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# COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

*(Prepared in accordance with NJSA 13:1L-17.1 et seq.)*

**2026 TO 2030**

## VERONA TOWNSHIP SHADE COMMISSION

600 Bloomfield Ave  
Verona, NJ 07044

**Prepared: February 09, 2025**

**For the time period 1/1/2026 to 1/1/2031**

**Essex County, New Jersey**

Mayor and Council:

Christopher H. Tamburro, *Mayor*

Alex Roman, Christine McGrath, Cynthia Holland, Jack McEvoy *Councilmen/women*

Township Manager:

Kevin O'Sullivan

Deputy:

Michael Kraus

Department of Public Works:

Chuck Molinaro, *Superintendent*

Planning Board:

Dee Dee Carpinelli, *Secretary*

Shade Tree Commission:

Carol Thomas, *Chair*

Christine McGrath, *Council Representative*

Robert Prout, Ira Jacobs, Diane Conboy, Catherine Tamasik, Kathy Rutherford and Val Ryan,  
*Committee Members*

**Prepared by:**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Plan seeks to guide management of Township-owned trees and Street trees, in pursuit of compliance with best practices, in order to improve the quality of life within the Township while reducing risk. This Plan analyzes the Township's policies, structure, and resources (to the extent that quantitative information on Township tree resources exist), ultimately recommending courses of action appropriate for the Township and the scope of the challenges ahead.

The objectives set forth by the Township and its Shade Tree Commission indicate that most community forestry activities will focus on identifying and removing risk trees, followed by replanting to replace those that were removed and lastly annual pruning. This process will be carried out systematically based on the condition rating assigned to each tree. The goal is to maintain and expand the urban canopy by planting new trees in place of any trees that were removed, and in locations where no trees are presently growing. This effort aims to create a seamless connection between living and working spaces and the natural environment. To accomplish this, the Plan outlines effective silvicultural and arboricultural techniques that adhere to best practices, such as diversifying tree resources and strategically selecting the appropriate species for each location. Additionally, it includes processes for managing and caring for both existing and future trees, as well as training protocols for Township volunteers and staff. Implementing these activities will help achieve the stated objectives, including enhancing environmental quality and the economic value of property in the Township. Whenever feasible, the Plan recommends engaging with and educating Township residents, including initiatives to inform private property owners about the numerous benefits of street trees. Furthermore, it ensures that both Township employees and volunteers receive comprehensive training, providing that employees complete the necessary continuing education units to maintain their certifications.

The Plan adopts a logical approach to formulate its management recommendations. It takes into account the history and geology of the Township, along with relevant laws and policies, such as the NJ Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act. Additionally, a qualitative inventory of the Township's tree resources has been conducted, although it does not encompass all the trees on township-owned land. The Township has identified as the next priority an inventory of the street trees on County roads, in particular, Bloomfield Avenue. The current inventory includes details such as the GPS location, address, species name, common name, condition rating, the size of each tree as well as its potential size, along with additional notes stating what maintenance is needed and any other conditions affecting the tree, such as pests or disease. This information aids greatly in budgeting and stormwater management considerations.

Specifically, this Plan recommends that at-risk trees be removed whenever deemed necessary, and semiannually updating the current inventory data to reflect those changes. Following a tree removal, tree planting will be considered to mitigate the loss of the tree removed. Annual pruning is recommended to reduce injury to people, and property, and for the overall health and resilience of the trees. The Township's budget includes funding for tree removals, tree planting and pruning. It is recommended that the Township also seek additional funding through grants whenever possible. Additional recommendations include community engagement activities and sharing of model ordinances and best practices created by outside agencies or organizations with the Mayor and Council.

All of these forestry activities, current and proposed, demonstrate the Township's desire to actively manage its community forest resource for the economic and environmental benefit of residents and business owners, and to manage tree risk at an acceptable level.

# Appendix 1. Municipal/County Information Form

Municipality Township of Verona

County Essex


Address 600 Bloomfield Avenue  
Verona, NJ 07044

Contact Name and Title Kevin O'Sullivan, Township Manager

Phone # 973-239-3220

Fax # and E-mail kosullivan@veronaNj.org

Organization Name Verona Shade Tree Commission

Mayor/County Commissioner's  
Signature 

Date of Management Plan  
Submission April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Time Period Covered in  
Management Plan January 1, 2026 – January 1, 2030

## Official Office Use Only

The above-named municipality/county has made formal application to the New Jersey Forestry Service. I am pleased to advise you that after our review, the NJ Forestry Service has concluded that this plan meets the standards set forth by the State and the NJ Community Forestry Council and is approved for the period covered.

Signed Todd Wyckoff 6/22/2026  
State Forester Approved Date

# Section 1: Overview, History and Background Information

## A) **Mission Statement**

"Verona cultivates a thriving, sustainable community forest by implementing state-sanctioned standards and securing the necessary investment to protect our trees and residents. We are committed to maximizing the beauty and safety of our trees to enrich the quality of life in our township."

## B) **Liability Statement**

Although Verona's street trees are undeniably a major environmental, aesthetic, and economic asset to the community, it is an inevitable reality that as they mature, they will require consistent care, proactive maintenance, and eventual replacement. A dedicated program of care and maintenance, when coupled with the critical principle of planting "the right tree in the right place," can help ensure that our community trees not only contribute maximally to the environmental health and economic vitality of the Verona area but also simultaneously minimize and mitigate potential hazards to public safety and property.

Verona, like many communities, faces constraints related to annual budget allocations, limitations in specialized staffing, and competing public works priorities. Furthermore, the sheer volume of our existing tree canopy, along with the immediate needs identified through preliminary surveys, means our community may not be able to immediately meet every single care and maintenance need of our extensive community forest.

Therefore, it is the fundamental intent of this comprehensive Forestry Management Plan to focus available, limited resources toward the areas of greatest need and highest risk in a deliberate, step-by-step fashion. This planned approach will systematically work toward achieving a healthier, more resilient, and more sustainable community forest with commensurate, measurable reductions in risk to public safety and municipal liability exposure.

## **Our Core Program Goals and Objectives:**

To achieve this vision, Verona plans to adopt the following core program goals and measurable objectives:

1. **Systematic Risk Reduction:** Implement a town-wide, cyclical hazardous tree assessment and pruning program, focusing initially on high-traffic areas and major thoroughfares to immediately address and reduce the most imminent threats.
2. **Proactive Inventory and Data Management:** Complete and maintain a comprehensive, digitally mapped inventory of all public street trees to inform data-driven decisions on planting, pruning cycles, and removal priorities.
3. **Sustainable Canopy Health:** Establish a multi-year pruning cycle for all mature street trees to maintain structural integrity, improve tree health, and prevent premature failure.
4. **Strategic Replenishment and Diversification:** Annually replace removed trees and strategically plant new trees to increase species diversity, expand the total canopy cover, and ensure resilience against future pests or diseases (e.g., Emerald Ash Borer).

We firmly believe that by taking the systematic steps outlined in this Management Plan, including the implementation of the town-wide hazard assessment program and the establishment of a regular pruning cycle, we will not only make tangible improvements to our physical environment but also successfully garner public understanding and support for plan implementation.

We are shifting from a reactive operational model to a proactive tree management and care strategy. Consistent inventories, systematic hazard assessments, and established maintenance schedules will enable Verona to anticipate problems and take corrective action before structural failure, limb drop, or other tree-related hazards occur.

Proactive maintenance, while dramatically reducing risk, cannot eliminate all unpredictable hazardous conditions or tree failures from extreme weather or sudden disease. By diligently following this Management Plan, Verona is dedicating reasonable, planned resources, which will systematically reduce tree-related accidents, minimize liabilities, and increase the safety of all residents and visitors.

## C) **Community Overview**

### **Community Description and Urban Forest Resource**

The Township of Verona is a fully developed suburban municipality located in the north-central portion of Essex County, New Jersey, encompassing approximately 2.79 square miles. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Verona has a population of 14,572 residents. Land use within the Township is predominantly residential, consisting of approximately 3,622 single-family residential lots, with limited multi-family and commercial development. Public parks and open space total approximately 296.6 acres and represent a significant component of the Township's overall urban forest resource and tree canopy.

Due to the Township's built-out condition and limited vacant land, Verona's urban forest consists largely of street trees, park trees, and trees located on private residential property, rather than large contiguous forested areas. The Township recognizes these trees as critical green infrastructure that provide environmental, social, and economic benefits, including stormwater management, erosion control, air quality improvement, energy conservation, habitat value, and community character, as articulated in the purposes of the Township's tree protection ordinance (§493-17).

Verona is geographically situated within the valley formed by the First and Second Watchung Mountains, with the Peckman River running through the Township. This varied topography includes steep slopes, upland residential areas, and lower-lying flood-prone zones, all of which influence tree establishment, species selection, maintenance needs, and long-term survival. These site constraints require careful coordination between land use regulation and tree management, particularly during construction and redevelopment activities (§493-20; §493-22). The Township maintains approximately 35 miles of local roadways and an additional five miles of county and state highways, which are important corridors for street trees but also present challenges related to utilities, soil volume, and roadway safety.

Significant parklands within and adjacent to Verona include Essex County's Verona Park and Hilltop Reservation, as well as the adjacent Cedar Grove Park. These county-owned open spaces contribute to regional canopy continuity, habitat connectivity, and overall urban forest health, while complementing the Township's locally managed tree resources.

## **Urban Forest Management Program, Ordinances, and Community Engagement**

Verona Township has demonstrated a long-standing and continuous commitment to urban forest management, including participation in organized shade tree management since the mid-20th century. The Township Shade Tree Commission was established by ordinance on June 7, 1955, and serves as the primary advisory body responsible for recommending policies, programs, and practices related to the planting, care, preservation, and removal of public shade trees (§18-1 et seq.).

The Township adopted its first tree protection ordinance in 1961, followed by regulations governing tree removal on Township-owned property in 1964. These early efforts have evolved into a comprehensive and enforceable regulatory framework governing tree protection, removal, and replacement on both public and private property. Current regulations are codified in Chapter 493, Article II of the Township Code, which was most recently amended in its entirety by Ordinance No. 2023-06 (§493-17).

Chapter 493 establishes clear standards and management authority for the protection of the urban forest, including requirements for tree removal permits, limitations on the annual removal of healthy mature trees, protections for significant and extraordinary trees, and mandatory tree protection measures during construction activities (§493-18; §493-19; §493-20; §493-21). The ordinance also requires replacement planting based on the size and type of trees removed, prioritizes native and non-invasive species, and ensures that canopy loss is mitigated through on-site replacement or contributions to the Township Tree Replacement Fund when necessary (§493-28; §493-29).

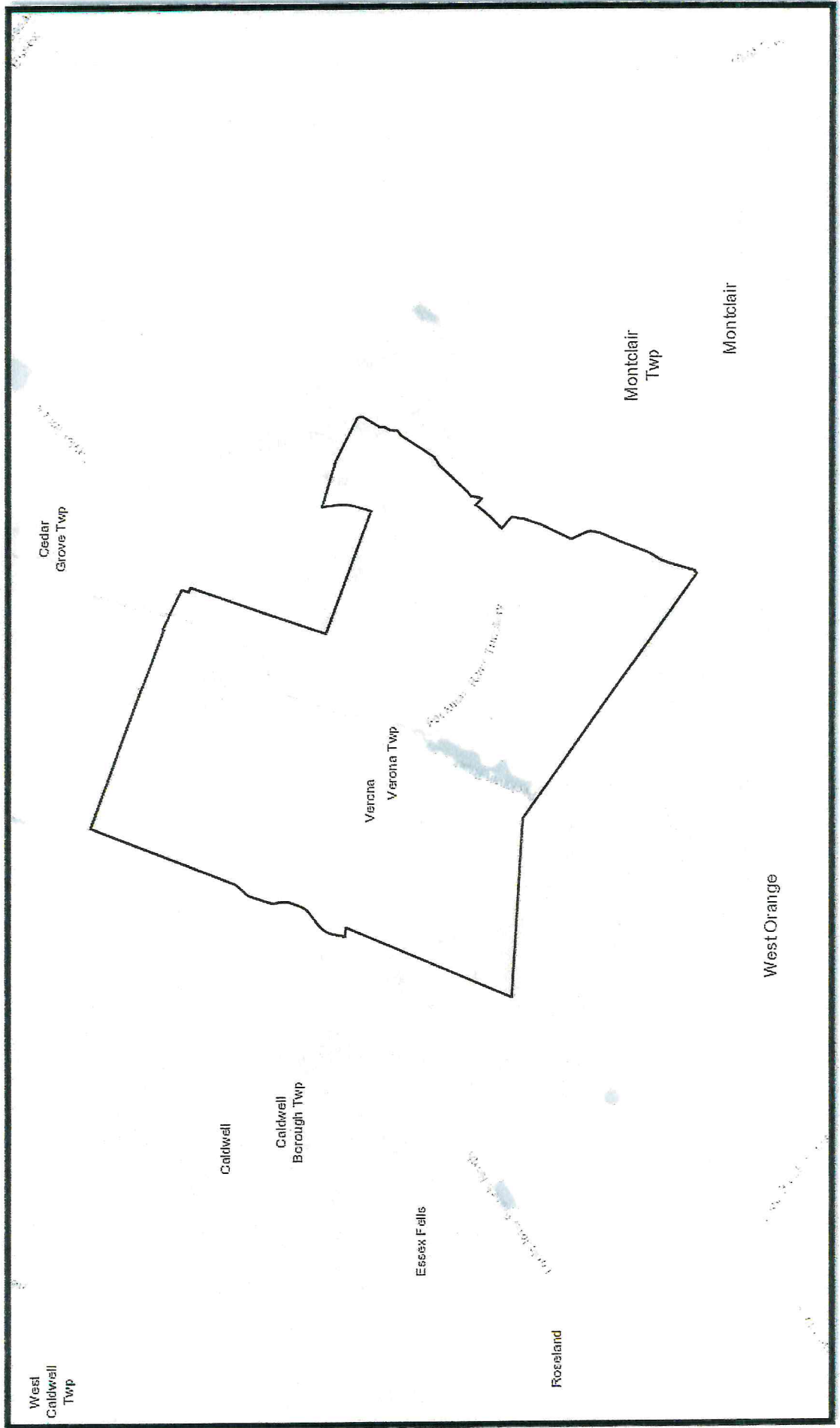
The Township's urban forestry program emphasizes shared stewardship and public engagement. Property owners are required to coordinate with Township officials, the Township Forester, and the Shade Tree Commission when proposing tree removal or site disturbance (§493-21; §493-24). Public hearings before the Planning Board are required when removal thresholds are exceeded, ensuring transparency and community involvement in decisions affecting the urban forest (§493-24). Contractor registration, inspection authority, and enforcement provisions further support consistent implementation of tree protection standards (§493-26; §493-31).

