

David VanLuven
Town Supervisor

Robert Leslie, AICP
Director of Planning

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
Albany County - New York
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
445 DELAWARE AVENUE
DELMAR, NEW YORK 12054
(518) 439-4955 x1157
Fax: (518) 439-5808
Email: rleslie@townofbethlehem.org



TO: David VanLuven, Supervisor
Town Board Members

FROM: Nate Owens, AICP

RE: Update on the Bethlehem Street Tree Inventory and Community Forestry Management Plan Project

DATE: March 6, 2020

Progress Update

The last time this project was before the Town Board was June 12, 2019, where the Town Board authorized the Town Supervisor to sign a contract with Davey Resource Group, Inc. (DRG) for consultant services for the street tree inventory and preparation of a Community Forestry Management Plan. Since then, staff notified residents of the inventory; DRG conducted the inventory; and staff, the consultant, and the Street Tree Advisory Committee have begun work on the management plan.

After DRG conducted the inventory and processed the iTree inventory report, they attended a Street Tree Advisory Committee meeting in December 2019 to discuss the inventory findings and aspirations for the management plan. Davey Resource Group is currently working on a first draft of the management plan using information from the inventory, Town staff, as well as guidance from the Street Tree Advisory Committee. Staff, the committee, and DRG will be reaching out to community members to share the inventory findings and gather input during development of the management plan.

Street Tree Inventory

DRG identified 4,824 trees, 149 stumps, and 1,657 available tree planting sites along the inventoried rights of ways. Staff will present the findings of the street tree inventory to the Town Board at the March 11, 2020 meeting. Some of the important findings are:

- Maple trees were particularly prominent, representing 31% of the street trees inventoried.
- Spruce, ash, and pine trees each make up around 10% of the inventory.
- Approximately 65% of inventoried street trees are native to North America, with 57% native to New York. Approximately 35% are exotic species, with 13.7% of all trees surveyed being invasive species.
- The tree most common invasive species include Norway Maple (10.4%), Callery Pear (1.9%), and Black Locust (1.4%)
- DRG rated trees for risk:

- 1 Extreme Risk Tree (notified NYSDOT), 3 High Risk Trees, 86 Moderate Risk, 4,758 Low Risk trees
- Bethlehem has a good distribution of tree sizes (diameter)
- Bethlehem has a low percentage of poor condition trees, but has lower than ideal percentage of good condition trees
- Potential Pest Impact Highlights:
 - Emerald Ash Borer (8.9%)
 - Gypsy Moth (12.5%)
 - Pine Shoot Beetle (15.6%)
 - Spruce Beetle (11.3%)
- Inventoried trees have carbon storage equivalent to emissions from 2,360 automobiles
- 104.6 thousand cubic feet of runoff avoided per year
- 1,844 lbs. of pollution removal per year

Community Forestry Management Plan

The purpose of the street tree management plan will be to establish the Town's aspirations for street trees in town, describe why those aspirations are worthwhile, detail where the Town is now with street tree related programs, and describe the work and resources needed to achieve the Town's aspirations and goals.

Staff from the Planning and Highway Departments have provided DRG with information regarding the Town's current practices and budget expenditures regarding street tree management. The consultant is currently working on a first draft of management plan. Staff and DRG will be holding a public meeting in the coming months to gather feedback from interested residents.

Next Steps

- DRG will continue drafting the Street Tree Management Plan
- The Street Tree Advisory Committee will review the Draft Street Tree Management Plan and provide feedback to DRG
- Staff, the Street Tree Advisory Committee, and DRG will discuss and plan a public meeting to solicit feedback on the Draft Street Tree Management Plan
- Staff, DRG, and the Street Tree Advisory Committee will hold a public meeting to gather resident input. Residents may also email or call staff to provide input.
- DRG will revise the plan and present a Final Draft to the Town Board for approval

Please contact me at x1155 if you have any questions or concerns.

Attachments

Cc: R. Leslie, R. Nagengast