



**City of Gahanna**  
*200 South Hamilton Road*  
*Gahanna, Ohio 43230*

# **COMPREHENSIVE LANDSCAPE PLAN**

***(Comprehensive Tree Plan for Gahanna)***

**DRAFT REVISED JKH 2018**

**GAHANNA'S VISION is ...**

*...to be an innovative model community that values its rich heritage, pursues high standards, and where citizens respect one another.*

**GAHANNA'S MISSION is ...**

*...to ensure an exceptional quality of life by providing comprehensive services, financial stability, and well-planned development which preserves the natural environment, so that city government will continue to be responsive, accessible and accountable to our diverse and growing community of citizens.*

**PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT'S MISSION is ...**

- *To protect and conserve the natural environment and to provide Gahanna citizens with opportunity to spend leisure time in a constructive beneficial manner.*
- *To provide a balanced recreation program designed to assist the citizens of Gahanna in developing and learning skills and maintaining their general welfare.*
- *To present stimulating programs to all age groups based on the expressed interest of the citizens of Gahanna.*

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## **I. Introduction**

### **a. Purpose Statement**

- i. The City of Gahanna's Comprehensive Landscape Plan (Comprehensive Tree Plan for Gahanna) was created for the following reasons:

- a. To provide a master tree plan to City Council, Planning Commission and internal staff
- b. To provide clear guidance, tree care standards and landscaping requirements to Gahanna residents and contractors

### **b. Note to Gahanna Residents**

- i. This document is designed to assist residents in finding the tree-related information they need. In places where there is a reference to another document, you can always contact Gahanna's City Forester for a hard or digital copy. Before conducting any work in a right-of-way, citizens must refer to the most updated copy of the codified ordinances, and in most cases, citizens should seek permission from the City of Gahanna.

## **II. Gahanna Codified Ordinances**

### **a. Chapter 154 – Landscape Board**

This ordinance outlines the creation, purpose and intended duties of Gahanna's Landscape Board. For a current copy, contact the City Forester or visit the City of Gahanna's website and search under the "Government" tab for City Codes and Charter.

### **b. Chapter 913 – Landscaping Requirements**

This ordinance outlines requirements for tree planting and maintenance in both private and public spaces. This chapter also includes information about non-tree landscaping standards. Residents searching for information about street tree requirements should check this chapter under section 10. For a current copy, contact the City Forester or visit the City of Gahanna's website and search under the "Government" tab for City Codes and Charter.

### **c. Chapter 914 – Tree Preservation, Planting and Replacement**

This ordinance outlines the preservation and protection of Gahanna's existing trees during development of lands. This chapter is designed more for engineers and developers than home owners. During development projects, trees must be included in landscape plans and some trees require protection during construction. For a current copy, contact the City Forester or visit the City of

Gahanna's website and search under the "Government" tab for City Codes and Charter.

### **III. Park Trees**

#### **a. Program Description**

##### **i. What are Park Trees?**

Park trees are considered to be any tree in a City-owned greenspace (not in a right-of-way). Some park trees are more maintained than others. Trees that are specially planted for aesthetic value are pruned and cared for on a regular basis while trees in natural forests are only evaluated if they become hazardous.

##### **ii. The Importance of Park Trees**

Trees are a vital asset to any urban environment. Healthy trees add beauty, are a source of oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide, provide shade, absorb noise and increase property values. Parks and the trees found in parks add value to the community and provide a natural haven for residents. Gahanna has been designated a Tree City USA for more than 20 years, and park trees help the community maintain this prestigious status.

##### **iii. Park Tree Guidelines**

The City of Gahanna is responsible for the planting, maintenance, and removal of park trees. If a citizen notices a tree that is dead and/or hazardous on park property, they are encouraged to report the tree to Gahanna's City Forester.

#### **b. Memorial Tree Program**

- i. The Memorial Tree Program is an opportunity to help beautify Gahanna's parks while at the same time celebrating life by planting a tree. People often wish to leave living memorials for those they have lost or to celebrate a birth of a child, wedding, or anniversary. In response to these wishes, the Gahanna Department of Parks and Recreation has established a special program to allow people to donate towards planting trees on City of Gahanna park land. A donation of \$650 will plant a tree that will beautify our community for future generations to enjoy. Trees are planted in the spring and fall. The size and species of trees will be appropriate for the site and will be at the discretion of the Parks staff. A plaque will be ordered and installed by the City of Gahanna and is included in the price of the tree. Contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 614-342-4250 for more information.

