Sent via Email to Surrounding Community Municipal Clerks
Sent via Email and Certified Mail, RRR only to the Union County Planning Board

September 26, 2025

TO: Union County Planning Board
Township of Clark
Borough of Garwood
City of Linden
Borough of Kenilworth
Borough of Roselle
Borough of Roselle Park
Township of Springfield
Town of Westfield
Township of Winfield

FROM: Patricia Donahue, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Re: **Township of Cranford Adopted Ordinances**

Ordinance No. 2025-18:
AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD, CHAPTER 397, REGARDING NJDEP-MANDATED REGULATION OF TREE REMOVAL AND AMENDING CHAPTER 255, ARTICLE IV, REGARDING TREE REPLACEMENT STANDARDS

Ordinance No. 2025-18 (attached) was introduced and approved on the first reading by the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford at a meeting held on Tuesday, September 16, 2025. Public Hearing and proposed final reading are scheduled for Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 8:00 p.m.at the Township Committee's Official Meeting in Cranford's Municipal Building, Council Chambers, 8 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey, 07016.

Sent via Email:
Cc: Township Committee
Township Administrator
Township Attorney
Zoning Officer
Land Use Administrator
Planning Board Chair
Planning Board Attorney
Tax Assessor
Construction Code Official
Township Engineer
Municipal Court Administrator
Township Consulting Zoning professionals

TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD
CRANFORD, NEW JERSEY

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-18

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD, CHAPTER 397, REGARDING NJDEP-MANDATED REGULATION OF TREE REMOVAL AND AMENDING CHAPTER 255, ARTICLE IV, REGARDING TREE REPLACEMENT STANDARDS

BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 397 of the Township Code shall be amended as follows:

397-1. Purpose:

An ordinance to establish requirements for tree removal and replacement on private property in the Township of Cranford to reduce soil erosion and pollutant runoff, promote infiltration of rainwater into the soil, and protect the environment, public health, safety, and welfare.

Nothing in this ordinance applies to Township Trees. Township Trees may not be removed for any cause except as authorized by the Cranford Shade Tree Commission as set forth in ordinance 2023-10 (sec 398). This ordinance does not apply to trees less than six inches Diameter at Breast Height as defined herein.

397-2. Definitions:
For the purpose of this ordinance, the following terms, phrases, words, and their derivations shall have the meanings stated herein unless their use in the text of this ordinance clearly demonstrates a different meaning. When consistent with the context, words used in the present tense include the future, words used in the plural number include the singular number, and words used in the singular number include the plural number. The use of the word "shall" means the requirement is always mandatory and not merely directory.

A. "Applicant" means any "person", as defined below, who applies for approval to remove trees regulated under this ordinance.

B. "Critical Root Radius (CRR)" – means the zone around the base of a tree where the majority of the root system is found. This zone is calculated by multiplying the diameter at breast height (DBH) of the tree by 1.5 feet. For example: a tree with a 6" DBH would have a CRR = 6"x1.5' = 9'.

C. "Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)" means the diameter of the trunk of a mature tree generally measured at a point four and a half feet above ground level from the uphill side of the tree. For species of trees where the main trunk divides below the 4 ½ foot height, the DBH shall be measured at the highest point before any division.

D. "Hazard Tree" means a tree ~~or limbs thereof~~ that meet one or more of the criteria below. Trees that do not meet any of the criteria below and are proposed to be removed solely for development purposes are not hazard trees.

EXPLANATION – Matter struck through ~~thus~~ in the above ordinance is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law. Matter underlined thus is a new matter.

1. Has an infectious disease or insect infestation that cannot be addressed through a reasonable treatment determined by a certified arborist or licensed tree expert (LTE);

2. Is dead or dying as determined by a certified arborist or LTE unless such condition is unambiguous;

3. Obstructs the view of traffic signs or the free passage of pedestrians or vehicles, where pruning attempts have not been effective;

4. Is causing obvious damage to structures, (such as building foundations~~,~~ ~~sidewalks~~, etc.); or there is an immediate risk of damage to structures;

5. Is determined to be a threat to public health, safety, and/or welfare by a certified arborist or Licensed Tree Expert (LTE) pursuant to the requirements as defined by the USDA Forest Service Community Tree Risk Rating System, available at https://fs.usda.gov/nrs/pubs/na/NA-TP-03-03.pdf.

E. "Invasive Tree" means any tree that is determined to be an invasive species by the NJ Invasive Species Strike Team.

~~E.~~ F. "Person" means any individual, resident, corporation, utility, company, partnership, firm, or association.

~~F.~~ G. "Planting strip" means the part of a street right-of-way between the public right-of-way and the portion of the street reserved for vehicular traffic or between the abutting property line and the curb or traveled portion of the street, exclusive of any sidewalk.

~~G.~~ H. "Resident" means an individual who resides on the residential property or contractor hired by the individual who resides on the residential property where a tree(s) regulated by this ordinance is removed or proposed to be removed.

