Background:

College Township began a street tree program and related subdivision regulations during the mid 1980s. Since that time, all new subdivisions were required to provide street trees within the street right-of-way. Generally, these trees are installed by the developer and maintained for a year, after which time the Township assumes ownership, and maintenance responsibilities of the trees.

The purpose of street trees is to provide shade on the adjacent streets and properties, add beauty to the neighborhood, and add value to the adjacent properties. They also help the environment and wildlife. There are currently over 2,500 street trees in College Township. Some are approaching 30 years old. The Township has a regular program for tree pruning, spraying as needed and replacement of trees that die. College Township will also cut or remove dangerous trees within the right-of-way, although these are much older trees that are not part of the street tree program.

A new two inch caliper street tree costs about $500 to purchase and install. Using a nationally accepted tree approval method, a twenty-five year old tree can be valued at $3,000 to $15,000 depending upon size, species and tree condition.

Tree Root Damage:

There are some normal consequences of having street trees. One is that tree roots can eventually lift or crack sidewalks, grow under paved driveways and spread around the surface of adjacent yards, causing a nuisance.

Sidewalk Damage:

In the case of damaged sidewalks, it may be necessary for the property owner to repair or replace a section of a sidewalk (Note that adjacent property owners are required to make such repairs as stipulated by a separate College Township sidewalk repair policy). If a tree root is causing the problem, the Township’s Engineer may allow for strategies that would minimize the recurrence of the situation. Each of these options must be approved by the Township Engineer prior to implementation.

(1) Reduced sidewalk width

The sidewalk block may be reduced to a width of 4 (four feet) around an existing tree. If this option is selected, consideration should be given to the installation of root barriers as described below.
(2) **Construct sidewalk around tree onto private property**

If there are multiple sidewalk blocks to be replaced due to tree root damage, a by-pass walk may be constructed back onto private property. Place concrete on a sub base of 6" of gravel (2RC Stone) which will deter root growth and provide drainage.

(3) **Root removal**

One solution is to remove roots to a depth of 6" to 8" below the sidewalk (12" total) and install a root barrier. A twelve-inch (12") deep root barrier will be furnished to the property owner by the Township upon request. Installation is the responsibility of the property owner, but the Township can provide installation instructions. All roots removed should be pruned off cleanly. Removal of roots greater than two inches (2") in diameter requires specific permission from the Township. New concrete should be placed on six inches (6") of gravel (2RC stone) to deter further root growth.

**Driveway and Yard Damage**

The following protocol is used when property owners find that their driveway or yard is being damaged by the roots of street trees. Note that the Township will attempt to control the nuisance; but, a primary consideration is to avoid damaging the street trees, which are considered a valuable asset.

(1) The property owner may contact either the Township Engineer and/or Public Works Director to notify them of suspected damage or nuisance issues. Township personnel will then inspect the problem and will assist with cutting some roots near the surface or adding some fill or topsoil if they determine that this could help and not cause damage to the tree.
(2) The property owner may not cut street tree roots greater than two inches (2") in diameter, unless given specific permission by the Township Engineer or Public Works Director.

(3) College Township does not assume any responsibility for driveway repairs or major yard restoration.

(4) If a street tree root problem persists, the Township will have their appointed arborist inspect the situation and make a recommendation as to whether or not additional root cutting or filling would help. If so, the Township will perform that work, if granted permission by the property owner.

(5) If a property owner requests or insists that a street tree be removed, then the Township’s appointed arborist or Public Works Director will prepare an appraised value of the tree, using a method accepted by the Council of Tree & Landscape Appraisers or other method accepted by landscape industry professionals. Note that 20- to 30-year-old trees could be valued at $3,000 to $15,000. The Township Public Works Director will also prepare or obtain an estimate for the cost of tree removal.

(6) If the property owner agrees to pay for the asset value of the tree and the cost of tree removal, then the Township will remove the tree, including the grinding of the stump.

(7) After the tree is removed, the Township will not be responsible for removing roots in the yard or cutting suckers that grow from the roots. These can, in most situations, be cut with a lawn mower and should eventually disappear.

(8) If there are extenuating circumstances, as determined by the Township’s appointed arborist, such as a problem tree species or unusual soil conditions, the property owner can ask the Township to waive the payment for the asset value of the tree. After consulting with the appointed arborist and the Township Council (governing body), the Township Manager will determine if the payment can be waived.

Duly approved and enacted this 20\textsuperscript{th} day of October, 2016.

\underline{\textit{Manager/Secretary Adam T. Brumbaugh}}

Approved by College Township Manager
October 20, 2016

1\textsuperscript{st} Revision

2\textsuperscript{nd} Revision