### **IV. Street Trees**

#### **a. Program Description**

##### **i. What are Street Trees?**

Street trees are the trees located in the right-of-way or easement (usually the area of turf between the street and the sidewalk). Rights-of-way are the areas dedicated to the City and the area where utility lines are typically placed. Because the City must have access to these utilities, the City retains ownership of right-of-way areas, including the trees. Like sidewalks, curbs and driveways, street trees are the maintenance responsibility of the homeowner. For more information, please contact the City of Gahanna's City Forester.

ii. The Importance of Street Trees

Trees are a vital asset to any urban environment. Healthy trees add beauty, are a source of oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide, provide shade, absorb noise and increase property values. Planting of street trees is required for all new residential and most new commercial developments. Gahanna has been designated a Tree City USA for more than 20 years, and street trees help the community maintain this prestigious status.

iii. Street Tree Guidelines

Many Gahanna residents ask if they are allowed to maintain and prune the street trees adjacent to their homes. In fact, it is the responsibility of the homeowner to do this. Because residents frequently ask for guidance on street tree removal, replacement and care, the City of Gahanna has a Standards and Specifications document available for resident use. It is available both digitally and on paper. Please contact the City Forester to obtain a copy of this document. The City's Parks Department and the City Forester are always available for guidance by calling 614-342-4260; or by sending an email to the City Forester at [parksandrec@gahanna.gov](mailto:parksandrec@gahanna.gov).

b. Tree Grant Program

This program is temporarily on hold due to funding.

**V. Tree City USA**

a. Program Overview

- i. The City of Gahanna and its citizens take pride in their commitment to protecting and improving the quality of the urban forest. Tree City USA is a National recognition of that commitment and is sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation. Gahanna strives to maintain this accreditation annually.
- ii. Tree City USA provides direction, technical assistance, public attention, and national recognition for urban and community forestry programs in thousands of towns and cities where more than 93 million Americans call home.

b. Tree City USA Benefits

i. Framework for Action

Meeting the four standards for becoming a Tree City USA provides initial direction for an urban or community forestry program. Like the first rungs on a ladder, the standards help get a community started toward annual, systematic management of its tree resources.

ii. Education

Education begins with discussion of the standards and getting organized to apply for Tree City USA status. It continues as the desire for Tree City USA recognition leads to contacts with the state forester's staff. In turn, this can set in motion aid from a variety of professionals in the form of technical advice, literature, films, and other assistance.

iii. Public Image

A community's public image is a very real phenomenon and important in many ways. Being a Tree City USA helps present the kind of image that most citizens want to have for the place they live or conduct business. The Tree City USA signs at community entrances tell visitors that here is a community that cares about its environment. It is also an indication to prospective businesses that the quality of life may be better here. It has even been known to be a factor in where meetings or conferences have been held.

iv. Citizen Pride

Pride is sometimes a less tangible benefit. Gaining and retaining Tree City USA recognition is an award to the tree workers, managers, volunteers, tree board members and others who work on behalf of better care of a community's trees. Non-involved citizens, too, often share a sense of pride that theirs is a Tree City USA. This may translate to better care of trees on private property or a willingness to volunteer in the future.

v. Financial Assistance

Preference is sometimes given to Tree City USA communities over other communities when allocations of grant money are made for trees or forestry programs. The reason is that there are invariably more requests than available funds when grants are available through state or federal agencies. If requests are equally worthy, some officials tend to have more confidence in communities that have demonstrated the foresight of becoming a Tree City USA.

vi. Publicity

Presentation of the Tree City USA award and the celebration of Arbor Day offer excellent publicity opportunities. This results not only in satisfaction for the individuals involved and their families, but also provides one more way to reach large numbers of people with information about tree care.

c. Standards of Tree City USA Accreditation

To qualify for Tree City USA, a town or city must meet four standards established by The National Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters. These standards were established to ensure that every qualifying community would have a viable tree management plan and program. It is important to note that they were also designed so that no community would be excluded because of size.

