



# Gahanna

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STREET TREE PROGRAM UPDATE

NOVEMBER 4, 2024

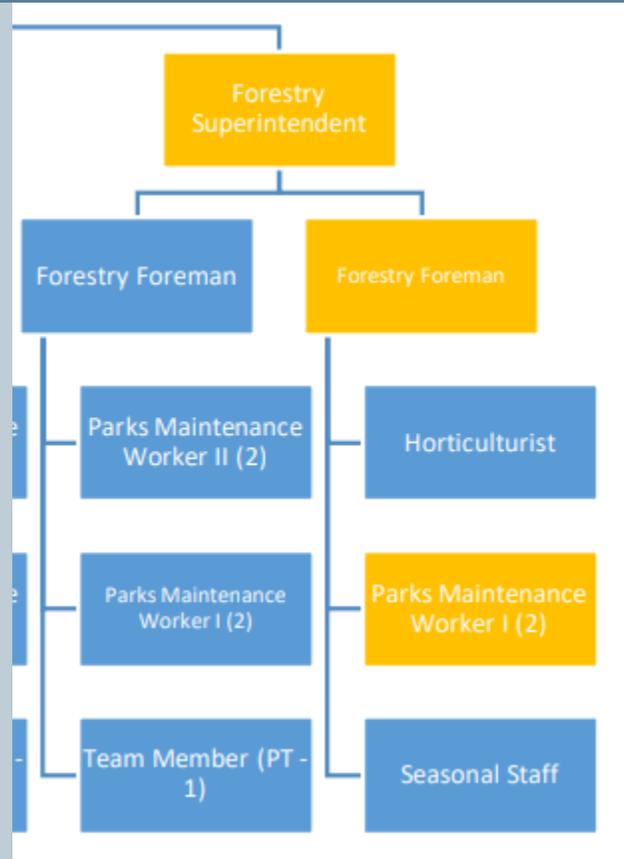
# Program Development

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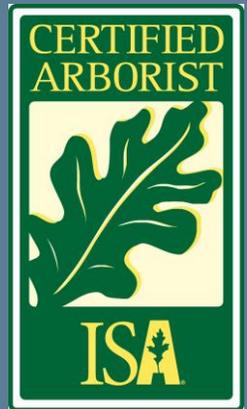
# Parks & Recreation: Forestry Division

## Forestry Division

- Blue positions exist currently
- Yellow positions are 2025 requests for new positions or reclassifications



- 2 ISA Certified Arborists
  - Forestry Supervisor
  - Forestry Foreman
- 1 Tree Risk Assessment Qualified
  - Forestry Foreman
- 1 Municipal Forestry Institute Graduate
  - Forestry Supervisor



# Forestry Division Responsibilities

## Park/General Operations

- Park tree care
  - Planting
  - Pruning
  - Removal
  - Stump grinding
  - Plant health care
  - Mulching
  - Watering
- Horticulture
- Vegetative management along trails
- Prairie management
- Review of development plans
- Emergency response

## Street Tree Operations (2024)

- Removal
  - Public safety hazards
  - Pears by request
- Planting
  - Follows removals preformed by Parks & Recreation and Sidewalk Maintenance Program
- Pruning
  - Public safety only – no clearance pruning
- Stump grinding
- Emergency response

# How did we get started?

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## 2018

- New City Forester hired
- Street tree program information gathered from meetings with neighboring municipalities
- Need for street tree services identified

## 2019

- City-wide budget cuts

## 2020/2021

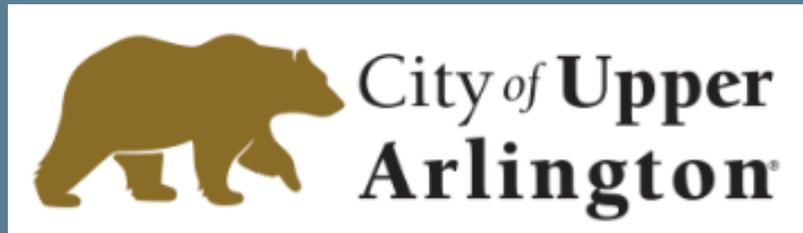
- Survey sent to central Ohio municipalities requesting street tree program information
- Survey results gathered and reviewed
- Survey results presented to Parks & Recreation leadership

# Regional Collaboration



# Model Urban Forestry Programs

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# Program Introduction

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# Why is a street tree program needed?