### **Support for Community Forestry Management Plan Implementation**

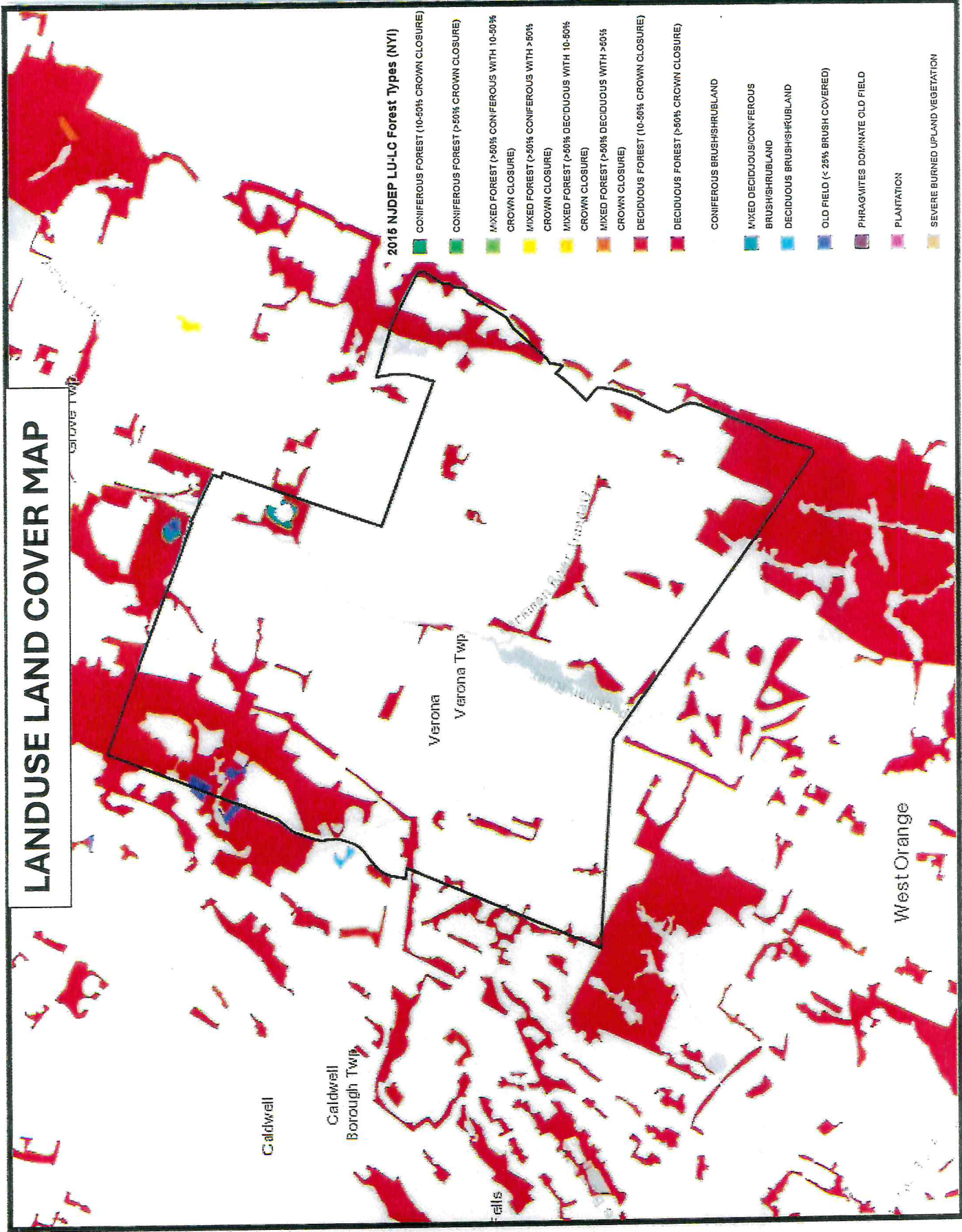
Through its established Shade Tree Commission, comprehensive tree protection ordinance, dedicated Tree Replacement Fund, and coordination with land-use boards and municipal staff, Verona Township has the organizational structure, legal authority, and community support necessary to implement and sustain a Community Forestry Management Plan. These mechanisms allow the Township to inventory, manage, protect, and enhance its urban forest resource over time, align tree management with broader planning and environmental goals, and maintain eligibility for state and federal urban forestry assistance programs.

This integrated approach supports the long-term health, diversity, and resilience of Verona's urban forest and reflects the Township's commitment to meeting the standards and objectives of the New Jersey Urban & Community Forestry Program.

# TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY MAP



# LANDUSE LAND COVER MAP



## 2015 NJDEP LU/LC Forest Types (NYI)

- CONIFEROUS FOREST (10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- CONIFEROUS FOREST (>50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- MIXED FOREST (>50% CONIFEROUS WITH 10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- MIXED FOREST (>50% CONIFEROUS WITH >50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- MIXED FOREST (>50% DECIDUOUS WITH 10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- MIXED FOREST (>50% DECIDUOUS WITH >50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- DECIDUOUS FOREST (10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- DECIDUOUS FOREST (>50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- CONIFEROUS BRUSHSHRUBLAND
- MIXED DECIDUOUS/CONIFEROUS BRUSHSHRUBLAND
- DECIDUOUS BRUSHSHRUBLAND
- OLD FIELD (< 25% BRUSH COVERED)
- PHRAGMITES DOMINATE OLD FIELD
- PLANTATION
- SEVERE BURNED UPLAND VEGETATION

Caldwell

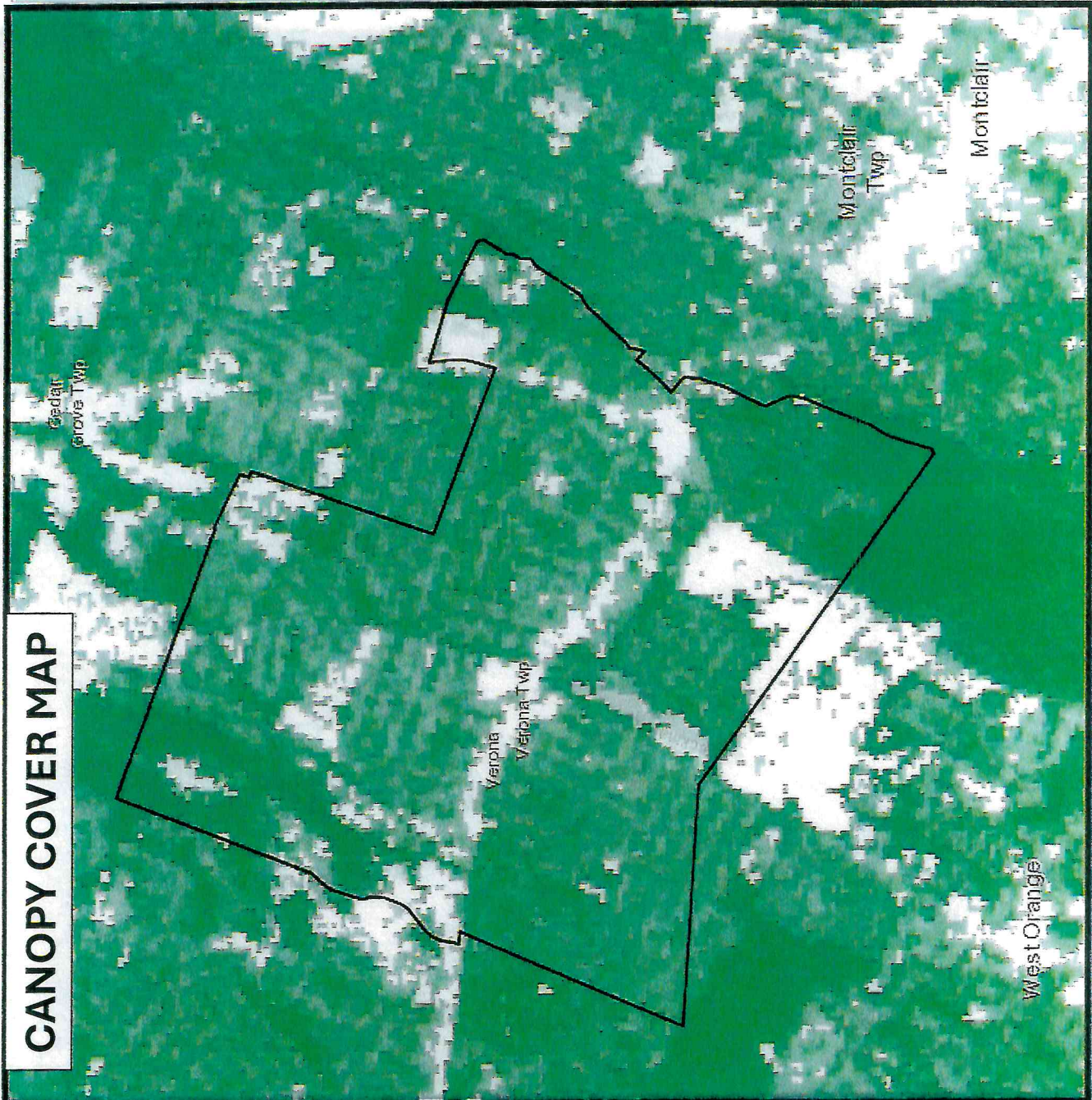
Caldwell  
Borough Twip

Verona  
Verona Twip

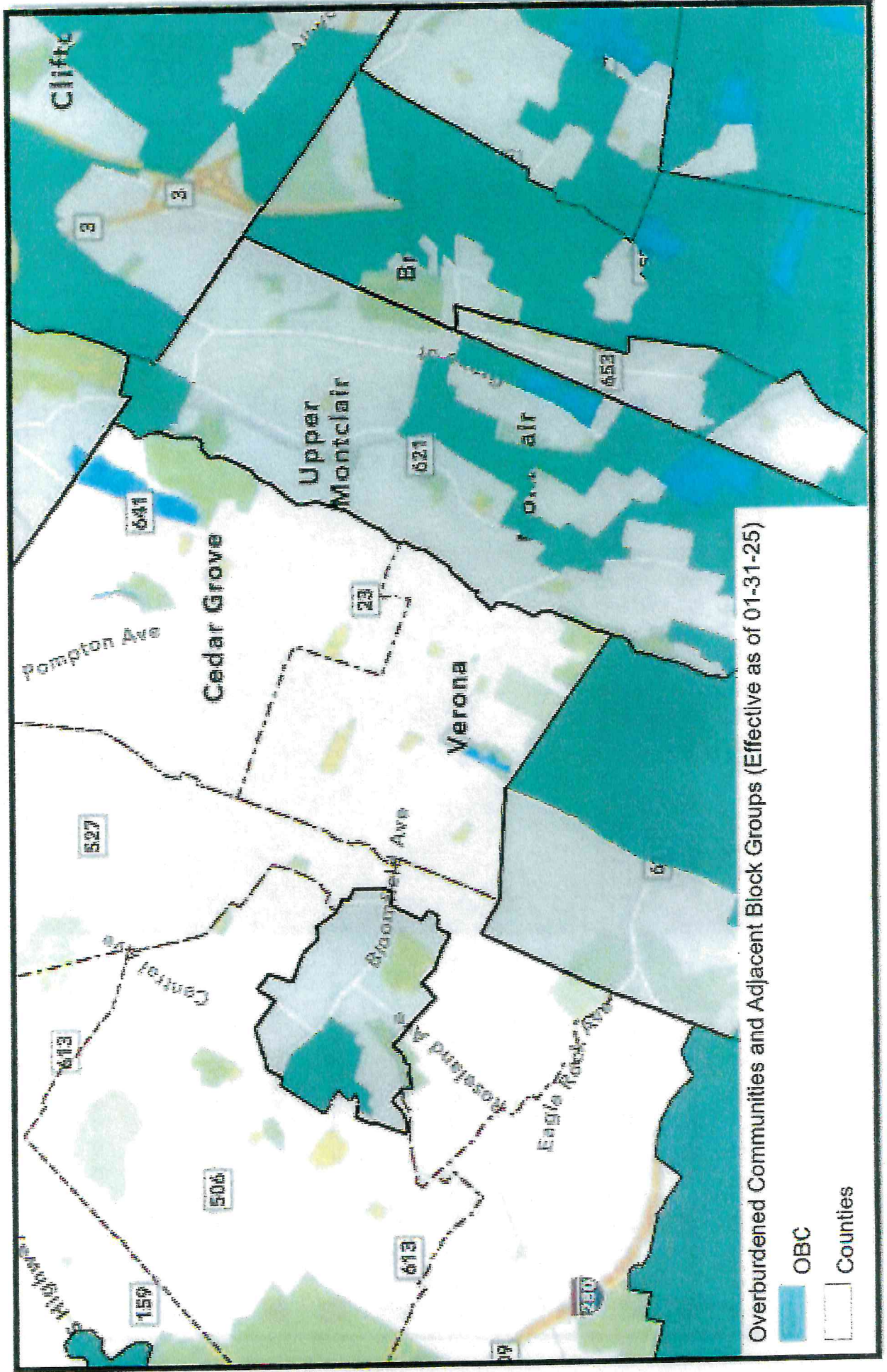
West Orange

# CANOPY COVER MAP

- 2015 NJDEP LU-LC Forest Types (NY1)**
-  CONIFEROUS FOREST (10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
  -  CONIFEROUS FOREST (>50% CROWN CLOSURE)
  -  MIXED FOREST (>50% CONIFEROUS WITH 10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
  -  MIXED FOREST (>50% CONIFEROUS WITH >50% CROWN CLOSURE)
  -  MIXED FOREST (>50% DECIDUOUS WITH 10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
  -  MIXED FOREST (>50% DECIDUOUS WITH >50% CROWN CLOSURE)
  -  DECIDUOUS FOREST (10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
  -  DECIDUOUS FOREST (>50% CROWN CLOSURE)
  -  CONIFEROUS BRUSH/SHRUBLAND
  -  MIXED DECIDUOUS/CONIFEROUS BRUSH/SHRUBLAND
  -  DECIDUOUS BRUSH/SHRUBLAND
  -  OLD FIELD (< 25% BRUSH COVERED)
  -  PHRAGMITES DOMINATE OLD FIELD
  -  PLANTATION
  -  SEVERE BURNED UPLAND VEGETATION



