Urban Tree Planting and Protection Resources

The Chester County Woodlands and Tree Protection webpage provides information to assist in the protection and expansion of the county's tree and woodland cover.

To view the Woodlands and Tree webpage go to: *www.chescoplanning/environmental/woodlands.* ▶ Information and links on the site that are most relevant to urban trees include:

- **Planting and Maintaining New Trees**
  Selecting the right trees and properly maintaining them after planting are essential to ensure their long term survival. This webpage provides resources to help keep trees healthy from planting through maturity and includes a special section on the needs of urban trees.

- **Tree Planting Funding Sources**
  Grant programs and funding sources for tree planting projects are provided in this section of the woodlands webpage. Chester County Planning also provides regular updates on grant information through our monthly eNewsletter and on our Municipal Grant Opportunities webpage.

Tree Protection eTools provide guidance and resources for the protection and expansion of trees and woodlands. The following eTools may be of particular interest to urban communities.

- **Street Trees**
  Street trees provide many benefits to communities when thoughtful planning, careful maintenance, and public awareness support their health and longevity.

- **Urban Heat Island Mitigation**
  Heat islands are urbanized areas with higher air and surface temperatures than outlying areas caused by concentrated impervious surfaces and limited greenery.

- **Urban Green Spaces**
  Urban green spaces are urban spaces with significant vegetation coverage that provide environmental quality, economic value, and social well-being.

To view all eTools and Grant Opportunities go to: *www.chescoplanning.org/MuniCorner* ▶ and go to "Planning eTools" and "Municipal Grant Opportunities" links.
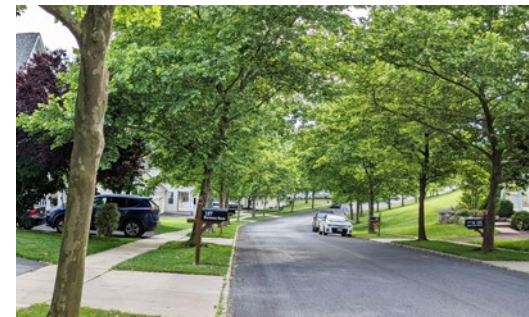
Natural Resource Protection Ordinances

Please contact the Planning Commission if you would like a summary of your municipal natural protection ordinance regulations, including brief recommendations for enhancing them. The inventory covers standards for woodlands, riparian buffers, wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplains.

DVRPC Resources

Municipal management of extreme heat
Municipalities can mitigate, prepare for, and respond to extreme heat events.
dvrpc.org/energyclimate/extremeheat ▶

Sidewalk and street tree screening tool
Identifies locations where sidewalk repair and street tree planting would have the greatest impact in addressing heat.
www.dvrpc.org/products/22120 ▶

Questions?

Contact ccplanning@chesco.org
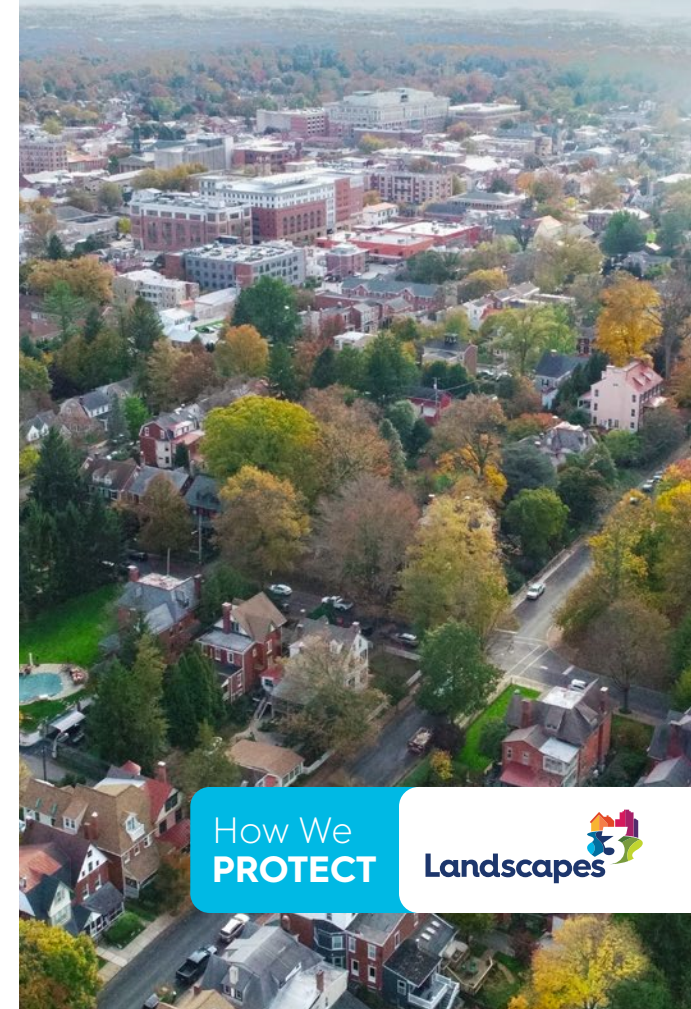
Chester County Planning Commission
601 Westtown Road, Suite 270
P.O. Box 2747
West Chester, PA 19380

www.chescoplanning.org ▶
610-344-6285

CHESTER COUNTY
Planning
COMMISSION

Growing the Urban Tree Canopy
in Chester County, PA

Making our urban landscapes cooler and greener for everyone!