~~H.~~ I. "~~Street Tree~~Township Tree" means a tree located on land owned by the Township, or which is located on a street, highway, public place, right-of-way, Township easement, park or parkway or within the sidewalk lines. ~~planted in the sidewalk, planting strip, and/or in the public right-of-way adjacent to (or specified distance from) the portion of the street reserved for vehicular traffic.~~ This also includes trees planted in planting strips within the roadway right-of-way, i.e., islands, medians, pedestrian refuges.

~~I.~~ J. "Tree" means a woody perennial plant, typically having a single stem or trunk growing to a considerable height and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground.

~~J.~~ K. "Tree Caliper" means the diameter of the trunk of a young tree, measured six (6) inches from the soil line. For young trees whose caliper exceeds four (4) inches, the measurement is taken twelve (12) inches above the soil line.

~~K.~~ L. "Tree removal" means to kill or to cause irreparable damage that leads to the decline and/or death of a tree. This includes, but is not limited to, excessive pruning, application of substances that are toxic to the tree, over-mulching or improper mulching, and improper grading and/or soil compaction within the critical root radius around the base of the tree that

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leads to the decline and/or death of a tree. Removal does not include responsible pruning and maintenance of a tree, or the application of treatments intended to manage invasive species.

M. "Tree Removal Company" means any individual, corporation, company, partnership, firm or association who is hired by any Person to remove trees on a property.

397-3. Regulated Activities:

A. Application Process:

1. Any person planning to remove a ~~street tree, as defined as Tree removal, with DBH of 2.5" or more or any~~ non-Township ~~street~~ tree with DBH of ~~6~~ 6" or more on their property shall submit a Tree Removal Application to the Township of Cranford Building Department. No tree shall be removed until municipal officials have reviewed and approved the removal unless there exists an immediate danger or risk of damage to property or person(s).

2. The placard issued upon approval of the Tree Removal Application must be displayed and visible from the street prior to the start of the tree removal.

~~2.~~ 3. Nothing in this Chapter shall alter the requirements for tree replacement for development applications as provided in § 255-26(N).

B. Tree Replacement Requirements

~~1. Any person who removes one or more street tree(s) with a DBH of 2.5" or more, unless exempt under Section 397-4, shall be subject to the requirements of the Tree Replacement Requirements Table below.~~

1. ~~2.~~ Any person, who removes one or more tree(s), as defined as Tree ~~r~~Removal, with a DBH of 6" or greater ~~or more per acre~~, unless otherwise detailed under 397-4, shall be subject to the requirements of the Tree Replacement Requirements Table. The species type and diversity of replacement trees shall be in accordance with Appendix A.

~~3~~2. Replacement tree(s) shall:

a. ~~Be replaced in kind with a tree species that has an equal or greater DBH than tree removed or meet the Tree Replacement Criteria in the table below~~ Be of a species that will achieve similar stature upon maturity as the removed tree;

~~b.~~ Be planted within twelve (12) months of the date of removal of the original tree(s) or at an alternative date specified by the municipality;

~~c.~~ Be monitored by the applicant for a period of two (2) years to ensure ~~their~~ survival and shall be replaced as needed within twelve (12) months; and

~~d.~~ Shall not be planted in temporary containers or pots, as these do not count towards tree replacement requirements.

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Category	Tree Removed (DBH)	Tree Replacement Criteria (See Appendix A)	Application Fee ~~$75.00~~
1	DBH of ~~2.5" (for street trees) or 6" (for non-street trees)~~ 6" to 12.99"	Replant 1 tree with a minimum tree caliper of 1.5" for each tree removed	~~plus $20.00 per tree~~ $50.00
2	DBH of 13" to 22.99"	Replant 2 trees with minimum tree calipers of 1.5" for each tree removed	~~plus $20.00 per tree~~ $50.00
3	DBH of 23" to 32.99"	Replant 3 trees with minimum tree calipers of 1.5" for each tree removed	~~plus $20.00 per tree~~ $50.00
4	DBH of 33" or greater	Replant 4 trees with minimum tree calipers of 1.5" for each tree removed	~~plus $20.00 per tree~~ $50.00

C. Replacement Alternatives:

1. If the ~~municipality~~ Township determines that some or all required replacement trees cannot be planted on the property where the tree removal activity occurred, then the applicant shall do one of the following:

a. Plant replacement trees in a separate area(s) approved by the municipality.

b. Pay a fee of ~~$300.00~~ $450.00 per ~~tree removed~~ required replacement tree. This fee shall be placed into the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund.