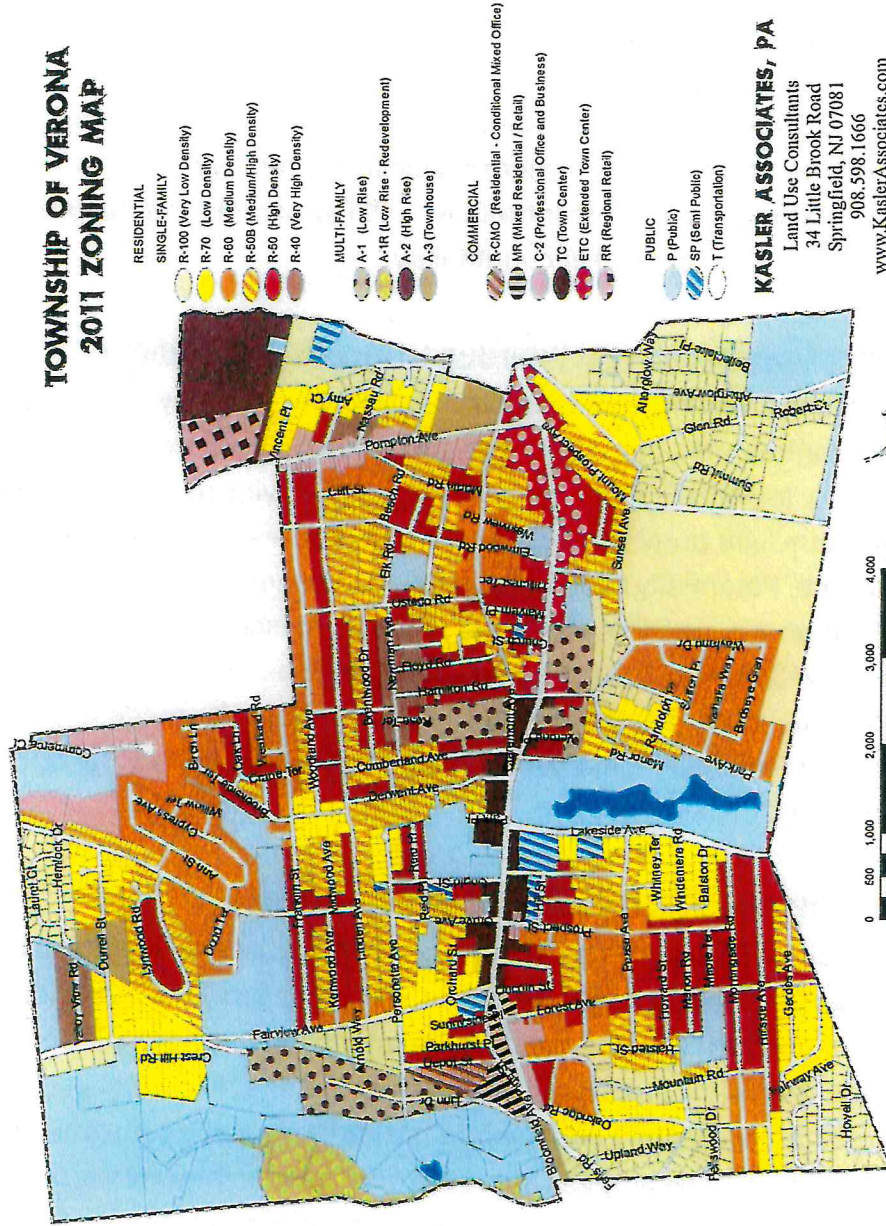
# OVERBURDENED COMMUNITIES MAP



# ZONING MAP

Township of Verona

## TOWNSHIP OF VERONA 2011 ZONING MAP



### **Program History and Management Authority**

Verona Township has maintained a long-established and continuous urban forestry program that reflects sustained municipal commitment, clear legal authority, and strong institutional continuity—key elements required for effective Community Forestry Management Plan implementation. This commitment is carried out through a coordinated management structure involving the Department of Public Works (DPW), the Shade Tree Commission, Township administration, and a Licensed Tree Expert (LTE). Together, this framework establishes clear lines of responsibility for tree planting, maintenance, hazard assessment, removal, ordinance enforcement, and policy guidance, consistent with NJ UCFP program expectations for management capacity and accountability.

### **Program Operations and Interdepartmental Coordination**

Tree planting and removals on public property are primarily conducted by qualified outside contractors under the direction of the Department of Public Works, particularly for large-caliper trees or projects involving multiple plantings. DPW staff also perform light pruning, routine maintenance, and individual tree plantings where appropriate. Potentially hazardous or declining trees are identified through coordination among DPW, the Shade Tree Commission, and residents, and are formally evaluated by a Licensed Tree Expert retained by the Township prior to removal or mitigation. This process reflects adherence to accepted urban forestry best management practices and prioritizes public safety while preserving healthy trees.

### **Accomplishments Since Previous Management Efforts**

Verona Township has successfully achieved several goals identified in previous planning efforts. The Shade Tree Commission has provided direct input into Township construction and redevelopment projects, including a new apartment complex, municipal streetscape improvements, the rehabilitation of a ball field, a new street tree inventory and the purchasing of mapping software. Early involvement in these projects improved coordination between urban forestry objectives and capital planning, reducing unnecessary tree loss and improving long-term outcomes.

The Township has also demonstrated commitment to professional development and program quality by consistently sending Shade Tree Commission members to annual urban forestry continuing education programs. In addition, Verona partnered

with DPW, the Environmental Commission, and Township administration to adopt and enforce a comprehensive tree protection ordinance that includes penalties and replacement requirements for illegal removal or destruction of Township trees. This ordinance provides the enforceable legal framework required to support CFMP implementation and long-term canopy management.

### **Public Engagement and Education**

Historically, public awareness of the Shade Tree Commission's role and activities has been limited. Recognizing this as a program gap, the Township has made increasing public outreach a priority. Efforts to address this include annual Arbor Day celebrations, public information shared through the Township newsletter, and increased visibility of the Commission's work. These actions align with NJ UCFP goals related to public education, community engagement, and shared stewardship of the urban forest.

### **Barriers to Success**

Verona Township faces several challenges that affect the pace and scope of urban forestry program implementation. Limited funding is a primary barrier, particularly in relation to the number of new trees needed to replace losses and to expand the canopy cover. An aging tree canopy has required the Township to implement an aggressive maintenance and risk management program to address hazardous conditions and public safety concerns. As a result, a significant portion of available funding has been redirected toward maintenance and removals, reducing resources available for new tree planting.

Additional challenges include maintaining an up-to-date tree inventory as removals and plantings occur and balancing increasing maintenance demands with long-term canopy goals. These barriers highlight the need for strategic prioritization, external grant funding, and continued interdepartmental coordination.

### **Capacity to Implement the CFMP**

Despite these challenges, Verona Township demonstrates strong capacity to implement and sustain a Community Forestry Management Plan. The Township has an established Shade Tree Commission, trained personnel, professional expertise through an LTE, enforceable ordinances, interdepartmental coordination, and growing public engagement. These elements collectively meet NJ Urban &

Community Forestry Program expectations for program readiness, management capability, and long-term sustainability.

## **D) Urban Forestry Composition (Street Tree Inventory)**

Verona's street tree inventory allows them to develop planting strategies that incrementally improve species balance over time. By prioritizing a broad mix of native and non-invasive species that are well suited to site conditions, reducing the risk of catastrophic loss from pests such as emerald ash borer or diseases affecting a dominant species group. Incorporating species diversity goals into planting programs and replacement policies supports long-term urban forest health, enhances climate resilience, and aligns with best management practices promoted through Community Forestry Management Plans.

Verona Township's current street tree inventory consists of all street trees on township owned roads. The trees inventoried are within the right of way curb strips owned by the Township, but the residents are expected to provide basic care of the trees such as watering, mulching and fencing to prevent deer rubbing damage. The data collected on each street tree includes, species name, common name, diameter at breast height (DBH), current height, potential height, location coordinates, street address, condition rating from 1-5 (1-dead to 5-good), and additional notes. In the notes column indicated if pruning was needed, if pests were present or impacts could be seen on the tree, if the tree needed to be monitored, any girdling roots or the possibility of girdling, and whether the tree needed a re-evaluation by an arborist with a tree risk assessment qualification or a licensed tree expert. Each tree was tagged for easy identification, but some tags may have been removed by homeowners or could be unintentionally removed in the future when the trees are replaced or pruned. Lastly, the inventory identified potential planting sites with points and associated coordinates of the location.

The majority of Verona's street trees were determined to be in "good" condition (rating 5) which is less than 10% dieback or damage. This accounts for approximately 1,123 trees, and is due to numerous and extensive recent tree planting efforts and the general age of the existing trees. There were 861 trees placed in the "fair" condition (rating 4), these trees had anywhere from 10%-25% dieback or damage. The poor condition (rating 3) the trees have 25%-50%, dieback or damage. This accounts for 128 trees. Trees in the "very poor" condition (rating 2) had 50%-75% dieback or damage or are in decline. This rating accounted for 29

trees. Lastly, 22 trees were found to be in “dead/dying” condition (rating 1). This category accounts for trees with greater than 75% dieback or damage and included 22 trees.

Overall, the condition of the larger oaks around the township are hitting peak age, and decline is being seen within the bases and sometimes within the canopy of those trees. The thought of removing a few overmature trees each year either on a 3-to-5-year cycle would be ideal. This way, visual aesthetics are maintained while retaining cooling effects and water mitigation provided is still in place. This way, entire streets or sidewalks are experiencing minimal canopy loss, which has detrimental effects on aesthetics and residents’ well-being. Other things that are impacting the trees is the lack of pruning especially on the street side, where vehicle damage can be seen and sometimes causing extensive damage into the trees. Minor damage can easily be pruned off or completely avoided with a pruning schedule. The deer are also causing damage to the trunks of the newly planted trees due to rubbing. Although trees will seal their wounds, these wounds can impact the tree’s future health. Otherwise, typical tree damage from homeowners’ landscaping crews or their personal landscaping machinery was noted.

Figure 2 on page 16 shows the condition rating for each species present. The young or newly planted tree species have little to no damage and therefore are in ratings 4-5 (green and purple). Conversely, the older street trees are rated lower (red and orange). These older trees are pin oak, red maple, amur maple, London plane tree, Norway maple and Callery pear.

Figure 1 on page 15 indicates all the inventoried species and the number of each individual species. Of the 37 different species present, two species dominate Verona’s street trees: red maple and Callery pear.

## SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

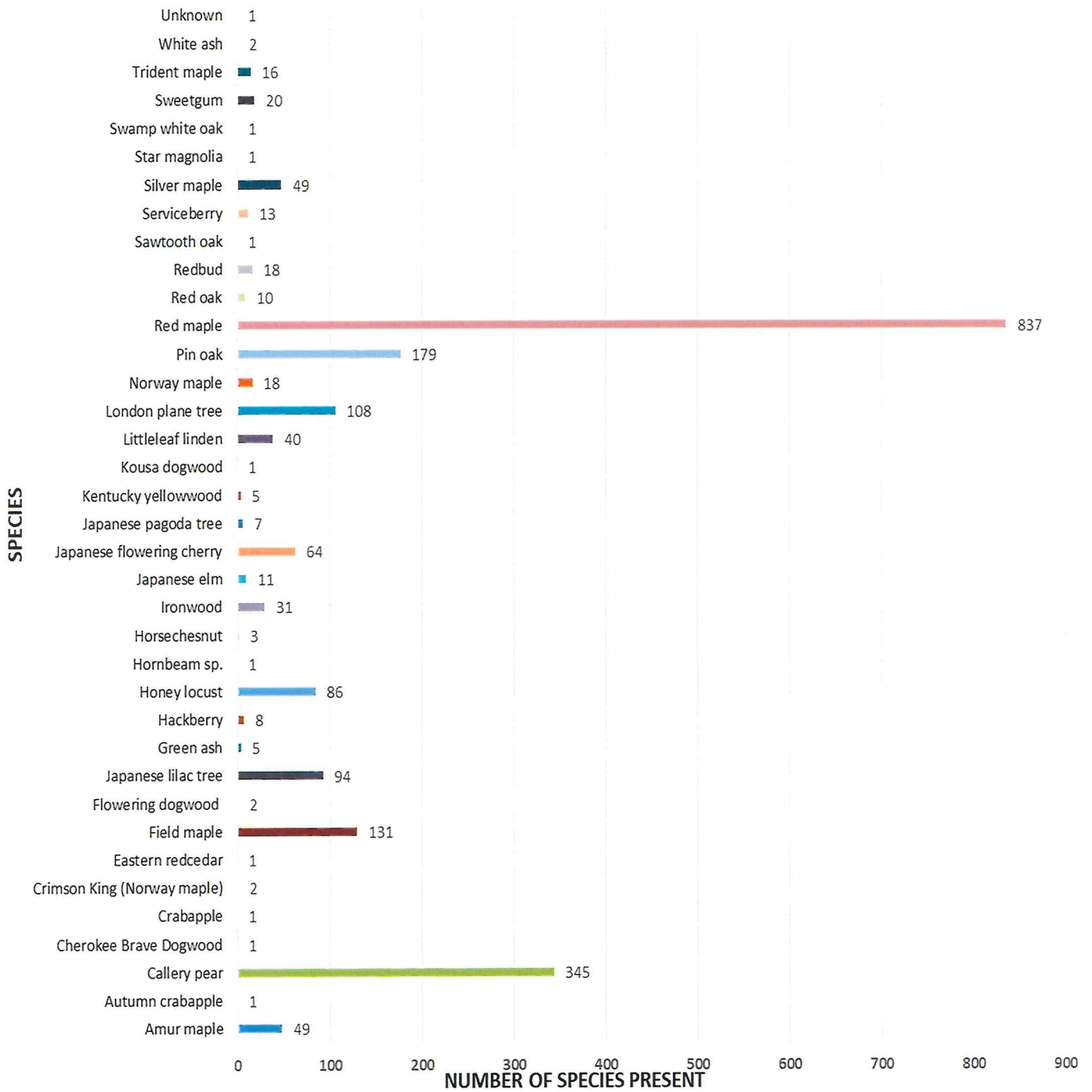


Figure 1.

## Species Condition Distribution

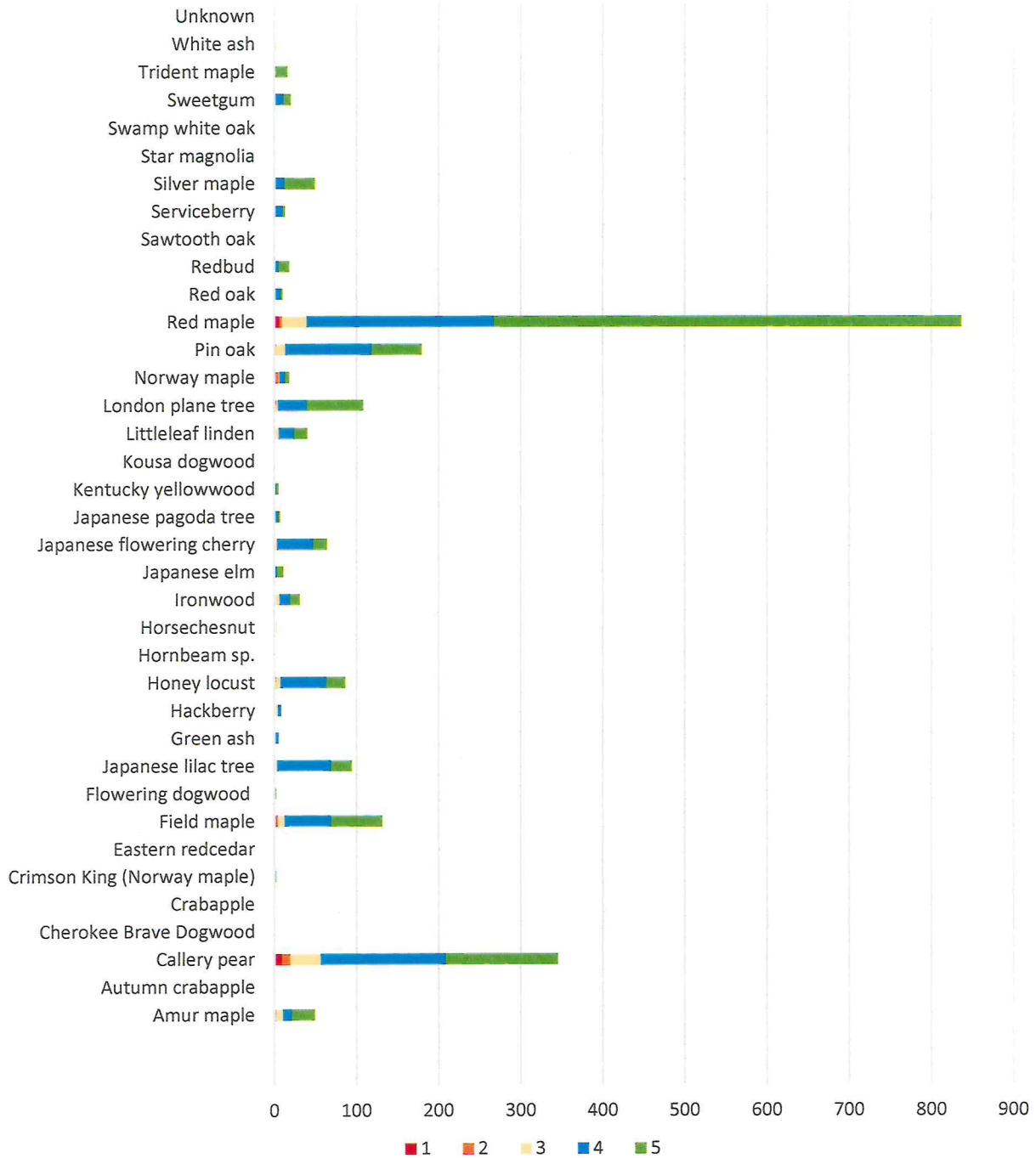


Figure 2. Is a graph of the distribution of conation rating of each species. The rating scale: 5 = Good (<10%, Green), 4 = Fair (10-25%, blue), 3 = Poor (25-50%, yellow), 2 = Very Poor (50-75%, orange), 1 = Dead/Dying (>75%, red). Possible conditions include dieback, missing crown, visual structural damage, injury, pest and disease presence, girdling roots, etc.

