

# Urban and Community Forestry Program

## 2017 Accomplishment Report – Massachusetts

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### Introduction

With dense populations and vast town forests, along with a tremendous resource of town commons and conservation land, the people of Massachusetts have come to expect the steady comfort and beauty of trees in their neighborhoods. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Urban and Community Forestry Program (U&CF) helps communities and nonprofit groups protect, grow, and manage urban and community trees and forest ecosystems, with the ultimate aim of improving the environment and enhancing the quality of life in all of Massachusetts' 351 communities.

DCR provides assistance to communities of all sizes throughout Massachusetts through technical assistance, education, recognition awards, and grant funding in its efforts to build support for urban and community forest resources. In addition, the DCR U&CF Program has also chosen to directly fund programs that help promote, provide, and support DCR U&CF priority program activities. A good example of this is the funding that they have provided to the Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Association (MTWFA) to help support continuing education programs, such as their 2-day annual conference that features technical training sessions and provides opportunities for information exchange for the entire membership of the MTWFA.

### Key Accomplishments

#### Asian Longhorned Beetle Reforestation Program

In 2008, the exotic invasive Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) was first detected in the city of Worcester, MA. Following the detection, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts established a cooperative program to eradicate ALB. To eradicate this pest, all infested trees are removed and chipped. Now, almost 10 years later, well over 36,000 trees have been removed from public and private property, including from yards, parks, schools, and streets within the current 110-square-mile regulated area that encompasses the entire city of Worcester, the second most populous city in all of New England after Boston, and four surrounding towns and portions of another one.

In response to this large-scale tree removal, the Massachusetts DCR developed a well-coordinated reforestation plan that includes a broad coalition of partners to work cooperatively to quickly restore the tree canopy for the regulated area. With Federal funding provided through the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and United States Forest Service (USFS), and Commonwealth dollars, the DCR Urban and Community Forestry Worcester Reforestation Program has planted 18,871 trees to date on both public and private property.

This effort required significant outreach and education efforts on the part of DCR and partners. DCR hired full-time urban and community foresters specifically for the reforestation program, and they worked with public and private landowners to gain approval to replant trees on public and private property. Each spring and fall, DCR hired a number of tree planters from within the community to plant the trees by hand. DCR reforestation staff also educated citizens and the community about proper tree care and maintenance. When not overseeing the planting crews, DCR urban and community foresters canvassed neighborhoods to spread the word about the program and scheduled appointments to meet with property owners to discuss tree planting options and selecting the right tree for the right place from an offering of more than 30 trees, including large shade trees, ornamentals, and conifers, to ensure a tree for every location.

Until ALB is declared eradicated from the Worcester area, both tree removal and tree planting numbers will continue to climb, although these numbers now grow at a much slower pace than over 9 years ago. While removing trees to control the beetle is not an ideal option for most tree owners, they do have another option, which is to have a new one planted on their property.



*Granville Avenue in Worcester prior to tree-removal operations (left) and after tree-removal operations (right).*



*Granville Avenue in Worcester six years later with new tree plantings.*



*Tree planting crew in Dodge Park in Worcester.*

### **Greening the Gateway Cities Program**

Launched in 2014, the Greening the Gateway Cities Program (GGCP) is designed to reduce household heating and cooling energy use by increasing tree canopy cover in urban residential areas with a goal of increasing tree canopy cover by 5 to 10%. This program, concentrated in Environmental Justice neighborhoods, targets areas within [Gateway Cities](#) that have lower tree canopy, older housing stock, higher wind speeds, and a larger population of renters. Back in 2014, the GGCP was piloted in three Gateway Cities. It is now active in the cities of Brockton, Chelsea, Chicopee, Fall River, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lynn, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, and Springfield.

GGCP is a partnership between the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; the Massachusetts Departments of Conservation and Recreation, Energy Resources, and Housing and Community Development; Massachusetts Gateway Cities; and local nonprofit organizations.

Modeled after the Asian Longhorned Beetle Reforestation Program, trees are planted by DCR Bureau of Forestry U&CF crews hired from local communities who work with public and private landowners to gain approval to plant trees on their property. When not planting trees, DCR urban and community foresters spend time educating citizens and the community in proper tree care and maintenance, canvassing targeted neighborhoods to spread the word about the program and to increase participation, attending outreach events, and scheduling appointments to meet with property owners to discuss tree planting options—selecting the right tree for the right place from an offering of more than 40 tree species and favoring large shade trees and conifers, while also including smaller ornamental trees to ensure a tree for every property owner and location.

To date, 11,637 trees have been planted. This number will continue to grow as our foresters schedule appointments and meet with property owners to site even more trees for the upcoming planting seasons.



*Planting team in Lynn.*



*Gov. Charlie Baker, State Sen. Thomas M. McGee, and State Rep. Dan Cahill helped plant an elm tree on Lynn Common. The tree is the 10,000th planted as part of GGCP. (thor Jourgensen)*

### **Statistical Highlights**

Managing Communities:	40
Developing Communities:	136
Population of Participating Communities:	4,777,170
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	25,777