- a. A Tree Board or Department
- b. A Tree Care Ordinance
- c. A Community Forestry Program with an Annual Budget of at Least \$2 per Capita
- d. An Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation

## VI. Appendix

a. Definitions (in reference to Codified Ordinances)

- i. "Accessory use or building" means a use or a structure subordinate to the principal use or building on a lot and serving a purpose customarily incidental thereto.
- ii. "Board" means the City Landscape Board.
- iii. "Injurious plants" includes, but is not limited to the following list of trees that are prone to disease, seek water (trouble for water and sewer lines), are soft wood trees and need room for roots to grow and a curb lawn does not provide enough room. Some of the trees have thorns and some won't tolerate snow, salt and sand that could affect it during the winter.
- iv. "Interior landscaping" means the use of landscape materials within the innermost boundaries of the landscape buffer zone and perimeter landscaping.
- v. "Landscape buffer zone" means that area adjacent to any vehicular use area or along common boundaries in which the perimeter landscape requirements are to be met.
- vi. "Large tree" means any tree species which normally attains a full grown height in excess of fifty feet.
- vii. "Medium tree" means any tree species which normally attains a full grown height of between twenty-five feet and fifty feet.
- viii. "Small Trees" means any tree species which normally attains a full grown height under twenty-five feet.
- ix. "O.F.T." means or fraction thereof.
- x. "Opacity" means the degree to which a wall, fence or landscaping is impenetrable to light or vision.
- xi. "Public Trees" shall include all shade and ornamental trees and/or shrubs now or hereafter growing on any public property.

- xii. "Parking area, lot or structure" means an off-street area or structure, for required parking or loading spaces, including driveways, access ways, aisles, parking or loading spaces, including driveways, access ways, aisles, parking and maneuvering space.
- xiii. "Perimeter landscaping" means the use of landscape materials within the landscape buffer zone to achieve the required opacity.
- xiv. "Person" means any person, corporation, partnership, company, contracting firm or other entity.
- xv. "Pruning" means to cut branches, stems, etc. from a plant to improve shape and growth.
- xvi. "Street trees" means those trees, shrubs, bushes, and all other woody vegetation on land lying within street easements or right-of-way, or between property lines on either side of all streets, avenues or ways within the City.
- xvii. "Topping" means the severe cutting back of limbs within a tree's crown to a stub, or to a bud or a lateral branch not large enough to assume the terminal role and produce healthy growth so as to remove the normal canopy, disfigure the tree, and promote weak rapid growth.
- xviii. "Treelawn" means that part of a street not covered by sidewalk or other paving, lying between the property line and that portion of the street right-of-way that is paved and usually used for vehicular traffic.
- xix. "Vehicular use area" means any area used by vehicles. (Ord. 160-92. Passed 10-6-92)

b. Invasive Species List

- i. The following invasive species list is provided by the Ohio Invasive Plants Council.
  - a. Amur honeysuckle
  - b. Asian bittersweet
  - c. Autumn-olive
  - d. Canada thistle
  - e. Common buckthorn
  - f. Common cut-leaved teasel
  - g. Common reed grass (phragmites)
  - h. Eurasian water-milfoil
  - i. European buckthorn
  - j. Garlic mustard
  - k. Japanese honeysuckle
  - l. Japanese knotweed
  - m. Morrow bush honeysuckle
  - n. Multiflora rose
  - o. Narrow-leaved and hybrid cattail
  - p. Purple loostrike
  - q. Reed canary grass
  - r. Russian-olive
  - s. Smooth brome

- t. Tartarian bush honeysuckle
  - u. Tree-of-heaven
  - v. White sweet-clover
  - w. Yellow sweet-clover
- ii. Note that there are species not listed above that are considered to be on the “watch list.” Although not yet classified as an invasive species, these plants display characteristics of invasive species. For more information on the watch list, contact The Ohio State University’s local extension office at 614-866-6900.

c. Prohibited Tree List

The following list of prohibited street trees are considered to be "injurious plants" and are prone to disease, seek water (trouble for water and sewer lines), are soft wood trees and need room for roots to grow and a curb lawn does not provide enough room. Some of the trees have thorns and some won't tolerate snow, salt and sand that could affect it during the winter:

- a. Box elder
- b. Mulberry
- c. Siberian elm
- d. Fruit trees
- e. Evergreen species
- f. Poplar species
- g. Hawthorn species (with exception of thornless cultivars)
- h. Honey locust (with exception of thornless and seedless cultivars)
- i. Silver maple
- j. Willow species
- k. Ginkgo (exclusion only includes females)
- l. Tree-of-heaven
- m. Cottonwood
- n. Crabapple species
- o. Ash species
- p. Pear species

Note that industry standards encourage the phrase, “Right Tree, Right Place.” Just because a tree is not listed as prohibited does not mean that it is an acceptable species for any location. All new street trees must be approved by the City Forester before planting. Any tree planted that has not been approved may be removed by the City of Gahanna.

d. Contact Information

City of Gahanna  
City Forester  
Julie Hussey  
julie.hussey@gahanna.gov  
P: 614-342-4250