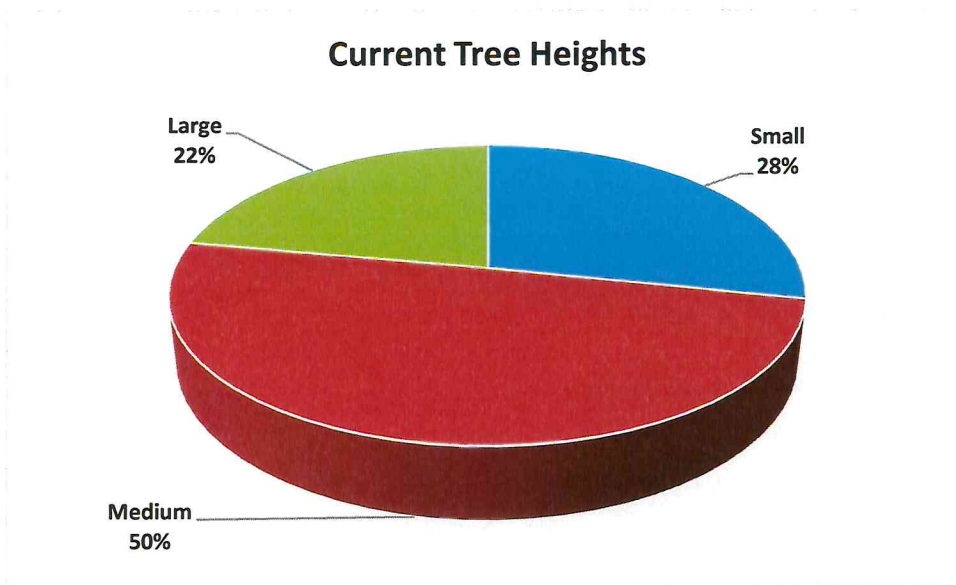


Figure 3. Above shows the current class size distribution of all species present. Scale for Tree Heights and Potential Tree Heights: Small (less than 25 feet), Medium (25-50 feet), and Large (greater than 50 ft).

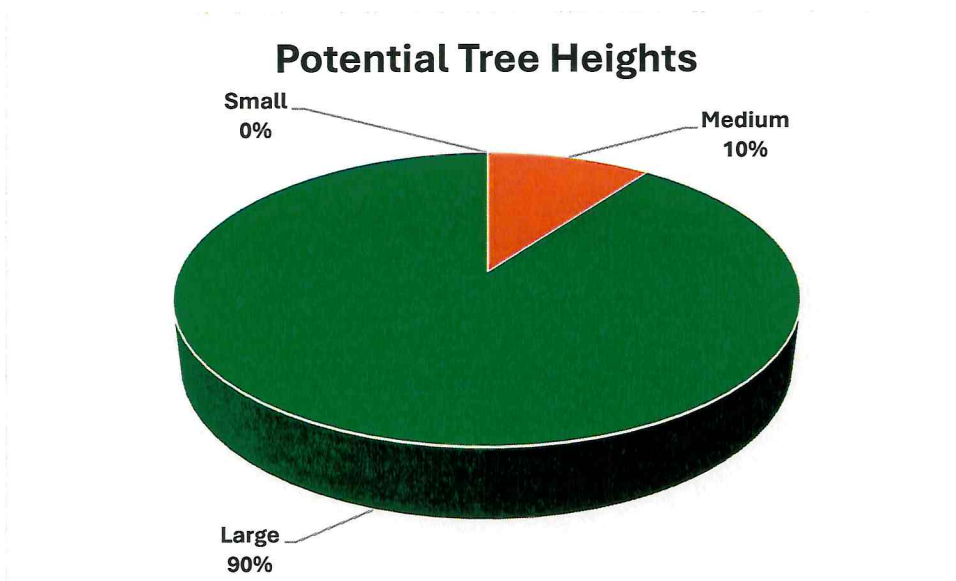


Figure 4. Above shows the potential tree heights of all species present, you might notice there are no trees within the small category. This is because even some trees that are designated as small trees eventually hit the lower end of medium sized trees of 25 feet, which makes them fall into the medium category.

Table 1. Below shows the species composition in the 2019 and the 2025 street tree inventories. Note that “other species” comprise individual species with less than two percent species composition. Some of these species include Autumn crabapple, Cherokee Brave dogwood, crabapple, eastern redcedar, flowering dogwood, hornbeam, horse chestnut, sawtooth oak, star magnolia, swamp white oak, Trident maple, white ash and unknown. One unknown tree was dead and key indicators of the species were not available. Note also that as trees are removed in any given species, this will increase the percentages of other species present even if more of the latter were not planted.

<u>2019 Inventory Data</u>		<u>2025 Inventory Data</u>	
Species	Percent	Species	Percent
Red maple	36.2	Red maple	38.70
Callery pear	22.7	Callery pear	15.95
Honeylocust	6.4	Honeylocust	3.98
Pin oak	5.4	Pin oak	8.28
London planetree	4.5	London planetree	4.99
Littleleaf linden	3	Littleleaf linden	1.85
Norway maple	2.8	Norway maple (Crimson king included)	0.92
Northern red oak	2.7	Northern red oak	0.46
Hedge maple	2.6	Field maple (aka Hedge maple)	6.06
Amur maple	2	Amur maple	2.27
Other Species	11.6	Other Species	16.55

**Species Diversity and Street Tree Inventories**

Species diversity is a critical component of a resilient and sustainable street tree population. A well-designed street tree inventory provides essential information on species composition, age structure, and distribution, allowing a municipality to identify over-reliance on any single species, genus, or family. Insufficient diversity increases vulnerability to pests, diseases, and climate-related stressors, which can lead to widespread canopy loss, higher maintenance costs, and a reduction in the environmental and economic benefits provided by the urban forest.

Verona Township’s street tree population demonstrates a high level of species diversity, with more than thirty-seven different species represented in the inventory. This level of diversity is a significant strength of the Township’s urban forestry program. While continued improvement in diversity is always a goal, species selection in an urban setting is often constrained by site conditions such as limited soil volume, overhead utilities, and roadway design. As a result, emphasis is placed

on selecting the right tree for the right site to ensure long-term survival and performance.

For inventory purposes, multiple varieties of Japanese cherry were grouped into a single species category, as many cultivars can only be reliably distinguished by flower color or fragrance and are difficult to identify outside of bloom periods. Since Verona's previous Community Forestry Management Plan, Verona has intentionally expanded species diversity in response to prior recommendations by incorporating species such as hackberry, yellowwood, Japanese tree lilac, and a broader range of cherries and hornbeams. These additions support long-term canopy resilience and align with best management practices for urban forest diversity.

The **10-20-30 rule** is used as a benchmark for evaluating species diversity within an urban forest. This guideline recommends that no more than **10 percent of the tree population consists of a single species (figure 4)**, no more than **20 percent consists of a single genus (figure 5)**, and no more than **30 percent consists of a single family (figure 6)**. While not an inflexible standard, the 10-20-30 rule serves as a practical planning tool for identifying diversity gaps and guiding future planting decisions. On the pages to follow are figures that show you each component of the 10-20-30 rule based on the current inventory.

On page 18, Figure 4 illustrates the percentage distribution of individual tree species within the current inventory. Based on the diversity guideline referenced above (i.e., no single species should exceed 10% of the total population), two species currently exceed the recommended threshold. Red maple comprises nearly 40% of the Township's total tree population. Given its substantial representation, it is advisable to suspend or significantly limit further planting of red maple—including all cultivars—in order to rebalance species composition and reduce vulnerability to species-specific pests, diseases, and environmental stressors. Callery pear accounts for approximately 16% of the tree population. This percentage largely reflects the presence of older, previously planted specimens. As these trees mature and are gradually removed or decline over time, and as new plantings prioritize alternative species, their relative proportion is expected to decrease to within the recommended range. Additionally, pin oak (*Quercus palustris*) and field maple (*Acer campestre*) are approaching levels that warrant monitoring. Careful consideration should be given to future planting selections to ensure long-term species diversity and resilience within the urban forest.

## Percent of Each Species Present

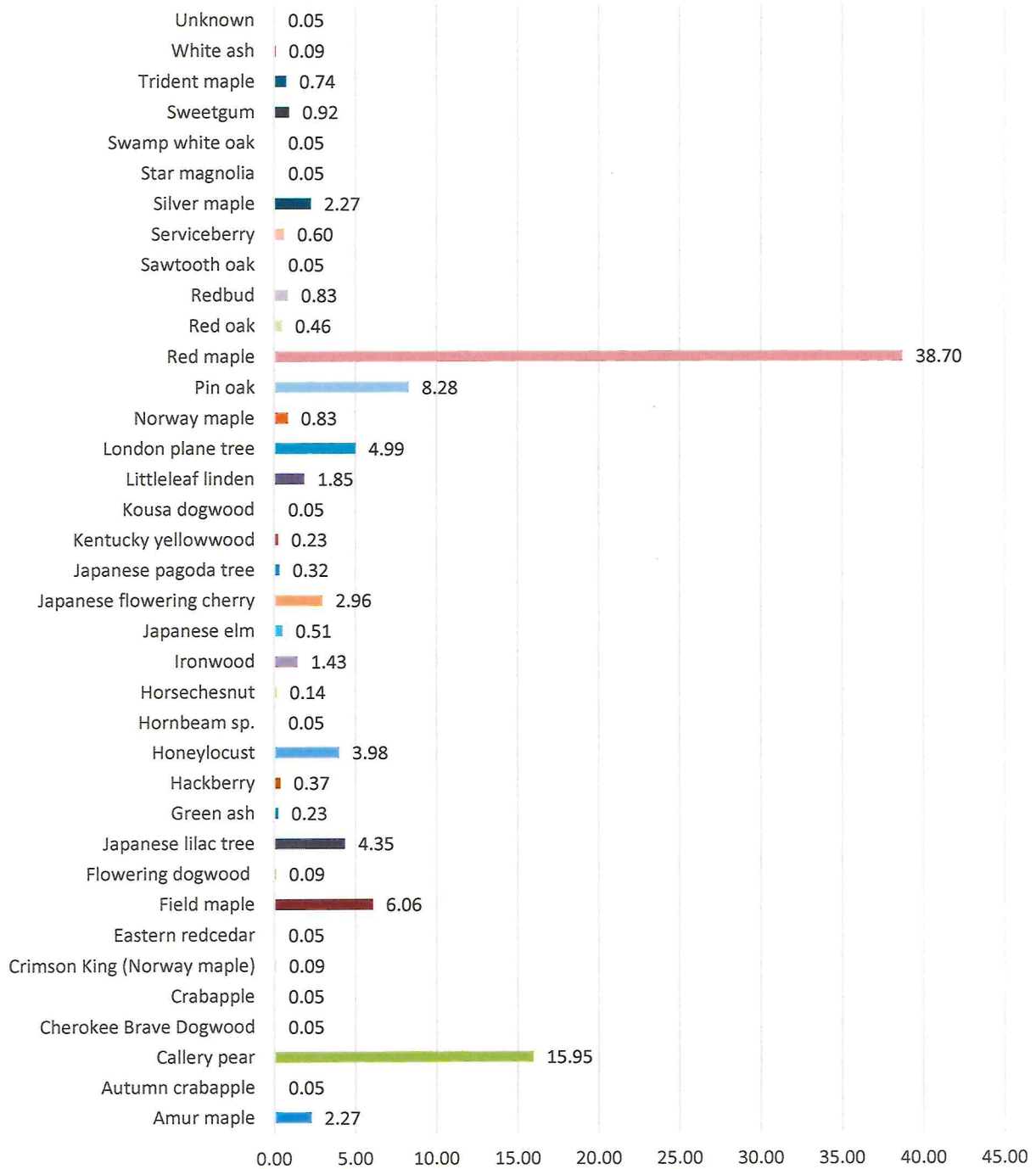


Figure 5.

