

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Trees Inc. 2022 report

On Tuesday, we reported that 37 dead street trees were removed, 23 new trees planted, and 60 trees were trimmed earlier this year by Trees Inc.

More than two-thirds of Pottstown's 2,800 street trees have been planted by Trees Inc., a non-profit corporation established by Pottstown civic leaders in 1984 to plant and maintain street trees.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton

Trees Inc. raised about \$470,000 between 1984 and 1988 which was used to plant 1,500 street trees.

Over the next 20 years, the non-profit planted 400 more new trees and 793 replacement trees.

By 2000, Trees Inc. was devoting its resources to maintenance. During a 7-year period from 2000 to 2007, the borough contributed about \$21,000 annually to trim street trees.

But in 2008, Borough Council stopped its contributions. It subsequently eliminated the Shade Tree Commission and adopted a new ordinance making it practically impossible to plant — even replace — street trees downtown.

That's why special votes of Council have been needed each year since 2017 to remove and replace dead trees.

Nothing has done more to enhance Pottstown's environment and quality of life than its street trees, yet their total cost over the last 38 years — including tree

trimming and sidewalk repairs — has been just \$1.36 million. Less than a quarter of that has been provided through local government — the rest of the funds have been raised through donations and grants.

Phoenixville and West Chester each spend \$200,000 annually on street trees, more than Pottstown Borough has spent over the last 15 years.

The borough's shade tree ordinance makes adjacent property owners responsible for street tree maintenance. That rarely happens.

So Trees Inc. does the best it can with its limited resources. The chart below sums up most of Trees Inc.'s activities.

Pottstown Trees Inc. over 38 years	
New trees planted	1,914
Replacement trees planted	829
Dead trees removed	809
Stumps only removed	311
Trees trimmed	11,021
Sidewalks repaired	373
Ash trees treated for EAB (3x)	131
Costs:	
Tree planting	\$593,539
Removing dead trees, stumps	\$149,637
Tree trimming	\$353,752
Sidewalk repairs	\$113,385
Tree Park maintenance	\$98,795
Emerald ash borer treatment	\$55,297
Total cost over 38 years	\$1,364,405
Percent borough funded	24%



DOWNTOWN HIGH STREET — None of the trees shown above on High Street, just west of Hanover Street, existed 40 years ago. Most of the 415 trees on High Street were planted in the late 1980s.