

URBAN FORESTRY MASTER PLAN 2025 PROGRESS REPORT



About the Urban Forestry Master Plan

The Columbus Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP) is the first Citywide, strategic plan to invest long-term in Columbus' trees. This plan was approved by Columbus City Council in April 2021, allowing the UFMP to help guide the entire Columbus community to prioritize, preserve and grow our tree canopy. We have three tree canopy goals: 1.) Reach Citywide Tree Canopy Cover of 40 percent by 2050, 2.) Stop the Net Canopy Losses by 2030 and 3.) Invest in Equitable Canopy Across All Neighborhoods by 2030. The department will accomplish these goals through four strategies: community coordination and collaboration, best practices, dedicated resources and stronger policies. This report details the progress made to date on these four strategy areas during 2025.

Community Coordination and Collaboration

Columbus Tree Subcommittee Adds Four New Members

The [Columbus Tree Subcommittee](#) advises the Recreation and Parks Commission on ways to protect and grow our urban forest. Composed of nine members, the subcommittee added four new members in 2025, who were selected and appointed by Mayor Andrew J. Ginther's office. These new individuals are passionate about tree canopy in Columbus and will help guide our urban forestry program.

Columbus Tree Assistance Program Funds 174 Tree Plantings on Private Property

Growing our urban forest requires planting trees on public and private land. For the second year, the Columbus Tree Assistance Program funded local

organizations to plant trees on private properties. Columbus Recreation and Parks Department awarded \$25,000 to five organizations: the Final Third Foundation, Forest Park Civic Association, Franklinton Area Neighbors Civic Association, Healthy Homes and Hilltop YMCA. Thanks to our partners - Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District and Green Columbus - and the awardees for planting 174 trees and making these projects a success!

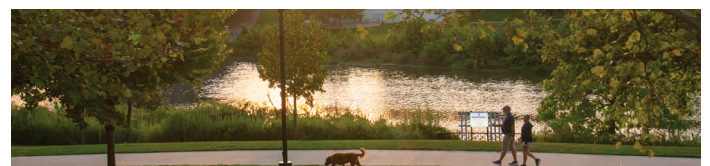
Tree Walk Held at the Columbus Park of Roses at Whetstone Park

Engaging residents in nature and conservation turns our neighbors into advocates! Assistant City Forester Chad Hoff led a tree walk at Columbus Park of Roses at Whetstone Park in October, where he taught approximately 25 participants how to identify trees in the park, as well as common issues and attributes of different tree species.

The Columbus Park of Roses is a certified Level II arboretum by the Morton Arboretum in Chicago. Events like these help maintain that important certification.

Green Columbus Hosted a Columbus Tree Coalition Meeting

It will take all of us to grow our urban canopy. Green Columbus has convened the Columbus Tree Coalition to mobilize people passionate about trees to help move forward goals of the UFMP. The group met in October, where approximately 30 people in attendance started narrowing the scope of actions the group can take. They are also identifying leaders in each community to join future meetings.



Best Practices

Columbus Receives Growth Award from Tree City USA

In 2025, Columbus celebrated its 46th year as a [Tree City USA](#). We also received the Tree City USA Growth Award from the Arbor Day Foundation for demonstrating higher levels of tree care and community engagement. These designations reinforce the City's commitment to our urban forest.

Forestry Team Prunes Over 2,000 Trees at Stockbridge Urban Forest

In October, Columbus Recreation and Parks Department's Forestry team pruned more than 2,000 young trees at Stockbridge Park. The Far South neighborhood is a priority area in the UFMP's equity analysis, and this 22-acre park was reforested in late 2022. Stockbridge served as the pilot park reforestation project, with plans to use this model in additional parks moving forward.

Forestry Finalizes Equitable Planting Plan

The Forestry section finalized its first three-year equitable planting plan. From 2026-2028, Forestry will focus on eight priority neighborhoods and direct 60 percent of annual tree planting to these areas. These neighborhoods were identified through the UFMP's Social Equity Index and focus on the neighborhoods where trees will have the greatest impact. The priority neighborhoods are East Columbus, Franklinton, Livingston Avenue area, Milo Grogan, Near East, North Central, North Linden and South Linden.

Construction Started on Forestry's New Location

Construction on West Case Park, located in the northwest part of Columbus, started in December 2025. The plans include a new Forestry outpost, which will increase responsiveness and reduce travel time by stationing Forestry staff on the north side of town.

Dedication of Resources

AEP Foundation Helps Fund the Tree Assistance Program

The AEP Foundation donated \$30,500 to the Columbus Tree Assistance Program. In 2026, these funds will be awarded to local organizations to plant trees on private property.