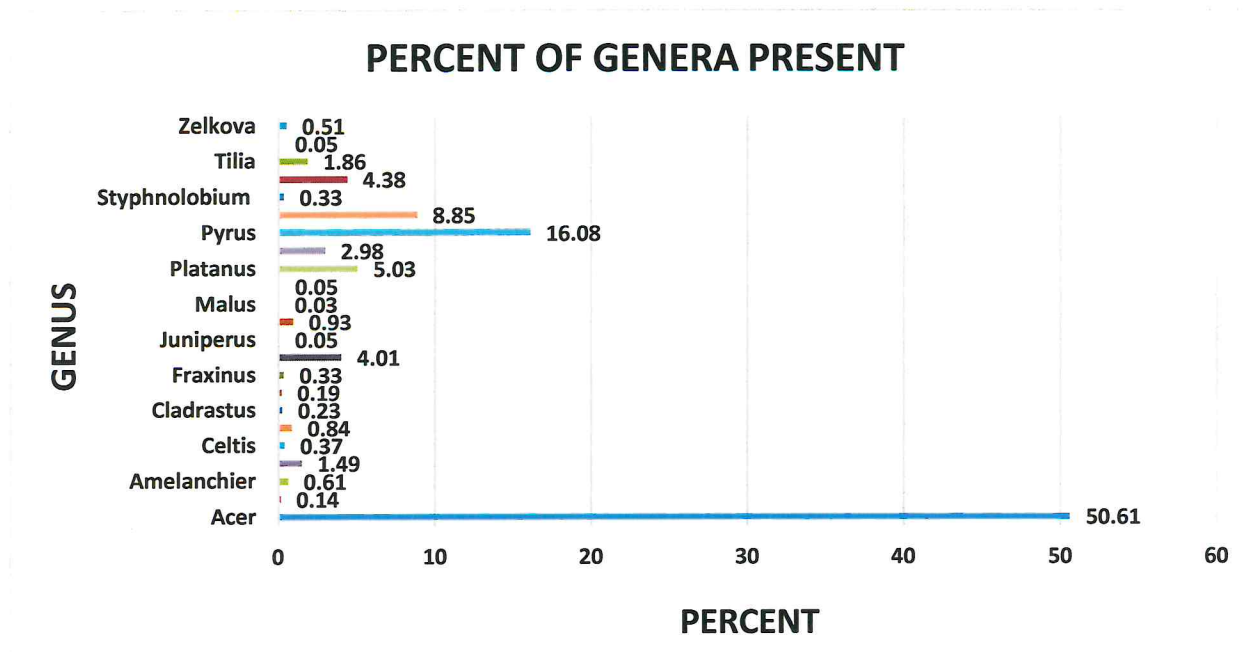


Figure 6. presents the percentage distribution by genus, the guidelines state that no single genus should comprise more than 20% of the total population to reduce susceptibility to genus-specific pests, diseases, and environmental stressors. The data indicates that the genus *Acer* (maples) exceeds twice the recommended threshold. This includes all maple species and cultivars currently represented in the inventory, such as red maple, silver maple, sugar maple, field maple, Amur maple, and sycamore maple, among others. Again, given the current overrepresentation of *Acer*, it is recommended that planting of all maple species and cultivars be temporarily suspended or significantly limited until the overall genus composition is brought into closer alignment with accepted diversity standards. This approach will help improve structural and biological resilience within the urban forest. The genus *Pyrus* is also approaching the 20% threshold. This representation primarily consists of Callery pear and its cultivars, including 'Bradford' and related varieties. In addition to concerns regarding genus overrepresentation, *Pyrus calleryana* is widely recognized for its invasive potential. The species readily spreads beyond cultivated landscapes, outcompeting native vegetation and contributing to ecological degradation in natural areas. Given both its increasing proportional presence in the inventory and its documented invasiveness, further planting of *Pyrus* species and cultivars is not recommended in urban landscapes. Prioritizing alternative, non-invasive species will better support long-term ecological stability and urban forest resilience.

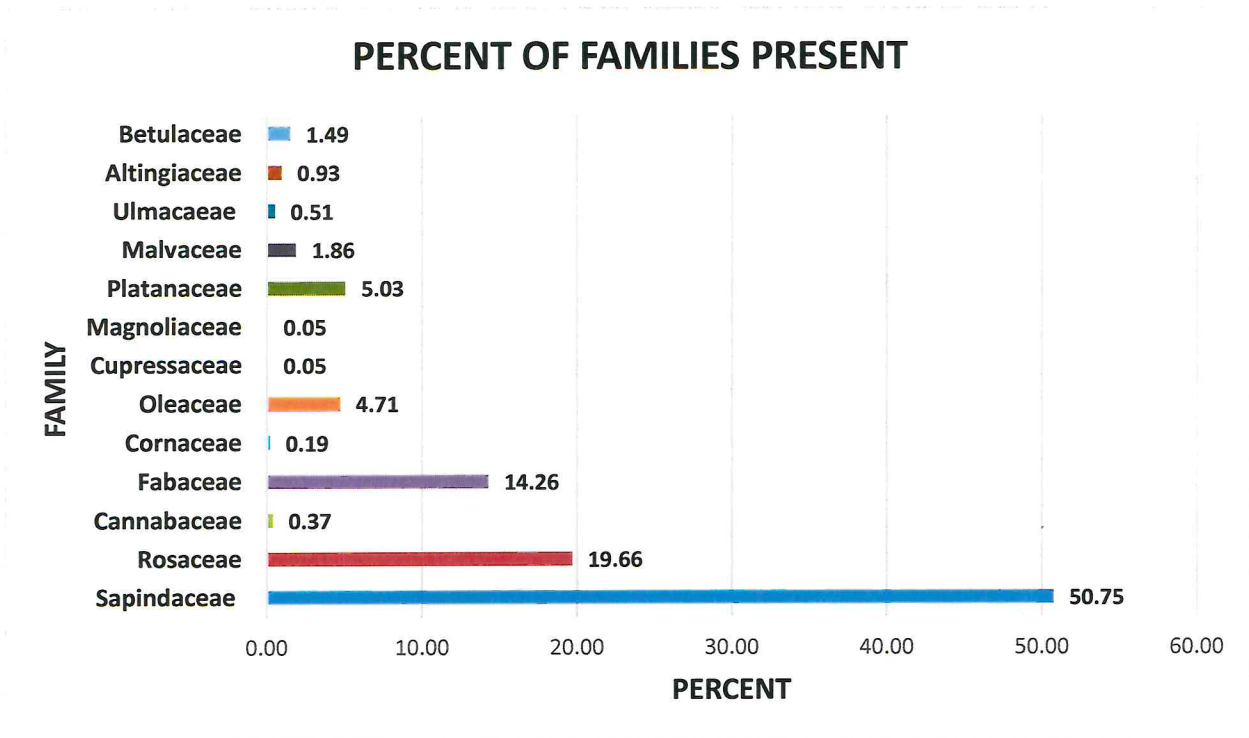


Figure 7. Illustrates the number of families present. It is recommended that the tree population not exceed 30% of one family. As indicated above, however the family Sapindaceae is present in almost double the recommended amount. This family includes Acer (maples) and Aesculus (chestnuts). All the other families fall well below the 30% threshold. The only other one to note is Rosaceae, which includes Amelanchier (serviceberry), Prunus (cherries) and Pyrus (pears).

**Table 2. Pest & Disease Vulnerability**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Amur maple</b>	High	Very susceptible to Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) and Verticillium wilt
<b>Autumn crabapple</b>	Moderate	Common leaf diseases like apple scab, fire blight; moderate insect pressure
<b>Callery pear</b>	Moderate	Fire blight is serious; invasive tendencies, moderate insect pests
<b>Cherokee Brave dogwood</b>	Moderate	Dogwood anthracnose common; dogwood borer present
<b>Crabapple</b>	Moderate	Apple scab and fire blight prevalent, some insect pests
<b>Crimson King (Norway maple)</b>	High	Very susceptible to ALB, Verticillium wilt
<b>Eastern redcedar</b>	Low	Generally tolerant; bagworms and cedar-apple rust manageable
<b>Field maple</b>	High	ALB threat and Verticillium wilt risk
<b>Flowering dogwood</b>	High	Very susceptible to dogwood anthracnose and borer damage
<b>Japanese lilac tree</b>	Moderate	Susceptible to bacterial blight and borers
<b>Green ash</b>	High	Emerald ash borer causes near-total mortality
<b>Hackberry</b>	Low	Minor leaf galls, generally hardy
<b>Honey locust</b>	Moderate	Insect pests like webworm common; canker diseases present
<b>Hornbeam sp.</b>	Moderate	Some scale and leaf spot, generally hardy
<b>Horsechestnut</b>	Moderate	Leaf blotch and bleeding canker moderately impact health
<b>Ironwood</b>	Low	Few significant pests; generally tolerant
<b>Japanese elm</b>	Moderate	Dutch elm disease lower than American elm; elm leaf beetle present
<b>Japanese flowering cherry</b>	Moderate	Bacterial canker and borers cause damage
<b>Japanese pagoda tree</b>	Moderate	Borers and cankers occasionally problematic
<b>Kentucky yellowwood</b>	Low	Rarely affected; minor leaf spots
<b>Kousa dogwood</b>	Moderate	Less susceptible than flowering dogwood; anthracnose and borers possible
<b>Littleleaf linden</b>	Moderate	Verticillium wilt and insect pressure moderate
<b>London plane tree</b>	Moderate	Anthracnose and sycamore lace bug cause moderate damage
<b>Norway maple</b>	High	Very vulnerable to ALB and Verticillium wilt
<b>Pin oak</b>	High	High risk of oak wilt and bacterial leaf scorch

<b>Species</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Red maple</b>	High	Susceptible to ALB, Verticillium wilt, and leaf scorch
<b>Red oak</b>	High	Oak wilt and spongy moth defoliation are significant threats
<b>Redbud</b>	Moderate	Verticillium wilt and borers moderately impact health
<b>Sawtooth oak</b>	Moderate	Spongy moth defoliation occasional
<b>Serviceberry</b>	Moderate	Fire blight and leaf spot moderately affect health
<b>Silver maple</b>	High	ALB and Verticillium wilt major concerns
<b>Star magnolia</b>	Low	Few serious pests or diseases; mostly minor leaf spots
<b>Swamp white oak</b>	Moderate	Spongy moth and oak wilt moderate risks
<b>Sweetgum</b>	Low	Minor pests like scale; generally hardy
<b>Trident maple</b>	High	ALB and Verticillium wilt serious concerns
<b>White ash</b>	High	Emerald ash borer causes near total mortality

Table 2. Above lists all the species inventoried, the pests or diseases that can impact them, and their level of vulnerability. Some of the pests and diseases have already impacted species that are present, and the Township continues to remediate the damage they have caused. Some diseases, such as anthracnose, cause a temporary disruption, and others are not present.

## **E) Overall Program Goals**

1. **Expand and Strengthen Verona’s Tree Canopy**  
Increase overall canopy coverage to enhance carbon sequestration, provide shade, and improve wildlife habitat throughout the community.
2. **Increase Public Awareness and Community Engagement**  
Educate residents about the environmental and community benefits of street trees and yard trees through targeted outreach and educational materials, encouraging more residents to request and adopt trees in the public right-of-way and on private property.
3. **Secure and Expand Funding for Tree Initiatives**  
Actively pursue and obtain grants from state and private sources to support the purchase, planting, and long-term care of new trees.
4. **Enhance Municipal Coordination and Implementation Capacity**  
Strengthen collaboration and communication among the Shade Tree Commission, township administration, and the Public Works Department to effectively plan and implement tree-related initiatives.

## **F) Plan Connections and Other Considerations**

### **Master Plan Consistency and Connections**

The 2022 Verona Master Plan emphasizes environmental stewardship, sustainability, and the preservation and enhancement of community character. The expansion and proper management of the Township’s tree canopy directly advance these objectives by enhancing carbon sequestration and contributing to local climate change mitigation efforts, reducing urban heat island impacts through strategic shade tree planting, preserving neighborhood aesthetics, and reinforcing Verona’s residential character. A healthy and diverse tree canopy also protects and enhances ecological resources, including wildlife habitat and overall biodiversity.

The Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP) supports the Master Plan’s sustainability framework by promoting species diversity, establishing long-term canopy goals, and ensuring coordinated municipal planning. Through future planting efforts, the Township is committed to attaining and maintaining recommended diversity thresholds of no more than 10 percent per species, 20 percent per genus, and 30 percent per family. Adherence to these standards strengthens ecological resilience and reduces vulnerability to pests, diseases, and extreme weather events.

### **Stormwater Management Plan Integration**

The Township's Stormwater Management Plan identifies green infrastructure and natural resource protection as essential strategies for managing runoff and improving water quality. Verona's urban tree canopy functions as a critical component of this green infrastructure network. Trees intercept rainfall, reduce stormwater runoff volumes, increase infiltration, stabilize soils, and filter pollutants before they enter local waterways. In doing so, they reduce the burden on gray infrastructure systems and contribute to improved watershed health.

The CFMP advances stormwater objectives through strategic tree planting in priority drainage areas, protection and preservation of mature canopy, and implementation of soil management practices that promote long-term tree health and maximize hydrologic function. By integrating forestry practices with stormwater planning, the Township enhances both environmental performance and infrastructure resilience.

### **Open Space Plan Coordination**

Verona's Open Space and Recreation planning efforts prioritize the preservation of natural areas, enhancement of parkland, and protection of environmentally sensitive lands. The CFMP complements these initiatives by supporting the management of wooded parklands and street tree corridors to maintain ecological function and visual continuity throughout the community. The plan promotes the use of native and site-appropriate species in public open spaces and encourages planting strategies that enhance habitat connectivity between parks and green corridors.

Tree canopy expansion across parks, as well as private and public lands, directly supports long-term open space preservation goals and biodiversity objectives. In addition, shaded and aesthetically enhanced landscapes contribute to passive recreation opportunities and improve overall quality of life for residents.

### **Emergency Response and Storm Readiness**

This CFMP integrates with the Township's emergency response and storm readiness protocols by emphasizing proactive tree risk assessment, routine inspections, and hazard mitigation pruning. Improved coordination among the Shade Tree Commission, Township Administration, and Public Works Department enhances the Township's ability to identify and mitigate hazardous trees prior to storm events, prioritize response following severe weather, maintain critical transportation and utility corridors, and reduce public safety risks associated with tree failure.

Verona's emergency response protocol includes regular monitoring of high-risk trees, prioritization of removals based on risk assessment, and coordinated post-storm damage evaluations. In the aftermath of severe weather events, Public Works crews and contracted professionals assess roadway obstructions, clear critical routes, and address hazardous tree conditions to restore safe access and essential services. Species diversification, adherence to structural pruning standards, and proper planting practices further strengthen storm resilience and reduce long-term maintenance costs.

### **Wildfire Risk Considerations**

Although Verona is not classified as a high wildfire risk municipality, responsible forest and urban woodland management remains important. The only identified areas of potential wildfire concern are located along Pompton Avenue within Essex County parkland. Verona's Fire Department is well respected and deeply rooted in community tradition, with dedicated volunteer personnel providing consistent protection and emergency response services. Ongoing planning for upgraded facilities further demonstrates the Township's commitment to maintaining high public safety standards.

The CFMP supports wildfire preparedness by promoting the removal of invasive and hazardous vegetation where appropriate, maintaining defensible space in select municipal properties, utilizing proper species selection and spacing in woodland interface areas, and reducing accumulated woody debris in managed public lands. These practices align with broader wildfire preparedness and vegetation management principles and contribute to overall community safety.

### **Wood Utilization and Sustainability**

Consistent with sustainable urban forestry principles, Verona promotes responsible wood utilization whenever feasible. Wood generated from tree removals may be repurposed for beneficial uses such as mulch, habitat enhancement, lumber, or community-based projects when practical. However, because most tree work is performed by outside contractors, the majority of woody debris is transported to approved off-site facilities for processing. This approach reduces landfill disposal, supports local reuse initiatives where possible, promotes resource efficiency, and reinforces the Township's sustainability goals.

When reuse is not feasible, recycling and disposal are conducted in accordance with all applicable state and local regulations. In the event of natural disasters, the Township may establish a Temporary Debris Management Area (TDMA) for the short-term storage of vegetative debris collected from public rights-of-way. The use of a

TDMA ensures that roadways remain clear while allowing for the consolidation and sorting of debris prior to transport to a permitted waste facility. These temporary holding areas may only be operated with appropriate departmental approval during a declared state of emergency.