## Sustainable Canopy

### Old, unmaintained canopy

- Hazard trees (especially old Callery pears)
- Pruning needed City-wide
- Lack of canopy diversity (genus, species, and age)

### Pests and diseases

Examples:

- Ash in Harrison Pond/Rathburn Woods
- Maples in Crossing Creek/Woodside South

### Right Tree, Right Place

## Environmental Impact



Maple in Crossing Creek



Pear on Westerdale Dr. (removed 2024)

# Program Introduction in 2021

## 2021: Urban forestry 5-year plan presented internally

- **Plan Goal**
  - Improve and increase tree canopy in Gahanna
- **Plan Action Items**
  - City transitions to ownership and maintenance of street trees
  - Improve public safety by removing hazardous trees
  - Improve maintenance of existing canopy
    - Pruning
    - Plant health care
    - Proper mulching
    - Proper watering
  - Plant trees
    - Diversify genus, species, and age of trees
    - Consider tree equity
    - Replace removed trees

# Plan Presented to City Council in 2022

## Phase 1

- Hazard Removals
- Removals
  - significant health decline
  - structural defects
- Code Review
- Forestry Supervisor
- Maintenance Worker II
- \$120,000 budget

## Phase 2

- Stump Grinding
- Pruning by Cycle
- Code Changes
- Community Education
- Forestry Foreman
- Equipment
- Seasonal Staff
- \$250,000 budget

## Phase 3

- Replacements
- Code Changes
- Community Education
- Maintenance Worker II
- Seasonal Staff
- \$280,000 budget

# Program Implementation in 2023

2023: Contract services begin earlier than expected (supplemental funding)

- Ash removal and stump grinding
- Tree replacement
- Completed 2024

2024: Street tree program funded in operational budget



Ash in Rathburn Woods (removed in 2023)

# Current Program Update

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# Current Street Tree Operations

## Tree Removals

- Focused on public safety
- Hazard removals identified by staff (new 2024)
- Hazard removals by request – verified by staff
- Pear removal by request (new late 2024)
- *Approximately 50% in-house, 50% contracted*

## Tree Pruning

- Public safety only – no clearance pruning
  - School signs, bus stops, traffic lights, road signs, streetlights, hazard branches
- *Approximately 90% in-house, 10% contracted*

## Tree Planting

- Following Sidewalk Maintenance Program (new 2024)
- Following Parks-initiated removals (new 2024)
- *Approximately 5% in-house, 95% contracted*

## Stump Grinding

- City covers cost of stump grinding and hauling away of chips (new 2024)
- Stump grinding follows removals
- Property owner responsible for turf remediation
- *Approximately 50% in-house, 50% contracted*



# Prioritizing Operations and Funding

## Hazard tree removals

- Public safety is priority
- Focus on areas with history of failure
- Callery pear removals – old trees are brittle and prone to splitting
- Every tree is inspected by ISA Certified Arborist and Tree Risk Assessment Qualified professional prior to removal
- Hazard trees tend to be clustered in locations
  - Monocultures
  - Lack of species and age diversity
- Lack of historical tree maintenance has led to a canopy with poor structure
- Completed inventory will assist with prioritizing removals (planned for 2025)

## Tree plantings

- Follows removals from previous year
- Residents must opt-in
- HOA coordination



# Communication with Residents

Letters (property owner only)

Phone Calls

Emails

In-Person Meetings

Door Hangers (property owner only)

Attend HOA Meetings

Articles in City Publications



Date: 7/29/2024

Re: Important Information Regarding Street Tree Removal

Dear Resident,

The City of Gahanna's Forestry Division has identified the street tree or trees in front of your home as a potential hazard.

ISA Certified Arborists on staff have inspected the tree(s) for potentially dangerous features, and the tree or trees in front of your home exhibit at least one of the following issues:

- At least 40% canopy loss;
- Structural defect (major structural cracking, major tree rot, damage, etc.); and/or
- Serious infestation of a pest or disease.