How We PROTECT

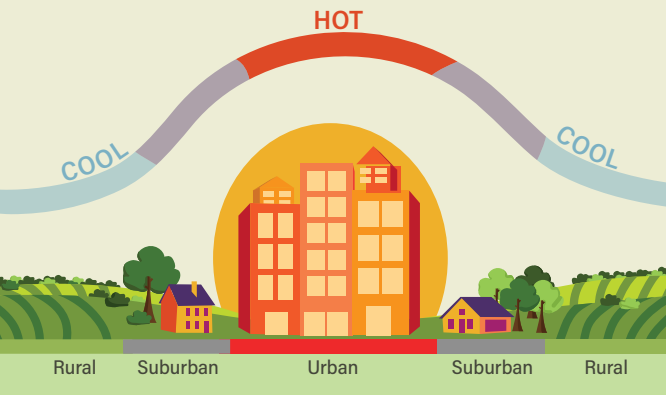Landscapes

Urban Heat Island Effect

HOT

COOL · COOL

Rural | Suburban | Urban | Suburban | Rural

What is an Urban Heat Island?

Buildings, roads, and other infrastructure absorb and release the sun's heat at higher levels than natural areas such as woodlands, meadows, and streams. Urban areas, where man-made structures are concentrated and where greenspace is limited, become "islands" of higher temperatures relative to the less developed surrounding areas. These pockets of heat are referred to as "urban heat islands." Residents living in urban heat islands are more likely to experience heat related illnesses, lower air quality, and a higher burden of energy costs.

Benefits of Trees in Urban Areas

Trees in urban areas are especially valuable as a heat mitigation tool because they provide shade and cooling in hot summer months, enhance public health and quality of life, and create attractive streetscapes for residents, businesses, and visitors to enjoy. Trees are most effective for heat island mitigation when planted in strategic locations where they can provide shade around buildings, on streets, and paved parking lots.

For more information on the benefits of trees in urban areas see: *www.epa.gov/heatislands* ▶ and click on "Trees and Vegetation" link.

Supporting Trees in the Urban Landscape

Trees in urban environments face many challenges including competition for space, lack of proper light and nutrition, damage from cars and snowplows, vandalism, and heavy pruning.

Selecting suitable trees that can withstand harsh growing conditions is important as well as maintenance of urban trees in their early years of growth. The survival of newly planted trees is dependent on providing them with enough space, water, and nutrients to thrive.

Consulting a landscape architect or arborist to assist with tree selection, planting, and maintenance needs will increase their odds of growing into mature shade trees. Municipal shade tree commissions are also important allies in protecting and expanding the urban tree canopy.

Tree Canopy Maps

Tree Canopy in Urban Landscape
- Tree canopy
- Impervious roads
- Impervious structures
- Impervious, other

Urban tree maps

Tree canopy maps have been created for each Urban Landscape in Chester County showing the current tree canopy, structures, and paved surfaces to help identify gaps along streets and in neighborhoods that could benefit from additional shade trees. The maps also show protected public lands and floodplains that could be good candidates for tree planting efforts. (Contact ccplanning@chesco.org for copies.)

Tree Cover in Chester County, PA
- Tree Canopy
- Impervious Surfaces

County-wide tree cover maps

For more detailed mapping, the interactive Tree Cover Map is available on our website and displays tree cover including woodlands, street trees, and tree canopy over impervious surface. The user can zoom into specific areas to more clearly see gaps in tree coverage where tree planting efforts could have the most impact. View the interactive map at: *www.chescoplanning.org/environmental/woodlands* ▶ and go to "Woodlands Mapping."

Please note that the county tree maps provide a snapshot of tree coverage based on the best digital information available at the time they were created. Site specific ground 'truthing' is needed to verify information.

Tree Canopy Goals

While specific tree canopy goals depend on the characteristics of each community, a goal of 40% is a good starting place for many urban areas in our region. The placement of the trees is equally important with priority areas along streets where trees provide essential neighborhood shade and in highly paved areas where they can reduce the urban heat island effect.

Tree equity score website

Tree Equity Score is a nationwide website that highlights inequitable access to trees. The score is calculated for urban areas at the neighborhood (Census block group) level. Scores range from 0–100 with a lower score indicating a greater priority for tree planting. The site recommends a "tree canopy goal" for each block group analyzed based on several factors. In Chester County urban block groups, the goals generally range from 40% to 50%.

To view the Tree Equity Score map go to: *www.treeequityscore.org* ▶