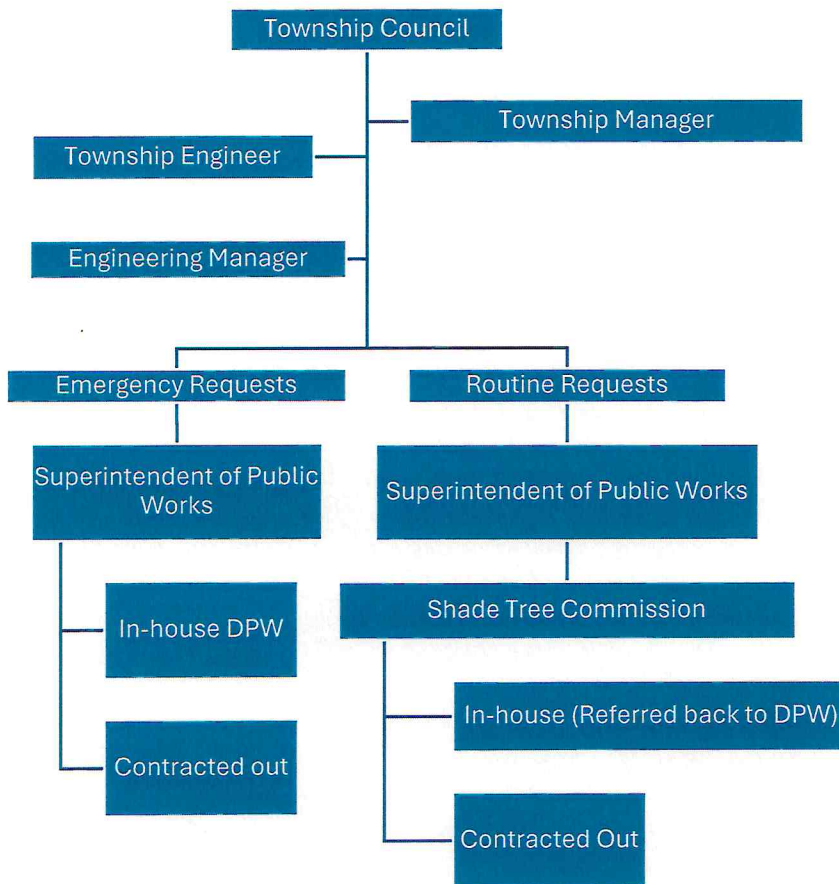
## Section 2: Community Forestry Program Capacity

### **A) Community Forestry Program Administration**

Verona's Public Works Department consists of 22 personnel. The superintendent has Core training and other DWP employees have been cross trained in chainsaw safety and brush chipper operations. They utilize those skills in all work completed on the ground. Training of proper pruning techniques should be considered, as this can be performed from the ground on many of the street trees. Anything that involves climbing or the need for an aerial bucket lift is outsourced to private contractors. The Superintendent of the Department of Public Works is responsible for overseeing all work related to street trees and trees on private property insofar as the latter requires permits for removals. The Superintendent also oversees the type and quantity of replacement trees.

Requests for tree service first go to the Superintendent of Public Works, the Shade Tree Commission is not involved, but they are notified of the work request.

Next, the Supervisor determines if the work required is an emergency or routine. If the required work is deemed to be an emergency, the Superintendent will next decide whether the work can be performed in-house or if a contractor needs to be called in. Emergency work is conducted as soon as possible, regardless of who will perform the work. If the required work is routine, the Superintendent advises the Shade Tree Commission of the pending work, to ensure the tree will not impact public safety, and to manage infrastructure conflicts with sidewalks and utilities. After this review, the work will be completed in-house or through private contractors. This process is depicted in the flow chart that follows. Any tree work including removals, pruning and requests to plant trees within the township right-of-way go through this process, the goal of which is to ensure public safety, manage municipal assets, maintain a healthy community canopy and regulate species diversity.



**Procedures for a Tree Service Request**

Requests for tree removals, pruning, or any treatments of public trees are received from property owners, other residents or Township workers. Tree service requests are handled as follows:

Service requests are received by the Superintendent of the Department of Public Works.

- Pruning service:
  - Pruning is done by DPW on all local roads
- Tree removals:
  - The Superintendent of Public Works inspects the tree to confirm the validity of the request.
  - If removal is required, and it is a Township owned tree, a work order is generated by DPW.

- If a tree removal is not justified, the requester is notified and DPW issues a work order for corrective action as needed.
- The work is completed by the DPW or a contractor, based on priority.
- All emergency service requests are responded to promptly by the DPW or a contractor, whichever is deemed appropriate for the situation. All other requests are completed in order of priority or as time permits.

### **Tree Planting Program & Policies**

Verona is committed to a “No Net Tree Loss” program. Tree plantings are conducted by private contractors. Bids for this service typically go out every two to three years. The current contract was issued in 2025.

### **Tree Planting Procedures**

#### a) Planting Jurisdiction

- Subject to available funding, the Township will plant and maintain trees within Township rights-of-way, parks, schools, and other Township-owned properties.

#### b) Planting Site Identification

- Sites were identified in the most recent street inventory; review of sites is needed before planting to avoid utility conflicts and should be done in cooperation with the Department of Public Works and the Shade Tree Commission.

#### c) Tree Placement

- Final planting locations will be approved by the Department of Public Works and/or the Shade Tree Commission when it comes to public areas.
- Trees are not planted in the curb strip right-of-way without the consent of the homeowner.

#### d) Species Selection

- Species are chosen by the Department of Public Works with input from the Environmental Commission, the Township’s Forester and the Shade Tree Commission.

- Priority is given to species diversity and site suitability.
- All plant material must meet high-quality nursery standards.
- The Township retains the right to reject unsuitable stock.

e) Tree Installation

- Trees are installed by private vendors under public contract unless otherwise noted.

f) Post-Planting Care

- New street trees are watered and fertilized by the adjacent property owner or the Township. Property owners will receive a letter outlining proper maintenance for the trees for which they are responsible.
- Trunk wraps and stakes should be removed after the first year.
- Mulch will be applied as directed in the Appendix (no volcano mulching).
- Trees must be protected from deer browsing and rubbing.

g) Funding

- Verona Township has an operating budget for tree planting. Grant funding should be considered to maximize the Township's canopy cover goals if the operating budget is ever a limiting factor.

## **B) Partnerships (NGOs, nonprofit organizations, interdepartmental)**

The vitality of Verona, New Jersey's urban canopy is a direct result of the close collaboration and shared commitment among several key municipal entities. The Department of Public Works (DPW), Township Administration, the Environmental Commission, and the Verona Shade Tree Commission work collaboratively to ensure the robust maintenance and strategic expansion of the town's valuable tree resources.

## **The Role of the Shade Tree Commission**

The Verona Shade Tree Commission serves as the principal advisory body for all matters pertaining to the selection, planting, and placement of trees throughout the township. Their function involves a detailed assessment of local ecological conditions, species resilience, and aesthetic suitability. Specifically, the Commission is responsible for:

- **Species Selection:** Making informed suggestions regarding the types of tree species that are best suited for Verona’s diverse urban environments, focusing on native, non-invasive, and disease-resistant varieties.
- **Location Planning:** Determining optimal planting locations on public property to maximize ecological benefits, minimize infrastructure conflicts (such as with utility lines and sidewalks), and enhance streetscape appeal.
- **Community Input:** Actively soliciting and welcoming input from surrounding conservation and park groups, such as the respected Hilltop Conservancy and the Verona Park Conservancy, to align municipal efforts with broader regional conservation goals and incorporate specialized environmental knowledge.

## **Implementation and Execution by the Department of Public Works**

Implementation and Execution by the Department of Public Works. The DPW is the operational arm responsible for the physical execution of the tree management plan. Working closely with the Shade Tree Commission, the DPW carries out the full lifecycle of tree care on public lands, including:

- **Planting:** Physically planting the selected trees in the approved locations according to best horticultural practices.
- **Maintenance:** Performing ongoing physical maintenance, which includes structural pruning, watering, mulching, disease and pest management, and the eventual removal of hazardous or dead trees.

## **Environmental Oversight and Species Guidance**

The Environmental Commission plays a critical advisory role, providing an ecological perspective to the planning process. The Commission reviews proposed planting schedules and species lists, offering supplementary suggestions to ensure that the tree selections contribute to local biodiversity, improves air and water quality, and supports overall municipal sustainability goals. The Role of the Township Administration and Inter-Departmental Synergy.

## **The Role of the Township Administration and Inter-Departmental Synergy**

Because it is a small municipality, Verona efficiently consolidates certain services; consequently, the Department of Public Works often incorporates the functions of the Engineering Department. This integrated structure facilitates seamless coordination between tree planting initiatives and public infrastructure projects.

Furthermore, the Township Administration and the Shade Tree Commission collaborate routinely on a vital administrative function: funding and resource acquisition. They actively work together to locate, apply for, and obtain funding through outside grant sources-including state, federal, and private foundation grants-to supplement the municipal budget dedicated to tree planting, maintenance, and tree-related educational programs. This proactive pursuit of external funding is crucial for sustaining and expanding the town's tree resources without overburdening local taxpayers.

This collaborative framework in which technical expertise, environmental stewardship, physical execution, and financial resourcefulness converge, ensures the long-term health and benefit of Verona's community forest.

## **C) Training**

### **Continuing Education and Professional Development**

Verona Township is committed to equipping all participants in its Shade Tree Program with the tools and understanding needed for long-term success in managing its tree resources. To achieve this goal, ongoing education and skill-building efforts will:

- Provide program members with the knowledge required to make sound decisions related to tree care and management.
- Support proper planning and execution of planting and maintenance efforts by incorporating up-to-date research and best practices from the field.
- Promote consistent, accurate tree assessments by ensuring that all evaluations follow recognized guidelines and produce unbiased results.

- Preserve institutional knowledge within the Shade Tree Program by ensuring that expertise is passed on as new members join and others depart.
- Meet the standards of the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act by ensuring Township representatives—staff or volunteers—complete at least 8 hours of annual training.

Additional Shade Tree Commission members and at least one more employee from the Department of Public Works should consider becoming Core certified pursuant to the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistant Act during the current planning cycle to further strengthen the Township’s capacity. This training, which is part of the New Jersey Community Forestry’s Training Skills and Accreditation initiative, helps ensure that municipalities meet required competencies. Additionally, DPW employees and members of the Township’s Environmental Commission have earned continuing education units (CEUs) in forestry.

The Township has an ongoing commitment to training and professional development in arboriculture and urban forestry. Volunteers are offered annual opportunities to participate in educational programs, and Department of Public Works employees receive regular training in safety and tree-related tasks. The DPW also uses a cross-training model, rotating employees among different employees so they can develop a broad set of skills. This approach ensures that staff are adaptable and able to assist the tree crew when additional help is needed. Specifically, DPW employees are cross-trained in tree pruning, chainsaw safety and tree hazard awareness. With the Township’s past substantial storm damage from winds, snow and ice, additional training was also needed in Hazardous Tree Identification. Each year, one person from the Shade Tree Commission or DPW takes the one-day Hazardous Tree Identification course offered by Rutgers. DPW employees’ training is covered by the Public Works Budget, which is independent of the Shade Tree Budget. Training is not necessary with regard to the use of herbicides or pesticides because that work is contracted out to licensed applicators

Currently, the Township has identified two main training needs. First, to enroll at least one more Township staff member and one volunteer in the NJ Community Forestry CORE training. Second, there is a need for more advanced training for DPW employees in tree hazard identification and risk assessment to enhance safety and effectiveness in the field.

## D. Township Budget

Statement of 5-year Tree Budget		Community Forestry Management Plan Budget
Administration	Municipal Salaries	\$50,000
	Equipment	\$1,250 (1,000.0-1,500.0)
	Volunteer Contribution (\$34.79 an hour)	\$5,218.50 (150 volunteer hours)
	Other: Emergency Services	\$1,250
	Total	\$57,718.50
UCF Stewardship	Planting/Removals/Pruning	\$217,000
	Other: Sidewalk Replacement	\$25,000
	Total	\$242,000
Education and Outreach	Training and Education (Municipal/County Employee/Volunteer)	\$ 750.00
	Public Outreach	\$4,000
	Total	\$4,750.0
Grand Total		\$304,468.50

Table 3. Above illustrates Verona’s 2026 operating budget and reflects the Township’s continued proactive approach to urban forest management. During the previous plan term, \$141,000 was allocated for tree planting, pruning, and removals.

As of 2026, Verona has applied \$5,197.50 on tree removals, pruning operations, and repairs. Along with the addition of securing planting contracts, for the ongoing street tree planting projects. Ensures timely and efficient tree planting, giving the newly planted trees the best chance of success. These distributions and contractual agreements demonstrate the Township’s ongoing commitment to public safety, ecological health, and responsible land management.

## **E. Equipment**

### **Verona Townships Equipment Use**

The Township utilizes a variety of equipment to manage tree maintenance and removals in any public spaces. Key tools include chainsaws, pole saws, pruning loops, brush chipper, and trucks. This equipment is primarily used to trim roadside trees, maintain trees located on Township property, and remove hazardous or unwanted trees that fall within the Township's capacity to handle. The chipper truck and tow-behind chipper allow crews to efficiently dispose of branches and debris, while the chainsaws are essential for pruning and cutting tasks during both routine maintenance and storm response.

## Section 3: Community Engagement

### **Community Education, Awareness and Outreach and Events**

The Township of Verona has demonstrated a strong commitment to engaging its residents in community forestry and environmental stewardship. The primary way the Township informs the public of updated tree ordinances, online tree service requests and a list of the members of the Shade Tree Commission is through its website: [veronanj.org](http://veronanj.org). The website contains a broad array of information about trees such as tree facts sheets, the general benefits of trees, best practices for tree planting and the care and maintenance of trees, along with other helpful website links. The Township's monthly online calendar publishes Shade Tree Commission meeting dates, seedling distribution days, and Arbor Day information.

Other forms of outreach are Comcast of New Jersey – Channel 35, Verizon FIOS – Channel 24, [myveronanj.com](http://myveronanj.com), [tapinto.net/towns/verona-slash-cedar-grove/](http://tapinto.net/towns/verona-slash-cedar-grove/) and Sustainable Verona. Additional efforts are taken to build relationships with property owners, such as letters to communicate “how to” care for newly planted street trees or how to request a street tree.

Verona Township actively promotes youth engagement and environmental stewardship through a variety of school- and community-based programs. Through the Trees for Schools grant initiative, students participate directly in tree planting projects on school grounds, gaining hands-on experience in species selection, planting techniques, and the environmental benefits of urban trees. The Verona Environmental Commission supplements this work by hosting annual environmental poster contests, school assembly programs, volunteer clean-up events, and tree seedling giveaways, all of which foster early awareness of sustainability and tree care. High school students may also serve as Junior Environmental Commissioners, providing leadership opportunities and direct involvement in local environmental initiatives.

The Township's annual Arbor Day celebrations further reinforce the importance of urban forestry. Programs are run in cooperation with the Township Schools. Such programs include a formal proclamation and ceremonial, hands-on tree plantings involving students and community groups. Arbor Day is the Shade Tree Commission's major public outreach project. Programs such as the Treasured Trees initiative encourage youth to identify and document notable trees within the community, strengthening awareness of canopy value and preservation. Collectively, these programs expand public education, cultivate long-term stewardship, and support the CFMP's goals of sustaining a diverse, resilient, and community-supported urban forest.

Verona conducts an Arbor Day Event on a yearly basis. Examples of these events include

2026 tree give away, public tree information station, children's activities and sustainability information event in partnership with the public library. In 2025, the Shade Tree Commission partnered with the Verona Baseball and Softball league to plant two trees at the ballfield. The Shade Tree Commission plans to continue engaging with the public every year at an Arbor Day/Earth Day event. The tree commission also has a presence at each outdoor fair conducted by the township.

