

# Community Trees

## Bridgewater Township

2022

Trees benefit the entire community, so all trees should be considered when examining the use of local laws and resources. This snapshot outlines how trees are managed in your community and is intended to encourage resident involvement in shaping future land use, resource management, and conservation policies.

Current Tree Canopy Cover: 25%  
Tree Protection Ordinance: No  
Township Parks: None

Street Trees: Washtenaw  
County Roads Commission  
or Private Ownership

*Bridgewater Township*

Website: [twp-bridgewater.org](http://twp-bridgewater.org)



### STRENGTHS

#### Zoning to Protect Agriculture, Open Space, and Natural Features

Over 70% of the land is agriculture and the majority of parcels are zoned as General Agriculture (AG) with the purpose of preserving rural character, farmlands and operating farmsteads, and natural resource areas. Parcels within the Agricultural Preservation Overlay area qualify for participation in the State of Michigan's Agricultural Preservation fund and are eligible for preservation via Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Ordinance.

#### Recognition of Natural Features Benefits

Throughout the Master Plan and Ordinances, multiple references note the importance of natural features and the need to protect and preserve them.

### CHALLENGES

#### Balancing Agricultural Use with Natural Features Protection

Agricultural operations can produce waste and runoff that degrade natural features and ecosystem services, such as clean water. Conventional agricultural practices generally do not provide wildlife habitat, clean the air, or sequester carbon long-term.

#### Differing Expectations of County-Owned Nature Preserves

Washtenaw County has established two nature preserves within the Township as part of its Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP); this involved the County purchasing land with significant natural features, including woodlands, and adding amenities to facilitate public access. However, differing views of how nature preserves should function as well as trespass concerns have arisen, which has reduced Township interest in pursuing additional preserves with the County.

#### Lack of Planning Capacity

No dedicated planning staff means most planning work is contracted out and makes implementing changes to land use policy and the Code of Ordinances more difficult.

### OPPORTUNITIES

#### Utilize PDR for Woodland Preservation on Private Land

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) is a voluntary agreement that compensates property owners willing to accept a permanent deed restriction (through a conservation easement) on their land. While PDR is primarily used to protect farmland, it can also be applied to protect privately-owned natural features like woodlands from development.

#### Promote Integration of Trees With Agriculture

Promote and encourage farmers to adopt practices that integrate tree planting alongside traditional crops. Farmers and landowners can apply to programs through the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to obtain technical assistance and potentially funding to implement conservation practices, such as alley cropping, windbreaks, riparian forest buffers, etc.

#### Adopt a "Woodlands Preservation Ordinance"

To safeguard woodland resources from unnecessary removal and to regulate their removal under special circumstances.

#### Strengthen Construction Protection Standards

Existing plant material remaining during site development could be provided stronger protections, hence increasing the likelihood of survival. For example, protect the critical root zone (CRZ), which varies by species and site conditions, from disturbance.

#### Encourage Collaboration with Outside Agencies

A myriad of agencies and organizations exist at federal, state, county, and local level to assist residents with natural resource conservation practices and sustainable land management, including: JLW Cisma, River Raisin Watershed Council, Farmer-Led Watershed Conservation, WCCD Farmer Cost-Share Program, Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

### WHAT CAN I DO?



#### SPEAK UP

Attend public meetings or serve as an elected official.



#### LEARN

Use this guide to review local ordinances and planning documents.



#### PROTECT YOUR LAND

Consider conserving your property!

# Bridgewater Township Ordinance Overview

The table below summarizes applicable forestry and landscape standards included in your local ordinances compared to elements typically included in robust programs. This brief overview does not examine the quality of each element nor how well it functions in practice. A more detailed document was provided to local staff and/or elected officials to provide guidance for future regulatory updates.

	Code/Ordinance Element	Yes	No	Zoning Ordinance Location
Development	Tree Planting	●		Article 8.07
	Tree Preservation	●		Art. 11.05(F)(2)(a)
	Tree Removal/Maintenance	●		Art. 11.05(F)(1)(a,b); Art. 11.10(I)(4)(c,d,e)
	Tree Replacement	●		Art. 11.05(F)(3,4,6)
	Requires landscape Plan, Inclusion of Trees and Vegetation in Site Plans	●		Art. 8.07
	Parking Lots: Tree Planting	●		Art. 11.10(E)(3)
	Woodlands: Tree Preservation	●*		Art. 11.05 (F)(1)
	Tree Requirements and Landscaping Standards: Greenbelts, Berms, Planting Screens, Fences, etc.	●		Art. 11.10 (C); Art. 11.10(D)(1)(b,c); Art. 11.10(D)(5)
General	Approved/Suggested Species List	●		Art. 11.05(F)(5)
	Prohibited Species List	●		Art. 11.10(H)
	Plant Material Guidelines: Species, Size, Spacing		●	
	Promote Use of Native Species	●		Art. 11.10 (B)(4)(d)

## What's a Tree Ordinance?

An ordinance is a law issued by a local government. Tree ordinances establish official policies for how a community wants to maintain its trees and establishes legal protection.

## Example Types of Tree Ordinances

**Street/Park Tree:** Addresses planting, maintenance, and removal of trees within the ROW or parks. May include private trees if they impact public interest or pose a public hazard.

**Tree/Woodland Protection:** Conserves desirable trees, tree canopy, or historic trees on public and private property. May require a permit to remove, encroach upon, or prune protected trees.

**Landscaping/Buffer:** Establishes requirements, such as number, placement, and types of suitable trees. May require trees in parking lots or buffer strips to protect needs of adjacent property owners (noise and views) or water quality (riparian buffers).

### KEY

\* = Ordinance partially fulfills criteria and could be improved.

Find Bridgewater Township's Zoning Ordinances at [twp-bridgewater.org/Resources/Zoning-Ordinance](http://twp-bridgewater.org/Resources/Zoning-Ordinance).

## RESOURCES

For more information, visit [washtenawcd.org/communitytrees](http://washtenawcd.org/communitytrees)

- Community Maps
- Tree Ordinance Development
- Tree Board Information
- Tree Benefit Facts
- How to Plant a Tree
- And More!

