Forest Home Improvement Association
President's Annual Report

October 2025 – September 2026

As I finish up my third year as president of FHIA, it has been a pleasure to work with many of you and witness the amazing energy and camaraderie that has driven our community for 200+ years. I am particularly indebted to **Jennifer Loucks,** VP, who ably took the FHIA reins as Acting President at various times of travel this past year. Here are some highlights of the activities conducted by all of you.

Spring Roadside Cleanup

Thanks to **Herb Engman and his group of volunteers**, the roads in Forest Home have been kept clean by those who have adopted them. Many of you also pick up trash in front of your homes and when out walking, which helps a lot. Thanks to all of you!

Park Maintenance

Connie Stirling-Engman and Herb Engman have continued to maintain Forest Home Park, including the flowers in two boxes at the Forest Home Park, which significantly dresses up the neighborhood. Thanks to you both!

Holiday Party

Valerie Hans and Michael Bend shared their wonderful home (the old Warren House) for another well-attended holiday party in December. Thank you both!

Annual Picnic

The Annual Picnic on September 12 in Forest Home Park was another great success. The weather was perfect, and everyone enjoyed good conversation, lawn games, superb potluck food and ice cream. We are MOST grateful to **Connie Engman** for overall coordination. Many other residents volunteered to serve food, grill, set up, and clean up. We are grateful to ALL of you.

Forest Home Chapel

Largely through the efforts of **Sally Grubb,** we have continued to have a highly collegial and productive relationship with **Forest Home Chapel,** which provides meeting space, concerts, and of course Sunday services. Thank you Sally!

Awards

Congratulations to **Bruce Brittain** and to **Forest Home Chapel,** who received 2026 Historic Ithaca Preservation Awards. Forest Home Chapel was cited for its sensitive restoration and preservation projects. Bruce Brittain received the Joseph O. Ciaschi Preservation Excellence Award in recognition of his commitment to community preservation, especially in Forest Home.

Charlie Trautmann received the James J. Byrnes Award from Tompkins Community Bank for his volunteer work in the community over the past five decades and the Roy L. Shafer Lifetime Achievement Award from the international Association of Science and Technology Centers in Washington, DC for developing the Sciencenter.

Keeping Us Informed

A special shout out to **Caroline Arms,** who keeps a constant ear to the ground and lets the community know about important information through her posts to our listserv. Thank you Caroline for many years of keeping your neighbors in the loop!

Infrastructure Improvements

During the past year, Fairway Drive and Crest Lane were milled and repaved by the Town of Ithaca. Speed bumps on Judd Falls Rd. were rebuilt to their original specifications. The ditch on the upper part of the 300 block of Forest Home Drive was cleaned out and reseeded.

Repairs to the walkway on the downstream bridge were made, beginning on October 1, 2026. The walkway had been closed since June 2, 2026, when NYS inspectors found considerable deterioration of the walkway support structure.

FHIA also thanks the Town of Ithaca and its staff for many smaller improvements and maintenance, from tree-trimming, sign vegetation removal, and the willingness to meet with the FHIA to address maintenance and improvements.

Forest Home Planning Study – STREETS ’27 *(aka Streets and Trails Reimagined for Everyone to Enjoy and Traverse Safely)*

Following the comprehensive community-wide conversation conducted in 2024-5 to help inform our priorities for the coming years, FHIA continued to deepen its partnership with the Town of Ithaca (as fiscal agent), Cornell, and Tompkins County to fund, set up, and contract a planning study for Forest Home.

STREETS ’27 is a multi-year project involving the residents of Forest Home, the Town of Ithaca, Cornell University, Tompkins County, and other stakeholders. The goal is to improve the quality of life in Forest Home by:

- Reducing the impacts of traffic
- Improving safety for vulnerable road users
- Maintaining or enhancing our Forest Home streetscape

Five members of FHIA serve on a 12-member Project Steering Committee, including **Robin Blakely-Armitage, Ari Lavine, Jennifer Loucks, Ruth Mahr, and Charlie Trautmann.** The Project Steering Committee oversees the project, which is being carried out by Fisher Associates, a regional community planning and transportation consulting firm with an office in Ithaca.

To date, since starting in Summer 2026, the consultant has conducted background research, held a community input session, held a series of community walking tours, and set up traffic monitoring stations at six points in Forest Home. A community planning meeting with Fisher Associates is being planned for later Fall 2026, the first of two major community engagement events associated with the project.

STREETS ‘27 is scheduled to conclude in December 2027, with a report outlining a series of conceptual designs focusing on reducing the impacts of traffic, improving safety for vulnerable road users, and maintaining/enhancing our streetscape, along with potential funding sources for implementation. Current information about STREETS ’27 can be found on the FHIA website, www.fhia.org.

<u>Shout-Outs for Behind-the-Scenes Volunteer Activities</u>

Many other contributions to our community occur quietly behind the scenes but are important to the FHIA. **Caroline and Bill Arms** do a superb job of maintaining the website, which this year saw major improvements. **Bruce and Doug Brittain** spend a good bit of time on maintaining walkways and keeping an eye on roads and construction activities. Many more volunteers leap into action when asked and are too numerous to be listed here. Finally, the officers of the FHIA **– Jennifer Loucks, VP; Connie Stirling Engman, Secretary; Jeff Holden, Treasurer; and Herb Engman, past president** – contribute far more than their titles imply, assuring the smooth functioning of the Forest Home Improvement Association. The entire neighborhood is grateful to you for your service.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Trautmann
President, Forest Home Improvement Association