



State of the Town Meeting, December 7, 2024

Lincoln's Trees: What resources do we want to protect?

The Lincoln Tree Preservation Study Group wants to hear from you! Please take our survey (bit.ly/LincolnTreeSurvey) and attend one or more of the educational events we will schedule in early 2025. The Study Group is an organization of interested Lincoln residents.



Lincoln's 2009 Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the value of our town's rural and agricultural character.

"The fundamental quality that contributes to Lincoln's rural character is its pattern of buildings, roads, and spaces that appear unplanned or 'organic' in their organization." (p.100)

"Guiding the design of new buildings to maintain the town's existing rural aesthetic is critical." (p.107)

"Thoughtful planning has resulted in a community that retains much of its historic rural character. However, the town's desirability and the resulting development pressures are threatening this character." (p.111)

But Lincoln's current bylaws and regulations* have fewer protections for trees than our neighboring towns.

While trees in the public right of way and in wetlands and buffer zones have some protections, other trees in Lincoln have virtually none. For example:

-  Site plan review under Lincoln's zoning bylaw requires a 10-foot vegetated buffer along lot perimeters, *unless otherwise agreed to by the Planning Board.*
-  The Planning Board's Site Plan Review Checklist and Stormwater Management Regulations require that trees larger than 12" in diameter be identified if they are to be removed, *but there is no standard for approving the proposed removal or requiring replacement of these trees.*
-  Lincoln's Comprehensive Climate Action plan *does not include the role of trees* in addressing climate change and creating a sustainable and inclusive community.

Neighboring towns have taken steps to inventory, protect, and preserve their trees.

- ◆ CONCORD has a Tree Preservation Bylaw that requires that residential property owners preserve trees that are over six inches in diameter in a lot's setback area during major development projects.
- ◆ LEXINGTON has a Tree Bylaw for the purpose of preserving and protecting both public shade trees and certain trees on portions of private property, and a Tree Management Manual.
- ◆ WELLESLEY has a Tree Bylaw to encourage the preservation and protection of sizable trees on portions of private property during significant demolition and/or development activity.
- ◆ WESTON has a Tree Advisory Group, charged with promoting community tree health, in coordination with the Tree Warden and local and state agencies.
- ◆ BEDFORD has an Arbor Resources Committee and a tree policy and has hired a consultant to prepare an extensive inventory of their trees.
- ◆ MEDWAY has a Tree Preservation Bylaw, which provides for the regulation of the planting, maintenance, protection, and removal of trees within a 'tree preservation area'.
- ◆ WESTFORD has a Tree and Invasive Species Inventory and Management Plan, developed by a consultant in 2023 with funding from a MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant.

Should Lincoln do more for tree protection? The Tree Preservation Study Group wants to hear from you!

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If you would like a copy of this handout with live links, please email susanhallmygatt@comcast.net.

**Bylaws and regulations relevant to Lincoln's trees: MA Scenic Roads Act and MA Public Shade Trees Act; Lincoln's General Bylaws (Art. XVII, Scenic Roads); Zoning Bylaw (Section 17); Residential Site Plan Review Checklist; Stormwater Management Bylaw (Art. 32 of the General Bylaws); Stormwater Management Regulations; Wetlands Protection Bylaw; and Comprehensive Climate Action Plan.*