397-4. Exemptions:

All persons shall comply with the tree replacement standard outlined above, except in the cases detailed below. Proper justification shall be provided, in writing, to the municipality by all persons claiming an exemption. Proper justification may include written statements, photos, reports, or testimony from a licensed tree expert or licensed tree care operator as defined in N.J.S.A. 45:15C-11:

~~A. Residents who remove less than one tree per acre into category 1, 2, or 3 of the Tree Replacement Requirements Table within a five-year period, not including those otherwise exempted under this section.~~

B. Tree farms in active operation, nurseries, fruit orchards, and garden centers;

C. Properties used for the practice of silviculture under an approved forest stewardship or woodland management plan that is active and on file with the municipality;

D. Any trees removed as part of a municipal or state decommissioning plan. This exemption only includes trees planted as part of the construction and predetermined to be removed in the decommissioning plan.

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E. Any trees removed pursuant to a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved environmental clean-up, or NJDEP approved habitat enhancement plan;

F. Approved game management practices, as recommended by the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife;

G. Hazard Trees may be removed with no Tree Permit Application fee ~~or replacement requirement~~; where conditions allow, each hazard tree must be replaced with a tree from Appendix A that will achieve a similar stature upon maturity where conditions allow.

H. The Tree Removal Application fee will be waived for the removal of invasive trees; however, a replacement tree will be required that will achieve similar stature upon maturity.

397-5. Enforcement:

This ordinance shall be enforced by the Cranford Building Department.

397-6. Violations and Penalties:

A. Any person(s) who is found to be in violation of the provisions of this ordinance shall be subject to a fine of $750.00 ~~300~~ or the amount of the required replacement tree(s) and cost of planting, whichever is greater.

B. Any Tree Removal Company found to be in violation of the provisions of this ordinance shall be subject to a fine of $2,000.00 per tree removed or the amount of the required replacement tree(s) and cost of planting, whichever is greater.

397-7 Severability:

Each section, subsection, sentence, clause, and phrase of this Ordinance is declared to be an independent section, subsection, sentence, clause, and phrase, and finding or holding of any such portion of this Ordinance to be unconstitutional, void, or ineffective for any cause or reason shall not affect any other portion of this Ordinance.

397-8 Effective Date:

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its adoption and any publication as may be required by law.

[No changes to Appendix A].

Section 2. Chapter 255, Article IV, of the Township Code shall be amended as follows:

§ 255-26. Design standards: specific.

. . .

N. Tree replacement.

(1) The following terms shall have the following meanings as used in this subsection:

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PROTECTED TREE
Any woody perennial plant with a trunk exceeding 18 inches in diameter (56.52 inches in circumference) measured at a point 4.0 feet above the ground level on the downhill side of such tree.

TREE
Any woody perennial plant with a main stem or trunk exceeding five inches in diameter (16 inches in circumference) measured at a point 4.0 feet above the ground level on the downhill side of such tree.

(2) A tree replacement plan shall be submitted with each application for development in which trees are proposed to be removed or have been removed as provided in § 255-24D(19). On-site replacement trees shall be provided for all trees removed, in accordance with the Township's list of approved replacement tree species and planting standards, and pursuant to the following table:

Category	Tree Removed (DBH)	Tree Replacement Criteria	Application Fee ~~*$75.00*~~
1	DBH of 2.5" ~~(for street trees) or 6" (for non-street trees)~~ to 12.99"	Replant 1 tree with a minimum tree caliper of 1.5" for each tree removed	~~*plus $20.00 per tree*~~ *$75.00*
2	DBH of 13" to 22.99"	Replant 2 trees with minimum tree calipers of 1.5" for each tree removed	~~*plus $20.00 per tree*~~ *$75.00*
3	DBH of 23" to 32.99"	Replant 3 trees with minimum tree calipers of 1.5" for each tree removed	~~*plus $20.00 per tree*~~ *$75.00*
4	DBH of 33" or greater	Replant 4 trees with minimum tree calipers of 1.5" for each tree removed	~~*plus $20.00 per tree*~~ *$75.00*

(3) If the site cannot accommodate the number of trees hereby required as replacement, the developer shall be required to contribute to a special fund, to be known as the "Tree Planting and Preservation Fund," in the sum of ~~$300~~ $450 per tree; provided, however, that if a tree to be removed is a protected tree, the amount of the contribution shall be determined by the Superintendent of Public Works upon consultation with the Shade Tree Commission. Such determination shall be based upon the value of the tree, calculated by the methodology adopted in the Township of Cranford's Community Forestry Management Plan. The Tree Planting and Preservation Fund shall be used by the Township for the planting of trees in the Township with the goal of replacing trees removed. The fund shall be administered by the Shade Tree Commission with advice from the Superintendent of Public Works.

Section 3. All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

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Section 4. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption and publication as required by law.

Introduced: September 16, 2025
Adopted:

Approved:

_____
Dr. Terrence Curran
Chair, Township Committee

ATTEST:

_____
Patricia Donahue, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RECORDED VOTE	**INTRODUCED**	**ADOPTED**
Terrence Curran	Aye	
Paul A. Gallo	Aye	
Brian Andrews	Aye	
Kathleen Miller Prunty	Aye	
Gina Black	Aye	

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