

Charles Town Tree Master Plan

Priority administrative tasks & projects for 2023

January 5th, 2023
Mayor and City Council,

We would like to start with thanking you for the opportunity to serve on the City of Charles Town Tree Board. It is our honor to assist our community with the critical tasks of planting, protecting, and maintaining our City's trees.

Our 2022 Master Plan was overwhelmingly successful. Here are just a few of our successes from this year:

- Maintained our Tree City USA status for the 10th year and received national recognition.
- Hosted a community Arbor Day event at Willingham Knolls park and planted 17 trees.
- Collaborated with Shepherd University to plant trees with a grant totaling \$4,900 from WV Division of Forestry and planted 30 trees throughout the City in April of 2022. These trees were planted as part of a research study that Dr. Campany of Shepherd University conducted regarding tree growth in urban areas.
- Developed a Landmark Trees Program to recognize trees of significance in our community.

We seek to build on these successes in 2023 and continue addressing our community's tree-related concerns and interests; create a healthier, more vibrant community through community forestry; provide educational and volunteer opportunities for our citizens; and increase tree canopy throughout our City.

As per our City's Ordinance Article 1104 Trees, one of our duties as a board is "to prepare and update, annually, a written City-wide "Tree Master Plan" that guides the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal, or disposition of trees on public lands; such plan shall consider existing and future utility locations and environmental factors in relation to existing and future tree species on public or private lands, as provided in this article or other ordinances; such plan shall also provide a status report of "Landmark Trees" within the City; such plan shall be recommended to the Mayor and Council and, upon their acceptance and approval, shall be implemented as the "Tree Master Plan."

The recommended priority actions on the following pages reflect the conversations we've had as a board, as well as conversations that our community has had with us as friends and neighbors. However, at this moment, they are only that – recommendations.

We have grouped our recommended priority actions into two categories – “Administrative”, which will need to be addressed within the Board itself or at the staff or Council level, and “Projects”, which are implementable projects throughout our community. Each has a priority ranking; estimated timeframe for completion; a generalized, estimated cost; and a Tree Board member lead.

This list conveys our values and what we want to achieve moving forward, but they can only be achieved with your input, acceptance, and ultimate approval.

We respectfully submit the following Charles Town Tree Master Plan and sincerely look forward to working with you on implementing these recommended priority actions.

Charles Town Tree Board,
Aaron Amore, Chair
Katie Coon
Jane King
Betsy Wells
Elizabeth Ricketts

Administrative

Maintain Tree City USA Status

There are 4 Standards that must be met prior to re-applying for Tree City USA designation:

1. City must have a Tree Board or a Forestry Department
2. City must have a tree care ordinance
 3. City must have a community forestry program with a budget of at least \$2 per capita
 4. City must have an annual Arbor Day observance and proclamation

In 2022, The City of Charles Town attained Tree City USA for the 10th time in the City's history. We received national recognition for reaching this milestone. The Tree Board will work with staff and City Council and WV Division of Forestry on reapplying to maintain this status with the Arbor Day Foundation. Visit the [Arbor Day Foundation](#) website for more details.

- Priority: High
- Estimated Time Frame: January 2023
- Estimated Cost: No costs beyond the \$2/capita that is already budgeted for contracted tree costs
- Tree Board Lead: Katie

Tree Canopy Survey

Seek and obtain funding for a Tree Canopy Survey within the 2023 calendar year. Several companies offer such surveys through an Urban Tree Canopy assessment. The purpose of such of survey would assist in the following areas:

- assessing defensible space around buildings to reduce wildfire risk
- mapping risks to utility infrastructure like powerlines
- modeling of tree services like air and water pollution mitigation
- measuring carbon storage and sequestration
- wildfire modeling
- assessing tree risks to residential properties
- creating and analyzing forest inventory
- measuring agroforestry resources in rural landscapes

Benefits come in many forms, such as energy conservation and the improved physical and psychological health of the people within these urban environments. The CTTB is in the process of obtaining estimates for a Tree Canopy Survey, utilizing its non-for-profit status and will seek outside funding, including but not limited to grants, awards and fundraisers. CTTB reserves the right to request matching or additional funds from the City Council if necessary.

- Priority: High
- Estimated Time Frame: by end of 2023
- Estimated Cost: Unknown
- Tree Board Lead: Aaron Amore

Finalize Landmark Trees Program

We have researched and drawn upon the expertise of the many Landmark Tree programs across the country and tailored it to our community. We have created an online form and a printable brochure for citizens to apply.

Our plan for the landmark trees program is to distribute this brochure ([link](#)) on the city's website and social media. We will use this form ([link](#)) to collect applications for it. We have a goal of recognizing at least 10 trees in 2023 that people nominate for this.

- Priority: Medium

- **Estimated Time Frame: January 2023**
- **Estimated Cost: None**
- **Tree Board Lead: Katie**

Create list of trees for Charles Town

City staff has expressed interest in receiving support from the Tree Board in creating a list of trees for planting in Charles Town. This will aid staff in providing guidance on landscaping plans during development projects, with the added benefit of being a useful resource for the Tree Board in our projects and an educational resource for the community as a whole.

Generally speaking, considerations of what makes trees appropriate for planting, beyond being non-invasive, include the presence of above ground power lines or below ground utilities; the size of the planting area; the shape of the tree crown; growth habitat; diseases; and others.

