

Park Development Tree Removal Evaluation Form

Applicant: County of Middlesex Block/Lot: Block 109 Lot 1
Project Name: Metuchen Trailhead Park at the Middlesex Greenway Location: Metuchen, NJ
Municipality (If different than applicant): Metuchen, NJ

Trees can provide a variety of ecological, social, and cultural services, including habitat for wildlife, public recreation, water filtration, decreased ambient air temperatures, and carbon sequestration and storage. To ensure that park development projects support these benefits, applicants shall provide detailed information regarding any tree removal proposed as part of the project, as well as a discussion of alternatives to removing the trees.

If one or more trees over 6" DBH* is proposed for removal, the applicant must complete this form, including a rigorous and detailed alternatives analysis that addresses the possibility of moving the proposed facilities either to another part of the park or to another park to avoid the tree removal. Based on our review, the project may not be funded. If 8 or more trees over 6" DBH* or 50% or more of the trees in the project area are proposed for removal, it is highly unlikely that the project will be funded, and the applicant should reach out to discuss the project with Green Acres before starting to prepare the application.

Please note that, if the project is funded, pre-bid documents will be compared with the information provided on this form and the requested tree removals map. Any discrepancies must be reviewed and approved by Green Acres before starting construction (particularly tree removal) to avoid project disqualification.

Alternatives Review

- Please identify other possible project locations (at this park or others) and discuss whether the proposed removal of any tree listed below could be avoided by relocating proposed facilities:

Trailhead Park as designed is the most suitable project location due to its direct adjacency to the Middlesex Greenway, strong connectivity, and available open space. To preserve the existing tree stand along Memorial Parkway to the greatest extent possible, the parking layout was shifted inward. Relocating the entrance to Middlesex Avenue is not feasible from a traffic and pedestrian safety standpoint. Shifting the parking to Middlesex Avenue will cause vehicular traffic to be present in the area of the site with the most pedestrian traffic. It will also reduce the functionality of the park by interrupting the pedestrian flow to the Middlesex Greenway. It will also affect the visibility and connection to the development across from the site. Therefore, the removal of two trees is unavoidable. Tree #1 conflicts with the proposed curb alignment and is diseased. According to the USDA, the species of Tree #1, the alianthus, is identified as a widespread invasive species. Maintaining this tree would crowd out native species and could damage some the pavements and other improvements on site. Tree #1 will be removed in accordance with the NJ Strategic Management Plan for Invasive Species, likely using primarily mechanical control methods like cutting, pulling and grinding of the tree and its roots. Tree #2 will be significantly impacted by grading and parking lot construction, resulting in root disturbance beyond what the tree can tolerate.

- Please discuss whether the proposed removal of any tree listed below could be avoided through trimming or securing (cabling, bracing):

The proposed tree removals cannot be avoided through trimming or securing measures such as cabling or bracing. Tree #1 is located within the proposed curb alignment and infrastructure footprint, making preservation infeasible regardless of pruning or stabilization. Tree #2 will experience extensive root disturbance from required grading and parking lot construction, and trimming or structural support would not mitigate the long-term impacts to tree health or safety. An option can be explored to move this tree to a different location on site or another site in an attempt to preserve it, however there is no guarantee that this tree will survive in this alternative.

Please estimate the current total number of trees in the proposed project area: 85

Municipal Tree Ordinance

All applicants should adhere to any existing ordinance that governs tree removal while administering their park development project, even if the ordinance would otherwise exempt the proposed project.

Concept Plan

Proposed tree removals must be identified by an "X" on the concept plan, and each tree listed below should be keyed to the map with a unique identifier (e.g., the tree that is listed as Map Key Value A. on the list should be shown as A. on the concept plan).

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Tree Characteristics

Please complete the requested information for each tree over 6" DBH that is proposed to be removed.
(Fallen trees should not be listed.)

Map Key Value	Species	DBH	Condition (Healthy, Diseased, Damaged, Dead)	Exceptional Specimen?	Historically Significant?	Significant Ecological Value?	Located in Riparian Zone?	Located on Steep Slope?	Additional Notes
1	Ailanthus	7"	Diseased	No	No	No	No	No	Spotted Lantern Fly
2	Black Walnut	18"	Healthy	No	No	No	No	No	

*** Definitions:**

DBH = Diameter at Breast Height – Tree diameter measured 4.5 feet from ground level on the downhill side of the tree.

Exceptional Specimen – A tree that is particularly impressive or unusual example of a species due to its size, shape, age, or any other trait that epitomizes the character of the species.

Historically Significant – A tree that is associated with a notable local or regional historic event, person, structure, or landscape.


Significant Ecological Value – A tree that provides greater than average ecological benefits, e.g., by providing food or shelter to threatened or endangered wildlife.

Riparian Zone – Land and vegetation within and directly adjacent to all surface water bodies including, but not limited to lakes, ponds, reservoirs, perennial and intermittent streams, up to and including their point of origin, such as seeps and springs.

Steep Slopes – Areas with slopes greater than 15 percent.

Certification

I certify that the information provided is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. (Signature does not imply an endorsement of the proposed project.)



Date: 1/20/24

Signature
Matthew K. Redden
Print Name

Title (check one): Chairperson, Shade Tree Commission
 Chairperson, Environmental Commission
 NJ Licensed Tree Expert

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