

## Planting Dreams for a Greener, Cleaner Tomorrow

### The Challenge:

Trees provide communities with many benefits, including slowing down and filtering storm water runoff and pollutants, beautifying streets, and providing wildlife habitat. Trees also contribute to atmospheric oxygen levels and provide shade to combat urban heat island effects. Sometimes, however, trees succumb to diseases or attacks from invasive insects, requiring them to be removed and replaced.

### The Solution:

The town of Irondequoit, NY, through its ReLeaf Program, used a \$70,000 USDA Forest Service grant to plant trees to replace diseased and damaged ones and to conduct community outreach. The town's Federal grant match, valued at \$23,130, was comprised of town staff resources, a local neighborhood association contribution, and a neighborhood group donation of time.

Grant recipients used the combined funding to purchase and plant trees and to pay for some of the staff time needed to create marketing materials, including a handout to explain the street tree project. The Irondequoit ReLeaf managers oversaw contractor installation of 84 street trees. The plan emphasized areas near waterbodies in key watersheds with the greatest potential stormwater impact in 2018. The project focused on the Winona Woods neighborhood.

### Resulting Benefits:

Tree varieties planted through the project included red maple, sugar maple, red oak, English oak, honey locust, linden, London plane, tulip, red bud, and others. The diverse selection of trees serves to improve the urban forest's resiliency to potential threats.

Project outreach materials directed messages such as "Why are trees important?" at residents who lived where



Robert W. Kiley, the Irondequoit commissioner of public works, shows off a newly planted tree. (Forest Service photo by Karl Honkonen)

trees could be planted. Citizens were also asked to serve as stewards, monitoring and helping care for the town's trees.

### Sharing Success:

Through its website, the town continues to promote tree planting. The project is also bringing about a more comprehensive review of the town's trees. Irondequoit Director of Development Services Kerry Ivers said, "This project has prompted us to take on a town-wide inventory and analysis of the street trees in the town. They will continue to implement and prioritize inventory areas of the town for future planting."

Federal Award: 16-DG-11420004-307

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– Irondequoit Director of Development Services Kerry Ivers



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 August 2019