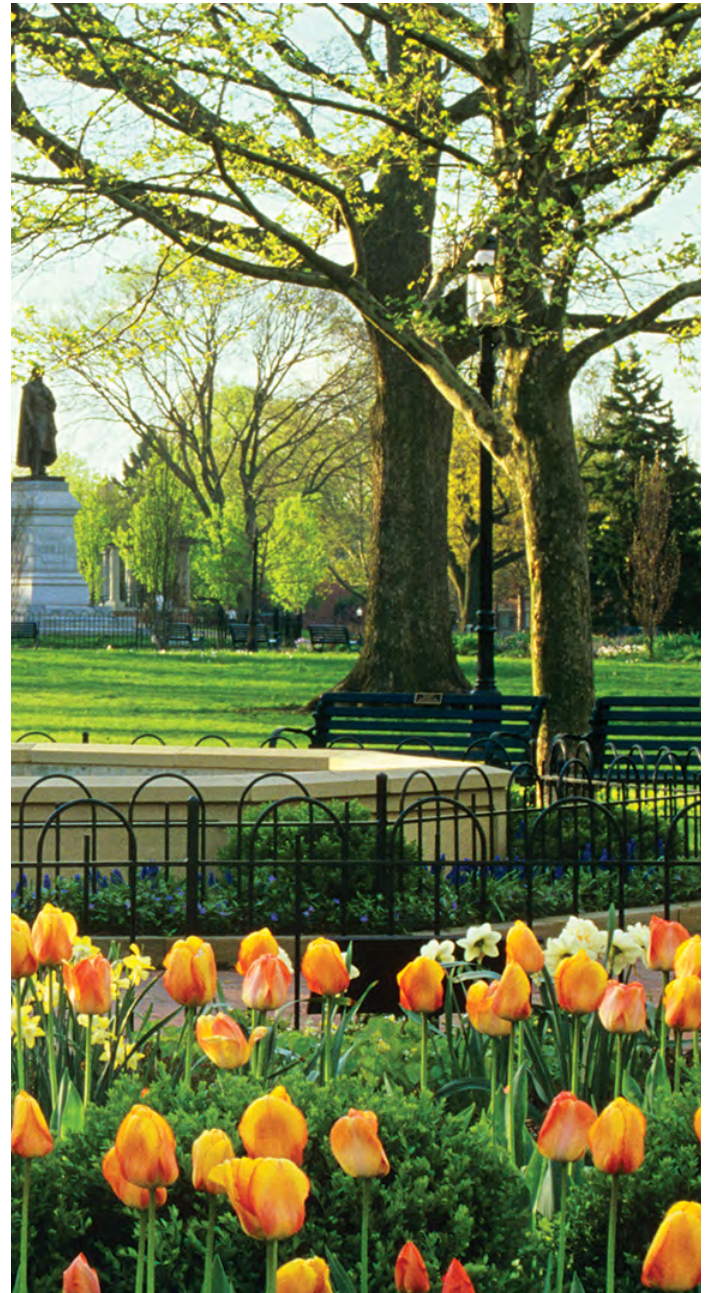
Two New Arborists Support Other City Departments

Two Forestry arborists are funded by and directly support Columbus Department of Public Service and Columbus Water and Power (formerly Columbus Department of Public Utilities). These arborists conduct inspections and issue permits related to public

tree impacts from those departments' construction projects. This partnership expands our Forestry team's capacity and allows potential impacts to be identified early, minimizing damage to public trees.

Forestry Arborists Inventory Park Trees

During the winter, the arborists have been collecting information on park trees in mowed areas of parks. Having accurate data on the locations, species and sizes of park trees helps Forestry manage them for the future. The last time this data was updated was 10 years ago (2012-2016). In 2025, 15 parks were completed, and the work will continue into 2026. The parks with updated tree inventories were Big Run, Chaseland, Cooke, Flint, Frank Fetch Memorial, Goodale, Krumm, Lazelle, Lincoln, Moeller, North East, Schiller, Sharon Meadows, Whetstone and Woodward parks.



Stronger Policies

Public Tree Code Implementation Reaches One Year

The City's updated Public Tree Code went into effect Aug. 1, 2024. When healthy trees are removed for a construction project, the project owner must mitigate those impacts by planting trees, or by paying a fee in lieu of planting. The code established the Tree Technical Manual, which lays out replacement guidelines, including species selection, mitigation and tree care standards. It also set fees to be charged in lieu of planting, and a process to deposit those fees into the City's tree fund, which is used to plant trees on public property.

During the first 12 months after the Public Tree Code took effect, Forestry staff completed 1,635 plan reviews with public tree impacts. Arborists reviewed 155 permit applications for public tree planting, pruning, removal and protection. Also, \$123,000 was collected and deposited in the City's Tree Fund.

Department Publishes Private Tree Research Report

Columbus Recreation and Parks Department's [Private Tree Research Report](#) was published, offering recommendations for clear, equitable and effective tree protection policies. It also analyzed the top causes of tree loss between 2011-2021, using data from the [Columbus and Franklin County 2011-2021 Canopy Assessment](#). The report was developed by researching best practices for private trees in 21 cities in the United States and Canada. This information will help inform best practices for tree planning and care, improving the health and sustainability of the urban forest.

2025 City Forestry Numbers



2,777

trees planted



9,516

trees pruned



1,626

hazardous trees removed



959

stumps ground



896

tree emergencies



5,634

requests for tree planting



1,581

plans reviewed with public tree impacts



142,314

total street trees