The STC publishes a newsletter three times a year which is sent to all Verona residents who have registered to receive the newsletter. This newsletter outlines activities being undertaken to support our township canopy. The information educates residents on tree maintenance and the benefit of trees in their yard in the street and public places. The commission is currently developing a program to reach out to residents in order to encourage them to agree to have trees planted in the right of way in front of their home. We supply the residents with information regarding the benefits of trees. These urban forest benefits include heat mitigation, stormwater reduction, and an increase in the aesthetic value of their home.

The Shade Tree Commission meetings are open to the general public; we encourage residents to attend these gatherings. The commission board currently has seven members. The DPW staff has a dedicated tree crew to conduct in-house work.

The township has recently agreed to a five-year capital funded planting program to address the reduction in our canopy due to the loss of aging trees. The program will identify streets in each quadrant of town in need of trees. Letters will be sent to residents in those quadrants directing them to request a tree either by returning the form enclosed or by filling out the form on the DPW Tree Maintenance and Request page. The goal is to plant 80 new trees each year for five years. Verona residents are willing and able to respond both online and by mail. They will be asked to agree to support the tree with watering for two years. Residents will be educated on the importance of proper mulching techniques and proper lawn cutting around trees. Verona residents are very aware of the correlations between the aesthetic value of trees and the value of their homes. The residents are motivated to claim ownership of new street trees. On many of the township streets the only shade available is that of the public trees. Part of the education outreach conducted by the Shade Tree Commission will highlight the temperature contrasts on streets with and without tree canopies.

Besides aesthetic value Verona's urban forest provides numerous long-term benefits to residents and the community as a whole. Shade from trees helps reduce summer temperatures, lower energy costs, and improve overall comfort in neighborhoods and public spaces. Tree canopies also play an important role in stormwater management by slowing rainfall, reducing runoff, and improving infiltration into soils, which helps mitigate the impacts of flooding and erosion. In addition, urban forests provide valuable habitat and food

sources for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife, creating opportunities for residents to enjoy and connect with nature close to home. Beyond their environmental functions, trees greatly contribute to the community identity, property value, and overall quality of life.

Verona was first designated as a Tree City, U.S.A. in 1981. The Township currently meets all the requirements for accreditation. Verona was recognized by Sustainable Jersey at the Bronze Level in 2016. Verona also has a Tree Replacement Program which is announced through various media resources. The Township's internet website, [veronanj.org](http://veronanj.org), is routinely used to post announcements relating to the Shade Tree Program, which enjoys strong Township and citizen support. However, the Township recognizes that ongoing public education, awareness, and outreach programs are necessary to ensure continued success over the long term. Specifically, such programs will:

- Maintain and further increase interest and active support for the Shade Tree Program
- Encourage public assistance in implementing various programs, protecting public trees, and beautifying the Township
- Encourage the planting, protection, and care of trees on private property for the benefit of the entire community
- Educate all citizens in the importance of environmental stewardship

Verona will continue to implement its existing programs, policies, and procedures in a manner that strengthens the visibility and effectiveness of the Shade Tree Program while maximizing outreach to residents, community groups, and other stakeholders. The Township remains committed to regularly reviewing and updating public information materials to ensure they remain accurate, accessible, and aligned with current best practices.

Educational outreach and related programming are coordinated through the Department of Public Works, ensuring consistent messaging and integration with ongoing municipal operations. Through these efforts, Verona aims to maintain a transparent, well-recognized, and community-supported Shade Tree Program.

## Section 4: Plan Elements

### Objectives and Action Items

#### Element #1: Training and Education

**Objectives A and B:** Maintain and expand annual training and education to meet NJ Shade Tree & Community Forestry Assistance Act requirements.

- **Action 1.1.1:** Maintain at least one current staff member and one volunteer with CORE certification, at The Shade Tree Federation.
- **Action 1.2.1:** Annually assess training and education needs for staff and volunteers, and send them to appropriate trainings, such as a pruning course.
- **Action 1.2.2:** Ensure the township achieves 8+ CEUs annually, either through local events or trainings offered.
- **Action 1.2.3:** Offer ongoing education for DPW through internal cross-training (see Pg. ~33-34).

**Objective C (Arboriculture Standards and Procedures):** Ensure all tree care adheres to proper arboricultural practices.

- **Action 1.3.1:** Follow ANSI A300 standards and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for pruning, planting, and removals.
- **Action 1.3.2:** DPW staff and contractors must adhere to industry safety protocols.
- **Action 1.3.3:** Annually train staff in Tree Risk Identification at Rutgers, safe equipment uses, and standard practices.
- **Action 1.3.4:** Require all contractors and utility workers to follow proper arboriculture standards.

#### Element #2: Community Forest Ordinance(s)

**Objectives A and B:** Enforce and improve local ordinances related to Shade Tree Ordinances and land use.

- **Action 2.1.1:** Definitions 493-1, defines shade trees to include trees and ornamental plantings in public highways, parks and street curb areas under township jurisdiction.
- **Action 2.1.2:** Enforce Ordinance 493-2 Permission Required no person is permitted to cut, prune, trim, remove spray or damage.
- **Action 2.1.4:** Educate residents on responsibilities under tree-related ordinances.
- **Action 2.1.3:** Improve and update 493-8 Removal of Dangerous Trees, it is not clear what is considered a dangerous tree, and is at the town's digression.

#### Element #3: Tree Resource Management

**Objective A:** Maintain and regularly update the municipal tree inventory.

- **Action 3.1.1:** Change any tree removal site/point to a potential planting site.
- **Action 3.1.2:** Add any new plantings and removals to both the excel data and GIS map
- **Action 3.1.3:** Track and improve tree diversity to try and gain compliance with the 10-20-30 rule.

**Objective B:** Identify, prioritize, and remove hazard trees for the public's safety.

- **Action 3.2.1:** Prioritize removals based on the inventory, DPW inspection and residents' reports.
- **Action 3.2.2:** Coordinate with utilities (e.g., JCP&L) for hazard mitigation around lines.
- **Action 3.2.3:** Focus removal efforts on the few remaining Ash trees.
- **Action 3.2.4:** Stay updated on pests and diseases that are on New Jersey's borders that could impact the township and monitor for the key identifiers.

**Objective C:** Optimize tree health, structure, and aesthetics through ongoing care relative to the cost to maintain them.

- **Action 3.3.1:** Conduct cyclical and as-needed pruning, especially on roadsides and public lands. Maybe limited due to not having the correct equipment and needing contractors, putting strain on the limited budget.
- **Action 3.3.2:** Consider establishing a schedule for young tree care events addressing (watering, mulching needs). Look at logistics of announcing when a tree was removed an alert residence of pickup spot.
- **Action 3.3.3:** Use DPW and contracted services for structural pruning.
- **Action 3.3.4:** Budget for maintenance and adjust as needed year-to-year.

**Objective D:** Maintain public safety and maximize the life of the trees, without posing a risk.

- **Action 3.4.1:** Continue to remove dead and hazardous tree as they arise or for another valid reason.
- **Action 3.4.2:** Use DPW and contracted services for tree removals, and structural pruning.
- **Action 3.4.3:** Budget for removals and adjust as needed year-to-year.

**Objective E:** To restore and expand canopy cover through strategic planting.

- **Action 3.5.1:** Use inventory data for planting sites, from trees that were recently removed, field observations and from residence outreach for a tree to be planted.
- **Action 3.5.2:** Promote native species and right-tree-right-place principles
- **Action 3.5.3:** Prioritize areas where tree canopy is lacking or void of.
- **Action 3.5.4:** Work toward a positive net planting rate (more planted than removed).
- **Action 3.5.5:** Apply for grants to fund planting.

**Objective F:** Control Forest pests and invasive plants to support native tree regeneration.

- **Action 3.5.1:** Monitor and manage EAB, deer damage, and spotted lanternfly threats.
- **Action 3.5.2:** Educate the public on risks of invasive insects and plants, report to authorities if requested.
- **Action 3.5.3:** Encourage native trees or non-invasive trees for plantings.
- **Action 3.5.4:** Consider the develop and implement a deer management plan.

**Objective G:** Minimize the waste and cost of vegetation material and encourage residents to obtain the free products it produces.

- **Action 3.5.1:** Consider keeping and utilizing wood chips from throughout the township.
- **Action 3.5.2:** Prioritize the mulching of new tree plantings.
- **Action 3.5.3:** Explore Urban Wood cooperation for any trees that are of timber quality.

## **Element #4: Community and Capacity**

**Objective A:** Promoting and building partnerships

- **Action 4.1.1:** Partner with schools and scout groups for youth engagement.
- **Action 4.1.2:** Continue to encourage volunteers within the community, with all tree related activities.
- **Action 4.1.3:** Continue to improve, maintain and gain new partnerships with regional utilities, emergency services, watershed organizations, to access debris-tree removals and tree-planting resources and sites.

**Objective B:** Promote environmental stewardship through public events, education, and communication.

- **Action 4.2.1:** Host annual Arbor Day event with tree giveaways and educational materials.
- **Action 4.2.2:** Continue Volunteer Cleanup Events at local parks and trails (such as the Peckman River and West Essex Trail), where students can participate in hands-on environmental work.
- **Action 4.2.3:** Continue Treasured Trees Program
- **Action 4.2.4:** Continue to promote community sustainability efforts (including trees, habitat, and resource conservation) and invites residents — including students — to engage in monthly meetings, volunteer activities, and sustainability projects that relate to environmental stewardship.
- **Action 4.2.5:** Continue the Verona Park Children’s Garden & Community Gardens offer opportunities for observation, learning about plant life, and volunteer participation — places where students can interact with nature and support plant care

**Objective C:** Promotional and outreach materials to community

- **Action 4.3.1:** Enhance an online presence though social media.
- **Action 4.3.2:** Continue to publish and distribute calendar with township related tree events.
- **Action 4.3.3:** Use media outlets and township-wide letters or email alerts to inform residents on urban forestry issues.
- **Action 4.3.4:** Produce flyers or other materials of current and future pests and diseases.

## **Element 5: Emergency Response & Disaster Planning**

**Objective A:** Storm Readiness, Response and Recovery

- **Action 5.1.1: Continue updating the Township Tree-Disaster Response Plan that identifies roles/responsibilities (DPW, Parks, Emergency Management), prioritized street/park corridors, communication plan, and post-storm rapid assessment protocol.**
- **Action 5.1.2: Consider creating and maintaining an inventory of equipment and last time they were serviced to ensure reediness with working equipment.**
- **Action 5.1.3: Train all DPW and contractors in new and any updated emergency removal/response procedures and protocols.**
- **Action 5.1.4: Maintain all contracts with emergency-ready private contractors.**
- **Action 5.1.5: Encourage communities to install rain gardens at residences and businesses.**

**Objective B (Wildfire protection):** Reducing risk of wildfire, encouraging community-wide fire safety practices, documenting activities, and maintaining aid from emergency services.

- **Action 5.2.1: Promote Firewise initiative residence, encouraging landowners to maintain their homes of dried plant materials.**
- **Action 5.2.2: Create and maintain a ledger of all activities completed or when conditions change to reduce or increase risk.**
- **Action 5.2.3: Maintain all agreements with Verona Rescue Squad (VRS) and Verona Township Fire Department.**

# Community Forestry Implementation Timeline for Years 2026-2031

Consolidated Activity	How Activity Will Be Accomplished	CFMP Action Code(s)	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
<b>Maintain Tree Committee training and professional development program</b>	Register new members for CORE Training, attend Rutgers pruning and hazard tree identification courses, attend annual Shade Tree Federation Conference, track CEUs, and provide annual refresher training.	<b>1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.3.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Maintain Tree Committee records and digital document management system</b>	Store meeting minutes, agendas, inventories, reports, and planning documents in a searchable digital repository and train members in document management procedures.	<b>1.2.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Pursue forestry-related grants and training funding opportunities</b>	Identify and apply for grants to support training, inventory, planting, maintenance, and stewardship projects.	<b>1.2.4, 3.5.5</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Implement arboricultural standards and safety compliance program</b>	Require municipal staff, contractors, and utilities to follow ANSI A300 standards, ISA BMPs, and OSHA safety requirements during all tree work.	<b>1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.4</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Conduct annual Arbor Day</b>	Coordinate annual Arbor Day events	<b>4.1.1, 4.2.1</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

<b>celebrations and educational programs</b>	with schools, community organizations, and local partners; include tree planting and educational activities.						
<b>Provide public education through newsletters, website, social media, and community events</b>	Publish articles, newsletters, educational materials, website content, and social media posts; staff booths at community events and festivals.	<b>2.1.3, 4.2.2, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Educate residents and contractors regarding tree ordinances and regulations</b>	Distribute ordinance updates, provide education regarding tree protection requirements, stormwater compliance, proper planting, staking, and mulching practices.	<b>2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Strengthen community partnerships and volunteer participation</b>	Coordinate with schools, community groups, municipal boards, and environmental organizations; recruit volunteers for forestry activities.	<b>4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Develop and maintain public tree stewardship programs</b>	Promote Tree Remembrance Program, Memorial Tree Program, tree request programs, and resident participation in right-of-way tree care.	<b>3.5.2, 4.1.2</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Maintain and update the municipal tree inventory</b>	Record removals, plantings, inspections, and maintenance activities; update GIS and evaluate species diversity and age distribution.	<b>3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

<b>Conduct hazard tree inspections and risk assessments</b>	Utilize trained volunteers, staff, and arborists to identify hazardous trees, structural defects, pests, and public safety concerns.	<b>3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.4, 5.1.1</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Coordinate utility vegetation management activities</b>	Work with utility companies to identify conflicts, schedule pruning, and reduce risk to public safety and infrastructure.	<b>3.2.2</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Monitor and manage emerging tree pests and diseases</b>	Monitor EAB, Spotted Lanternfly, Beech Leaf Disease, and other emerging threats; incorporate findings into management and outreach activities.	<b>3.2.3, 3.2.4</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Provide care and maintenance for newly planted and existing trees</b>	Conduct watering, mulching, structural pruning, and resident outreach to improve tree establishment and health.	<b>3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Conduct annual maintenance and forestry budget review</b>	Evaluate maintenance, pruning, and management costs to support annual budgeting and program planning.	<b>3.3.4</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Continue tree removals and replacement planting activities</b>	Remove hazardous, dead, diseased, or declining trees and replace them where appropriate.	<b>3.4.1, 3.4.2</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Conduct annual tree removal budget review</b>	Evaluate removal needs and adjust budget allocations based on inventory and risk assessment findings.	<b>3.4.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

<b>Implement annual tree planting and canopy expansion program</b>	Identify planting sites, prioritize canopy-deficient areas, plant at least 75 trees annually, and maintain a positive net canopy gain.	<b>3.5.1, 3.5.2, 3.5.3, 3.5.4, 3.5.5</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Manage aging street tree populations and infrastructure conflicts</b>	Develop phased replacement plans for mature trees and evaluate alternative sidewalk designs to reduce root conflicts.	<b>3.3.1, 3.4.1, 3.5.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Develop and implement a deer impact monitoring and management program</b>	Monitor deer browse impacts on plantings and coordinate with municipal and wildlife agencies on mitigation measures.	<b>3.5.4</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Implement vegetation recycling and wood utilization program</b>	Reuse wood chips and vegetative debris for municipal landscaping projects and evaluate opportunities for beneficial wood reuse.	<b>Tree &amp; Mulch Utilization 3.5.1, 3.5.2, 3.5.3, 3.5.4</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Develop public tree interpretation resources and educational programming</b>	Collect information for a tree directory, organize tree walks, and develop educational programs for schools and residents.	<b>4.1.1, 4.3.2</b>		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Prepare and submit the next Community Forestry Management Plan</b>	Evaluate program accomplishments, review goals, gather stakeholder input, revise objectives, and submit the next five-year CFMP.	<b>4.1.3</b>				✓	✓
<b>Coordinate emergency preparedness and disaster planning activities</b>	Work with OEM to review and update the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and Township Disaster Response Plan.	<b>5.1.1, 5.1.4, 5.2.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

<b>Inventory, maintain, and evaluate emergency response equipment</b>	Inspect and service equipment used for storm response and emergency tree operations.	<b>5.1.2</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Provide annual storm response training for staff and contractors</b>	Conduct emergency response, hazard tree, and storm cleanup training exercises and refresher courses.	<b>5.1.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Promote green infrastructure and stormwater resiliency practices</b>	Educate residents and municipal departments on rain gardens, tree planting, and green infrastructure practices.	<b>5.1.5</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Promote Firewise and wildfire risk reduction practices</b>	Provide educational materials and outreach regarding wildfire prevention and vegetation management.	<b>5.2.1</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Maintain wildfire and natural hazard risk records</b>	Document storm damage, hazard tree incidents, and wildfire-related concerns to support planning efforts.	<b>5.2.2</b>		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Conduct Park and public property tree safety evaluations</b>	Coordinate with Fire Department, OEM, and arborists to inspect public properties and address tree-related safety concerns.	<b>3.2.1, 5.2.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Long-Term Deliverables (2027–2030)

### 2027–2028

- Begin collecting information and photographs for a township tree directory.
- Develop tree walk and public interpretation programs.
- Improve coordination among township boards and committees.

