community, while reducing friction that will prevent the achievement of your goals.
- Tree resource management **must** be tied to previous and/or existing tree inventory data. In order to manage your tree resource to some desired future state, you have to know the current state of your resource. This enables and empowers your community to engage in intentional, proactive management as opposed to reactive management.
- Therefore, the Elements, Objectives, and Action Items (Section 4a) pertaining to tree resource management should be directly informed by the inventory data collected in your community, reported under Urban Forest Structure, Composition, & Trends (Section 1d).
 - The data you currently have may not be current or comprehensive. In that case, you can consider adding Elements/Objectives that reflect the current status and build upon it to update and/or expand your current inventory.
- Elements, Objectives, and Action Items, are not limited to your tree resource. These items can pertain to any other section contained in the Guidelines (e.g., Plan Connections, Partnerships, Equipment, Training, Community Engagement). However, at minimum, plans should include and address the main numbered CFMP Elements in Appendix 4.
- Consider how you can utilize the resources you have available to bolster your current position.
 - For example, how could you strengthen relationships with local organizations or nonprofits in order to share your workload and/or ease the burden of resource management?
 - You might also consider explicitly planning to apply for and receive an NJUCF grant to facilitate the management of your urban forest.
- Think of this plan as dynamic and adaptable, rather than as a static document. It can, and should, change or be updated, relative to the conditions in your community. At any time, you may submit CFMP amendments to the NJUCF program – in fact, this is highly encouraged.

2. External Resources

A. Planning

Here, we've included some resources that may assist your community's urban & community forest management conceptualization. These guides each played a role in shaping the current version of the guidelines and will serve as valuable resources for your community.

i. Sustainable Forestry Initiative's Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standards

Our CFMP guidelines are aligned in many ways with various sections in the [Sustainable Forestry Initiative's Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standards](#). We believe this demonstrates our alignment with an international standard, and we'd like to present this resource as a way to help conceptualize urban and community forestry in a complementary manner to our guidelines.

ii. Urban Forest Management: A Primer to Strategic Planning for Municipal Governments

The University of Florida's School of Forest, Fisheries & Geomatics Sciences produced a 2022 guide, [Urban Forest Management: A Primer to Strategic Planning for Municipal Governments](#). We feel this resource may assist communities, as it provides a comprehensive way to conceptualize and approach urban forest planning and management, strategically, from top-to-bottom. There are many themes included that your community could incorporate in your planning process. Specifically, this framework guides a long-term vision for sustainable planning, community engagement and participation, governmental partnerships, and conceptualization of the urban forest as a system comprised of social-economic, governance, and ecological components.

iii. The Sustainable Urban Forest – A Step-by-Step Approach

The Davey Institute's 2016 guide, [The Sustainable Urban Forest – A Step-by-Step Approach](#) is designed to assist municipalities in assessing their urban forest, identify management concerns, and create a path toward long-term sustainability in a step-by-step fashion. Included are methods to establish community objectives and systematically assess progress toward these aims. This is another great resource to check out if you're considering increasing collaboration and strategic approaches to urban forest resource management in your community.

B. Other Resources

[Vibrant Cities Lab](#) – Comprehensive guide from the U.S. Forest Service provides a roadmap for putting green infrastructure to work in your community.

[Rutgers Forest Adapt](#) – a mapping interface that allows you to visualize various data layers relevant to forest management, including climate, forest characteristics, land use, and more.

[i-Tree](#) – peer-reviewed software suite from the USDA Forest Service that provides urban and rural forest analysis and benefits assessment tools. The i-Tree tools can help strengthen forest management and advocacy efforts by quantifying forest structure and the dollar value of environmental benefits that trees provide.

[Sustainable Jersey](#) – Sustainable Jersey provides tools, training and financial incentives to support communities as they pursue sustainability programs. They have a [Resources page](#), which links to data files and interactive maps processed and prepared by Sustainable Jersey. The program includes a number of urban and community forestry “actions,” or best practices and standards for municipalities. Your municipality can earn points in this program by completing this Community Forest Management Plan and fulfilling the other requirements for maintaining accreditation in the New Jersey Urban and Community Forestry Program.