The Tree Board will assist City Staff with this task, with a valuable first step being to collect similar resources that are already available for our region. At a minimum, we can review, and if necessary, refine the City's existing list of "Prohibited Species" found in the City's "Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance".

- **Priority: Medium**
- **Estimated Time Frame: Fall 2023**
- **Estimated Cost: None**
- **Tree Board Lead: Betsy**

Projects

Tree Inventory/Mapping

There are three main types of inventories: sample, partial, and complete.

1. A sample inventory is conducted on a random sample of street segments, blocks, road miles, or area to provide an estimate for the urban forest. Typically, the sample is 3-10%. The sample can also be stratified.
2. A partial inventory is conducted on a specific non-random area. It may be a geographic area, such as a downtown. It may be a phased inventory where different areas are collected at different times, with the goal of each phase eventually comprising a complete inventory. A survey collects a few attributes over a large area, even the entire municipality. Surveys are often conducted by vehicle.
3. A complete inventory includes all street trees, sometimes all park trees and trees on municipal properties, and often includes available planting locations and stumps.

CTTB seeks to create a complete tree inventory to the greatest extent possible. An example of such a tree inventory is seen in the following link which shows a complete tree inventory for the WVU Campus in Charleston, WV. <https://pg-cloud.com/WVSU/https://pg-cloud.com/WVSU/> Such an inventory would require the services of one or more companies in combination with several tools by which data is retrieved. Applications designed to be used with smartphones can be used by multiple persons to obtain and gather real time information about trees in our community. CTTB sees this as an opportunity for direct outreach to its citizens and to incorporate this as an educational component for our school aged residents. City employees can also participate as they access all areas of the City, many on a routine basis. A cell phone application can gather an image of the tree, determine its genus and species and accurately locate the tree using the phone's GPS coordinates. Appropriate waivers/consents would need to be required for those under 18 years to participate.

Purpose: Identification of the City's tree inventory will not only identify the type of trees in the community but will assess the overall health of the trees. This will enable City maintenance to be aware of diseased or dying trees that might create a hazardous condition or situation. It can also

identify invasive species which can be removed to prevent further spread of such trees to the detriment of native trees.

- Priority: High
- Estimated Time Frame: by end of 2023
- Estimated Cost: Unknown
- Tree Board Lead: Aaron C. Amore

Arbor Day Celebration

CTTB seeks to promote its Arbor Day Celebration through the following means:

1. Planting of a Tree
2. Session/class with an Arborist on planting, care and pruning trees growing in their yards for Charles Town Citizens. This workshop may be facilitated by certified ISA Arborists with WV Division of Forestry.
3. Educational program for young persons, including a nature walk, artistic activities and possibly a sponsored event by a local business or businesses.

In order to maintain our Tree City USA status we also need a Mayoral proclamation.

- Priority: High
- Estimated Time Frame: April 2023
- Estimated Cost: None
- Tree Board Lead: TBD

Poster Contest

We would like to hold an art poster contest for school aged children in Charles Town with the theme of “Charles Town is Wonder-FALL”. Art will be displayed downtown in windows and a winner will be chosen.

- Priority: Medium
- Estimated Time Frame: Sept/Oct 2023
- Estimated Cost: None
- Tree Board Lead: Jane

Cost-share Tree Planting Program for Private Residents

The Charles Town Tree Board plans to apply for Cacapon Institute’s “Your Community BMP” program in fall 2023. Through this program, up to 18 residents can sign-up to purchase up to two trees each at the discounted rate of \$25/tree. The trees will be in 5-7 gallon containers and approximately 6-8’ tall. Each tree comes with two wooden stakes, a plastic bark protector, and a section of arbor tie.

City staff assistance will be needed to collect the payments and subsequently send those funds to Cacapon Institute. The City will incur no costs for participating in this program. The Tree Board has approximately \$800 in the City’s budget from conducting this project in fall 2021 that may be used to support a similar initiative in 2023.

Trees will be picked up by City maintenance personnel from the WV Division of Forestry office in Inwood and delivered to residents houses at a date TBD in October-November.

- Priority: High
- Estimated Time Frame: October-November 2023
- Estimated Cost: None
- Tree Board Lead: TBD

Tree Maintenance and Removal

The Tree Board will assist City staff and Council with making recommendations on cost-sharing on said requests. Funding for these maintenance & removal tasks will be paid for through the City's budget for contracted tree services, which is currently funded at \$12,000.

- Priority: High
- Estimated Time Frame: On-going
- Estimated Cost: TBD, but out of \$12,000 budget for contracted tree removal
- Tree Board Lead: City Staff

Tree Dedication Program

CTTB would like to work on creating a program, possibly in partnership with local mortuaries, for community members to be able to purchase a tree and have it planted in memory of a loved one.

- Priority: Medium
- Estimated Time Frame:
- Estimated Cost: None
- Tree Board Lead: TBD

Appendix 1 – Table of Priority Administrative Tasks (grey) & Projects (green)

Task	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Maintain Tree City	Katie											
Tree Maintenance Program	TBD											
Arbor Day Celebration	TBD											
Poster Contest						Jane						
Tree List						Betsy						
Landmark Trees Program						Katie						
Cost-Share Tree Planting						TBD						
Tree Dedication Program			Aaron									
Tree Pruning Workshop			Aaron									
Tree Survey/Inventory				Aaron								
Tree Maintenance requests			City Staff with Tree Board support									