## **2029**

- Begin drafting the next five-year Community Forestry Management Plan.
- Complete data collection for the township tree directory.
- Mid-term evaluation of inventory, ordinance performance, and education outcomes.

## **2030**

**2031**-Full CFMP renewal: compile 5-year accomplishments, update inventory, budgets, CEU records, and community outreach summary for NJ State submission.

## Appendix:

### **Tree Inventory and Access**

Due to the size of the data set, there is no clear and easy way to display it within the appendix. If you need/want access to the excel or copies of the map with the point data and attribute data it holds, please contact Verona Township they can send copies directly. On the following pages are maps of the point data for the Street Tree Inventory (green points) and a map showing potential planting sites (red points).





## **Municipal Codes and Ordinances of Trees Resources:**

TOWNSHIP OF VERONA, COUNTY OF ESSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

### **Verona Municipal Code — Trees (Chapter 493)**

#### **§ 493-1 — Definitions**

Defines *shade tree* to include trees and ornamental plantings in public highways, parks, and street curb areas under Township jurisdiction. ([eCode360](#))

#### **§ 493-2 — Permission Required**

No person is permitted to cut, prune, trim, remove, spray, or damage any tree, shrub, or plant on a public highway or public place without permission from the Shade Tree Commission. ([eCode360](#))

#### **§ 493-3 & § 493-4 — Protection and Open Space Requirements**

Require maintenance of open space at the base of trees in public highways to ensure root access to air and water. Excavation within two feet of public trees requires Shade Tree Commission approval. ([eCode360](#))

#### **§ 493-7 — Written Approval for Removal**

Any removal or transplanting of a public *shade tree* requires written approval from the Shade Tree Commission. Costs and deposits are determined by the Commission. ([eCode360](#))

#### **§ 493-8 — Removal of Dangerous Trees**

The Shade Tree Commission may require removal of trees that pose a danger to public safety, with notice to owners where applicable. ([eCode360](#))

#### **§ 493-9 — Planting in Public Highways (Street Trees)**

States that *no shade or ornamental tree or shrub shall be planted by anyone but a representative of the Shade Tree Commission in any public highway* in Verona. This effectively makes the Shade Tree Commission responsible for street tree planting, not adjacent private property owners. ([eCode360](#))

### **Additional Provisions in Chapter 493**

The code includes related regulations such as:

- Street tree protection from adjacent property removal (e.g., no property owner may remove a street tree). ([Verona New Jersey](#))
- Permit restrictions (e.g., no tree removal permits are granted if other municipal accounts are delinquent). ([Verona New Jersey](#))

## **Ordinance No. 2023-06**

An Ordinance Amending Chapter 493, Article II of the Township Code Entitled “Tree Protection, Removal and Replacement” (Verona New Jersey)

### **§ 493-17 Purpose; Findings of Fact**

The Township Council finds that the preservation, maintenance, protection and planting of trees:

- stabilizes soil to prevent erosion and sedimentation,
- reduces stormwater runoff and related damage,
- removes air pollutants and generates oxygen,
- provides noise buffers and protection from severe weather,
- enhances wildlife habitat, property values, aesthetic character, and public health, safety and welfare.

It is the intent of this article to regulate and control the indiscriminate and excessive cutting of trees on private property and encourage property owners to preserve trees where possible.

Trees are declared important cultural, ecological, scenic and economic resources, and there is a recognized link between tree removal and stormwater, soil erosion, and land use impacts.

Nothing in this article shall diminish the powers or authority of the Shade Tree Commission under statute. (Verona New Jersey)

### **§ 493-18 Definitions**

BASIC DEFINITIONS include:

- Caliper: trunk diameter measured at 4½ feet above ground.
- Mature Tree: a deciduous tree with ≥6 in. caliper or any coniferous tree >10 ft. tall (used in prohibited acts and permit requirements).
- Significant Tree: a larger threshold tree (deciduous >20 in. caliper or conifer >30 ft., with exceptions).
- Township Forester: NJ certified tree expert licensed by state with ≥3 years experience.
- Tree of Heaven: invasive species *Ailanthus altissima*. (Verona New Jersey)

### **§ 493-19 Prohibited Acts**

No person shall:

1. Cut down, destroy, or remove any mature tree (as defined) except as permitted.
  2. Cause willful damage, injury, or disfigurement to any mature tree (through impact, cutting, chemicals, soil deposits within root zones, or similar acts).
  3. Store materials or place construction equipment within 10 feet of any tree.
- These restrictions also apply to actions by others under a person's direction. (Verona New Jersey)

### **§ 493-20 Protection of Trees During Construction**

Prior to construction, developers must erect protective barriers (e.g., snow fencing) around mature trees slated for retention.

Barriers must be at least 10 feet from trunks and remain until occupancy certificates are issued. Equipment, materials, and chemicals may not enter protected zones.

Trees that die within 2 years post-planting must be replaced by the owner/applicant. (Verona New Jersey)

### **§ 493-21 Permit Required; Tree Removal Limits**

No more than 30% of any mature tree may be cut or removed without a tree removal permit.

- Permits must be physically posted and visible during work.
- No more than 2 healthy mature trees may be removed per calendar year without Planning Board approval.
- Dead, diseased, or hazardous trees (as determined by the Township Forester) count only if unsafe.
- Extraordinary trees have additional protections; removal requires written recommendation and Council approval.  
Some exceptions apply (e.g., approved land-clearing operations, harmless trimming, required government agency actions). (eCode360)

### **§ 493-22 Permit Application**

Applications to the Zoning Official must include:

- Applicant and property owner names and contact info,

- Property address,
- Number of trees and reason for removal,
- Tree replacement plan showing species and sizes.  
Additional data on species, caliper or height, tree health, and slope/riparian constraints may be required.  
Riparian zones and steep slopes have restrictions on removal unless certified by the Township Forester.  
Permit issuance requires compliance with municipal tax and utility payment status.  
(eCode360)

**§ 493-24 Planning Board Hearing**

For removal of more than two healthy mature trees, the Zoning Official consults the Township Forester and forwards the application to the Planning Board, which holds a public hearing and reviews criteria including soil erosion, drainage, property values, buffers, and hazards. More trees may be denied unless justified by hardship or public safety concerns. Dead trees and Trees of Heaven are exempt from this section. (eCode360)

**§ 493-25 Expiration of Permit**

Permits expire one year after issuance if removal has not occurred. A new permit and fee are required. (eCode360)

**§ 493-26 Tree Contractor Requirements**

All tree contractors must:

- Register annually with the Township and pay the registration fee,
- Be licensed under New Jersey’s Tree Experts and Tree Care Operators Licensing Act,
- Maintain required insurance:
  - \$2M property damage / bodily injury,
  - \$300,000 auto,
  - Workers’ compensation. (eCode360)

### **§ 493-27 Permit Applicability**

- Residential development: All trees are subject to replacement standards.
- Non-residential development: All trees removed require replacement per § 493-28.
- Public entities, utilities, and agencies are exempt from removal permit application processes. (eCode360)

### **§ 493-28 Tree Replacement**

Replacement is required:

- One new tree for each removed deciduous tree 6–<16 in. caliper;
- Two new trees for each deciduous 16–<24 in. caliper;
- Four replacement trees for deciduous  $\geq$ 24 in. caliper;
- Single replacement for conifer 10–<25 ft.; two replacements for conifers  $\geq$ 25 ft.  
Only native, non-invasive species are allowed. Trees dying within two years post-planting must be replaced.  
Mitigation applies if removal occurred without permit. Replacement can be on-site, off-site public plantings, or via the Tree Replacement Fund. (eCode360)

### **§ 493-29 Tree Replacement Fund**

A trust fund is established to accept tree replacement contributions and other donations, for planting and maintenance on public property. Administrative costs may not exceed 30% of fund expenditures. Disbursements must align with the Community Forestry Management Plan. (eCode360)

### **§ 493-30 Appeals**

Applicants may appeal Zoning Official decisions on permit denials to the Planning Board. The Board may affirm, reverse, or modify determinations. (eCode360)

### **§ 493-31 Violations and Penalties**

Violations are punishable by fines of \$200–\$2,000 per offense, plus mitigation for each illegally removed tree. Each illegally cut or damaged tree is a separate offense. (eCode360)

*Providing Forest  
Management Services  
For Over 40 Years.*



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Heather J. Gracie-Petty, CF  
Christina L. Harrigan, CF  
Steven W. Kalleser, CF  
Alexander Kelchner, CF

## **THE FIRM**

The corporation consists of professional foresters approved to practice by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Organized in the late 1970's, the firm serves over 1,150 clients owning New Jersey woodlands, including private landowners, major corporations, non-profit groups, and public agencies. Together, they own over 40,000 acres of forests which benefit from proper management and environmental care. Forest Management Plan preparation, farm tax assessment preparations, forest stand improvement programs, commercial thinning and harvesting of timber, wildlife habitat improvement projects, and forest restoration projects such as invasive plant control and planting of native species, are all activities where we play a leading role.

**Heather J. Gracie, CF, President**, holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resource/Forest Management, Rutgers University, 1984. She served on the Executive Committee of the New Jersey Division of the Society of American Foresters for over 30 years, where she has held several offices, including Chairperson and treasurer. She frequently lectures and conducts tours on forestry for professionals, students, and other interested citizens. She has been awarded the Certificate of Continuing Forestry Education Accomplishment by the Society of American Foresters and has achieved Certified Forester (CF) status for her ongoing accomplishments in continuing education and professional practice. She is a recipient of the Bronze and Silver Hard Hat Awards by the American Forest Foundation for her participation in the New Jersey Tree Farm Program. She was awarded the Silas B. Little Award for her longtime service to the New Jersey Division of the Society of American Foresters. In 2014, she was elected a Fellow in the national Society of American Foresters in recognition of outstanding service to forestry and the society. She is owner of an American Tree Farm and Christmas tree farm in New Hampshire.

**Christina L. Harrigan, CF, Vice-President**, holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resource/Forest Management and Applied Ecology from Rutgers University, 1989. She is currently on the board of the Allegheny Society of American Foresters, and she previously served on the Executive Committee of the New Jersey Division of the Society of American Foresters, holding several offices, most recently Treasurer. She received the President's Award for Outstanding Field Forester in 2018 by the Society of American Foresters. She was twice awarded the Certificate of Continuing Forestry Education Accomplishment by the Society of American Foresters, and has achieved Certified Forester (CF) status for ongoing accomplishments in continuing education and professional practice. In 2023, she was elected a Fellow in the national Society of American Foresters in recognition of outstanding service to forestry and the society. She is currently the Treasurer for the New Jersey Tree Farm Committee.

**Steven W. Kallesser, CF, Senior Associate Forester**, holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resource Management, and Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science from Rutgers University, where he graduated with high honors in 2000. In 2005, he achieved Certified Forester (CF) status for his ongoing accomplishments in continuing education and professional practice. He began working with the firm in 1999 as a Student Associate. He has served as Chairman for the New Jersey Division of the Society of American Foresters, and has served on the NJ Farm Bureau Highlands Advisory Committee and the NJ Forestry Association's Highlands Advisory Committee. He was awarded the Forester of the Year Award in 2008, by the Allegheny Society of American Foresters, a five-state area professional society, for his work in organizing foresters to provide technical input during the production of the Highlands Regional Master Plan. In 2020, Steve was elected a Fellow in the national Society of American Foresters in recognition of outstanding service to forestry and to society. An active volunteer with the Boy Scouts, he has served as the conservation chairman for the Northern New Jersey Council, and as Scout Master to his local Scout Troop.

**Alexander L. Kelchner, Senior Associate Forester**, holds an Associate of Applied Science degree in Forest Technology, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Ecological Forest Management from Paul Smith's College, where he graduated with honors: Cum Laude in 2014. Prior to joining the firm in 2016, he was employed as a Field Forester from 2014 to 2015. He joined the NJ Tree Farm Committee in 2019, and as of 2024 is currently the chairman of the NJ Tree Farm Committee. In 2021 he achieved Certified Forester (CF) status for ongoing accomplishments in continuing education and professional practice. He has received several awards in physical fitness and cross country, and was an active member of both his high school and college cross country teams. He is also an avid hunter and also enjoys hiking, camping, backpacking and farming.

**Jacquelyn Johnston, CCF**, joined Gracie & Harrigan in 2023 as an Associate Forester. She holds an Associate degree in Environmental Science from Raritan Valley Community College (2019), and a Bachelor of Science degree in Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources from Rutgers University (2023), where she was awarded the E.B. Moore Forestry Award. While at Rutgers, she worked at the Chrysler Herbarium, working on a project tracking the movement of ballast species of the Poaceae family. In 2022 to 2023 she worked with Dr. Jason Grabosky to complete a comprehensive tree inventory of the Cook Campus at Rutgers, and also worked on the late Professor John Kuser's project of a silvicultural thinning of Dawn Redwoods (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*). While at Rutgers, she obtained a Wetland Delineation certification through the freshwater ecology class, participated in the Forestry Club, and volunteered for as many tree planting projects that she could attend. She is a board member on the International Society of Arboriculture, New Jersey Chapter, and is the treasurer of the Society of American Foresters, New Jersey chapter. Her interests are gardening, plant propagation, food systems, hiking, foraging, beekeeping, and road trips to nurseries and farm stands.