Trees that are hazardous have been marked for removal. The cost of removal and stump grinding will be covered by the City of Gahanna. Turf remediation will be the responsibility of the property owner.

While replacing the tree or trees is not required, we understand the environmental, health and wellness, and aesthetic benefits that trees provide. The City has identified a process to make replacement more affordable and less labor-intensive, and is currently devising a proposed program for residents. More details regarding the Optional Replacement Program will be available next year, and information will be sent via mail with instructions on how to sign up for the Program.

If you choose to replace the tree(s) on your own in the meantime, please keep in mind that any replacement tree must meet all spacing requirements as set forth in Gahanna Code Section 913, and you must obtain a Right of Way permit from the City before planting can take place.

As a resident, your feedback is important to us. If you have any concerns regarding street tree removal, please contact Julie Predieri, City Forester, by phone at (614) 342-4261 or email at [Julie.Predieri@Gahanna.gov](mailto:Julie.Predieri@Gahanna.gov).

Sincerely,

Julie Predieri  
City Forester

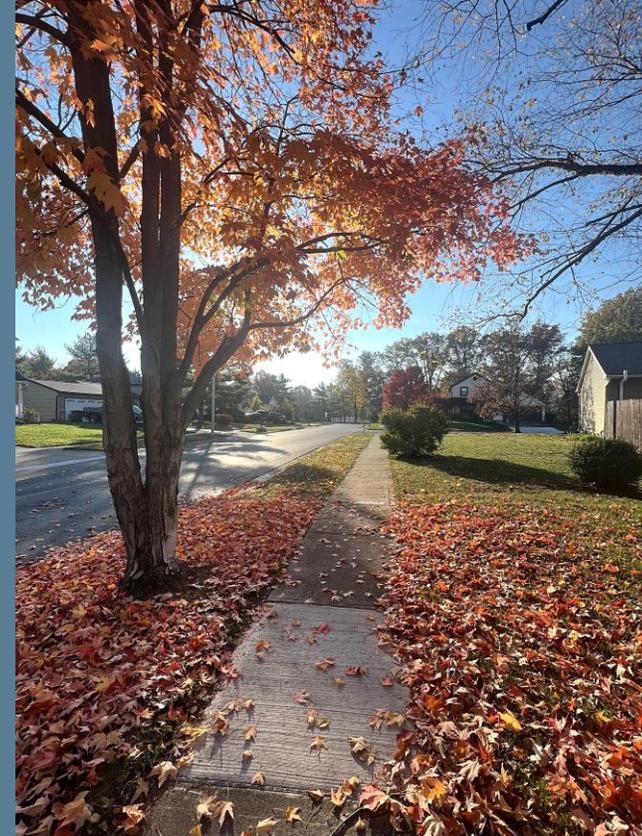
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# Tree Projects Happening Outside Parks & Recreation

Sidewalk Maintenance Program

Clearing for new and existing utilities

Clearing for development of private property



# Current & Future Challenges

Sidewalk/tree conflict

Misinformation and confusion

Future code changes

Effective communication and education

Tree planting

- Identifying replanting locations
- Property owners allowing replanting
- Funding
- Care for new trees



# What to Expect Coming Up

## Short Term:

- Concentrated hazard removals
  - To be identified by Forestry staff and Urban Forestry Management Plan inventory
  - Will include many, but not all Callery pears
  - Will include other species of trees if hazardous features are present
- Urban Forestry Management Plan and inventory (requested for 2025 budget)
- Pear Management and Outreach Plan (2025)
- Code revisions
- Expanded replacement tree planting
  - Follows Sidewalk Maintenance Program and Parks & Recreation removals the following year

## Long Term:

- City-wide tree planting
- Structural pruning
- Plant health care



# Goals for the Future

## Improve and increase tree canopy in Gahanna

- Full street tree program including planting, pruning, removals, stump grinding, and plant health care
- Continue to plant and maintain trees in parks
- Collaborate with Sidewalk Maintenance Program to put the right trees in the right place and save trees when possible
- Improve public education about trees with creative approaches to communication
- Align with goal for a more sustainable Gahanna

