



Indiana DNR, Division of Forestry
Community & Urban Forestry

Establishing a Community & Urban Forestry Program in your Community

When beginning an urban forestry program, we recommend that you consider the following steps to develop a successful long-term program. These are some things that have helped Tree Cities and many other communities in the state and nation get started.

- 1. Develop an ad hoc committee** to get an urban forestry program off the ground. Get a diverse group of interested people involved such as city employees, volunteers, city council representatives, parks personnel, local business people, civic groups, etc. Have a meeting with them and the State Coordinator discussing the community, its challenges, what they might like to achieve. The State Coordinator will guide the group in this process of learning more about urban forestry, and will do a community forestry assessment on that visit.
- 2. Determine who will have long term responsibility for the tree program** by designating a municipal department and a Tree Advisory Commission (Tree Board). This can be an existing municipal department or a group of citizens interested in urban trees. This group can come from the core ad hoc committee. Duties of the Tree board will be outlined in the Public Tree Care Ordinance.
- 3. Develop a promotional campaign** to educate the public about the value of the urban forest and try to develop public support for a tree management program. This could also include more technical training for city employees and tree board members.
- 4. Conduct an inventory** to determine what the urban forest resource is and what problems need correcting first. This work is usually done under the supervision of a qualified urban forestry consultant. The more sophisticated inventories usually include all trees and potential planting spaces on city properties or right of ways. The ideal inventory will be on a computer program that can be updated as planting, maintenance and removals are done. Many times, the urban forest inventory, and the consultant who is hired to do it, can be paid for with grant dollars awarded by the Division of Forestry-as well as the staff to do the inventory.
- 5. Develop a tree ordinance**, which defines who will be responsible for your tree care program. The ordinance should have an appendix that specifies which tree species can be planted, where the planting will be done, and sets minimum standards for planting and maintenance. It may also have a permitting section for Arborists working in the community.

6. **Develop a long-range management plan.** The plan should include: a general summary of the condition of the present urban forest, number and locations of trees to be planted, location of trees to be removed, pruning and maintenance needs, training needs of city employees, and funding needs of the community.

Keep the public informed about your efforts and activities. Put updates on the progress of the newly established urban forestry program in the local paper and newsletters. Or keep a flyer on the progress in City Hall. Explain the ordinance, the inventory, and the need for each of these management tools. Include a benefit or two of trees in "our" town in all communications.

To become a Tree City USA a community must: (applications are due on Dec 31st of each year)

1. Draft and pass a public tree care ordinance. This may also have a landscaping component so that residential and retail developments will set aside a specific amount of space for trees.
2. Name the municipal department where the program will be housed and appoint a Tree Advisory Commission or Tree Board.
3. Spend at least \$2.00 per capita on the tree care program
4. Have an annual Arbor Day event and proclamation.

Good luck and remember: "Trees can't talk, but they can tell us a lot about our past, our present, and our future--if we just listen." Unknown

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