

Bowdoinham Municipal Tree Plan Revised, February, 2026

Mission Statement -

The mission of the proposed Bowdoinham Tree Committee is to provide guidance and action plans for the long term stewardship of trees in public spaces and along rights-of-way.

Introduction:

Trees are a valuable resource in the community. They improve air quality by removing pollutants through their leaves. Trees influence temperature and energy use by providing shade, transpiring moisture, and reducing wind speed, helping to mitigate the need for cooling in the summer and heating in the winter. Trees also provide wildlife habitat. Trees improve water quality and reduce costs associated with stormwater management. They sequester carbon dioxide through photosynthesis, helping to reduce or mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and store carbon in their tissues. There are even numerous health benefits associated with the mere presence of trees.

Trees inherently have “natural capital” within Bowdoinham, and indeed the planet. (Natural capital is the monetary value of everything that comes from nature that gives people the essential means of life - food, water, shelter.) And, trees are beautiful, making the town visually appealing and creating a more pleasant and comfortable place in which to live or visit. Mature shade trees and other ornamental trees significantly increase property values.

In short, it is in the Town’s best interest to preserve, maintain, care for, and, when necessary, replace its municipal trees.

In response to citizen concerns over the course of 2024/2025, a Municipal Tree Plan Committee was formed to develop a tree plan for our Town moving forward. The Committee will serve as an advisory and communication body, working together with the Select Board, Town Manager, Public Works Department, Cemetery Advisory Committee, Comprehensive Planning Committee, and the citizens of Bowdoinham to help guide the Town regarding the care of its municipal trees.¹

Committee Structure and Scope:

- The Town shall create a standing Municipal Tree Committee.
- The Municipal Tree Committee shall consist of at least 5 members, all of whom shall be volunteers from the town of Bowdoinham.
- The term of membership is 3 years.
- A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the Municipal Tree Committee.
- The Committee shall elect a chair person, vice chair, and secretary.
- The Committee shall meet on such a schedule and at such dates as it shall deem necessary and expedient, but not less frequently than quarterly.
- Phase 1 of this plan will focus primarily on Village District 1.

Tasks:

Tasks will include initiating specific projects, such as:

- Surveying, assessing and documenting the town's municipal trees, starting with Village District 1 and all town cemeteries.
- Timely monitoring of municipal trees for structural health and evidence of disease.
- Researching, gathering and sharing remediation strategies regarding the infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer.
- Compiling and maintaining a list of resources relevant to tree care and making this available to the public. For example: Maine Forest Service, Arbor Day Foundation, USDA, Maine Arborist Association.²
- Identifying sources of funding to support such tasks, such as Project Canopy.²

Tasks will also include advising and communicating with relevant entities about best practices, such as:

- Work to secure funding to keep an arborist on retainer in order to provide professional assessment as needed.
- Preservation, especially of "heritage trees".³

And, pending an initial town tree survey, and professional assessment:

- An initial maintenance plan will be created, in conjunction with public works. This plan will outline best practices for basic tree health, and be updated periodically.
- Trees will be targeted for removal based on the health of the tree, and as necessary to protect public safety.
- Removal will be done by public works, or a professional arborist as the job requires.
- Areas in need of replanting and new planting will be identified, which will emphasize native trees and sustainability.
- The committee will work with the Select Board, Public Works, and citizens to ensure appropriate and cost-effective strategies to replant, purchase and plant new trees.
- The committee will work with the Maine Forest Service, and other groups, to gather and share information regarding prevalent tree pests and diseases. This information will be shared through such resources as the town website, the town newsletter, the Bowdoinhammer, as well as at various community functions.
- The committee may also share such information, as well as other topics pertinent to tree care, through the presentation of public forums and workshops.

Endnotes:

- 1- Municipal Trees: Any tree or woody vegetation that stands on municipal property or rights-of-way.
- 2- An evolving list of various resources, with contact information, is attached.
- 3- Heritage Tree: Any tree which because of age, size, species, historical association or horticultural value is of special importance.

Resources

Maine Forest Service, DACF
(207) 287-2431 or -2791 (Augusta)
foresthealth@maine.gov
www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs

Project Canopy
https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/policy_management/project_canopy/index.html

USDA Forest Service
(800) 832-1355
sm.fs.webmaster@usda.gov
www.fs.usda.gov
Eastern Region (R9)
(414) 297-3600 (no office in Maine)
626 East Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53202
Urban Forestry Roadmap - Vibrant Cities Lab
www.vibrantcitieslab.org/urban-forestry-roadmap/

Arbor Day Foundation
(888) 448-7337
211 N. 12th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508
www.arboday.org