[American Forest’s Tree Equity Score Map](#) – The Tree Equity Score is based on tree canopy and surface temperature in conjunction with income, employment, race, age and health factors in the U.S.

[NJ Overburdened Communities](#) – New Jersey’s Environmental Justice Law, N.J.S.A. 13:1D-157, et seq. creates a definition to identify populations who are likely to be affected by environmental injustice. This link contains lists and maps of “Overburdened Communities” according to criteria listed on the site.

[Water Resources Program at Rutgers NJAES](#) – The water resources program engages and empowers communities to employ practical science-based solutions to address water resource issues throughout NJ. In coordination with the NJFS, this program has developed guidance better design and implementation of stormwater tree bed practices.

[NJ MAP](#) – is an interactive atlas for ecological resources, environmental education and sustainable communities. The Geospatial Research Lab at Rowan University’s Department of Geography, Planning and Sustainability created this free online map viewer to connect NJ citizens, municipalities and advocacy groups with real time geospatial tools to support their planning and conservation efforts.

3. Examples of Overall Program Goals, Elements, Objectives, and Action Items

In this section, we recap the definitions for Overall Program Goals, Elements, Objectives, and Action Items, and provide examples of each. Keep in mind, the lists below provide only a few examples; your CFMP should include as many of each as is relevant for your community's needs for the next 5 years.

- **Overall Program Goals**: overarching Goals that comprise a future vision of your community, program, and its trees.
- **Elements**: Elements are components of your urban and community forest you'd like to manage in this 5-year plan.
- **Objectives**: milestones set to help you reach your Overall Program Goals under the frame of each Element.
- **Action Items**: specific, measurable actions nested under each Objective that will allow you to achieve these Objectives for each Element.

Examples

1e. Overall Program Goals

1. Create and maintain a thriving, healthy, and resilient urban forest
2. Create a sense of community and support for our urban forest
3. Improve the quality of the tree resource for all members of our community

4a. Element, Objectives, and Action Items

Element 1: Tree Resource Management

Objective 1: Increase and maintain canopy cover over the next 10 years

Action Item 1a. Conduct a tree inventory to understand the municipal tree resource (2024)

Action Item 1b. Plant 50 trees in [name] neighborhood, in which there is a lack of canopy cover (Spring, 2025)

Action Item 1c. Plant 100 trees in [name] Park (Fall, 2026)

Action Item 1d. Using the data collected in our inventory, conduct routine maintenance, and remove hazardous trees (Annually)

Element 2: Community Engagement

Objective 1: Understand public values and concerns regarding the community's urban forest

Action Item 1a. Host regular, open town hall style/stakeholder meetings to allow community members to provide input for urban forest issues and management (Spring and Fall, Annually).

To make this an inclusive and equitable process, we will endeavor to reach, involve, and represent residents who are currently marginalized or who face communication gaps (e.g., those who are not proficient in English, have limited mobility, or experience impaired vision or hearing).

Action Item 1b. Host community events that promote and celebrate urban forest resources, including Arbor Day (Spring, Annually)

Action Item 1c. Post updates and newsletters on our website and social media accounts (Quarterly)

Element 3: Community Forestry Program Capacity

Objective 1: Improve partnerships in our community to increase program capacity

Action Item 1a. Collaborate with the Department of Engineering to share and improve our GIS capabilities (2025)

Action Item 1b. Engage [name], a local nonprofit, to build community partnerships and capacity for urban forest stewardship and maintenance activities (2025)

Objective 2: Continue and enhance professional development

Action Item 2a. Send 5 DPW members to education and training events related to tree planting, young tree pruning and care, and maintenance, to help with our action item of planting over 150 new trees in year two of this plan. (Annually)

Action Item 2b. Send 3 Shade Tree Commission members to Core Training (Oct 2024, 2025)

Action Item 2c. Send DPW and Commission members to training events related to inventory management, as one of the main action items of this plan is to conduct an inventory.