

# **Massachusetts 'Greening the Gateway' program, \$825,703 in grants to cities, including New Bedford**

Baker-Polito Administration today announced \$825,703 in grants to support tree plantings in Gateway Cities across the Commonwealth. Five Massachusetts municipalities and two non-profit organizations will receive awards totaling \$629,684 through the Greening the Gateway Cities (GGCP) Implementation Grant Program and an additional eleven projects are receiving awards totaling \$196,019 through the GGCP's Partnership Grant Program.

"Since taking office, we have invested over \$25 million to support the Greening the Gateway Cities Program and have planted nearly 35,000 trees across the Commonwealth, which provide tremendous benefits to our communities, such as improving air quality and lowering energy consumption," said Governor Charlie Baker. "We are pleased to provide this important funding to assist our partners as we work together to plant and care for trees within cities and towns throughout the state."

"These Greening the Gateway Cities Program grants offer critical funding that strengthens our partnerships with municipalities and key stakeholders in order to achieve mutual goals that will directly benefit the public," said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. "This program supports increasing the tree cover within local urban neighborhoods by five to ten percent, which will produce many environmental benefits while simultaneously reducing household heating and cooling energy use and providing residents with cost savings."

The GGCP is a partnership between the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Urban & Community Forestry Program, the Department of Energy Resources (DOER), and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), along with Gateway Cities and local grassroots organizations. Notably, the program utilizes trees to reduce energy use, reduce flooding from stormwater runoff, and improve the quality of life in these cities, especially during the increasingly hot summers in Massachusetts. Trees have the ability to cool neighborhoods and reduce the "urban heat island" effect where large areas of pavement cause significantly hotter living conditions. Tree plantings are also focused within Environmental Justice neighborhoods – areas with over 25% of residents who are low income, minority, or non-English speaking.

"The Greening the Gateways Cities Program helps ensure that residents in Gateway Cities enjoy the benefits of healthy urban forest ecosystems," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Beth Card. "These grants awarded by the Baker-Polito Administration are facilitating tree planting work that our local partners determined to be critical as communities seek to address the impacts of climate change and secure improvements that result from a robust urban tree canopy."

"Our Gateway Cities are at the forefront of climate change and are among the most vulnerable communities in the Commonwealth," said Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Doug Rice. "Importantly, the Greening the Gateway Cities Program provides a vital tool to make these areas more resilient to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme heat."

The GGCP Implementation Grant awards will facilitate tree planting in seven municipalities by funding municipalities and non-profit organizations seeking to maximize tree planting in

urban residential areas of Gateway Cities to augment tree planting that DCR is actively pursuing within designated planting zones. This increase in tree planting work will achieve even greater energy savings from reduced heating and cooling costs, further promote clean air, and contribute to larger reduction of urban "heat island" impacts that are being exacerbated by climate change.

The GGCP Implementation Grant awardees are:

- City of Chelsea – \$100,000 to conduct outreach to residents and plant an estimated 200 trees, as well as contract with a certified arborist to conduct DPW staff training in tree planting and care.
- City of Fall River – \$99,125 to plant 175 street trees in partnership with the non-profit Fall River Street Tree Planting Program.
- City of Haverhill – \$100,000 to plant and water an estimated 300 trees, as well as to print and disseminate "Adopt-a-Tree" materials to promote residential tree planting and care.
- City of Holyoke – \$100,000 to water newly planted trees as well as install an estimated 46 tree pits to facilitate DCR tree planting work.
- City of Taunton – \$60,000 to purchase a 500-gallon spray tank for watering trees anticipated to be planted through GGCP efforts, install tree pits within the newly designated planting zone, and plant 15 trees in neighborhoods outside DCR's planting zone.
- Groundwork Lawrence – \$100,000 to this community-based non-governmental organization to plant 100 trees in the South Lawrence West neighborhood impacted by the Columbia Gas line explosion, as well as to plant upwards of 50 trees at Campagnone North Common (CNC) that has lost trees to deterioration and age.

- New England Botanic Garden – \$70,559 to this central Massachusetts-based non-governmental organization (formerly “Tower Hill Botanical Garden”) to conduct outreach to residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations in the Main South, Grafton and Bell Hill neighborhoods in Worcester and plant 100 trees.

The Partnership Grant awards advance DCR tree planting in ten Gateway Cities by funding municipalities that partner with the agency to prepare sites for tree planting, as well as non-profit partners conducting outreach to residents and business owners seeking those willing to receive free trees. These partnerships ensure DCR can maximize tree planting in urban residential areas of Gateway Cities and achieve benefits that include energy savings from reduced heating and cooling costs, clean air, and reduced urban “heat island” impacts. The GGCP Partnership Grant awardees are:

- City of Chelsea – \$20,000 to purchase and install two catch basin tree pits to intercept of storm water runoff and support tree growth.
- City of Holyoke – \$20,000 grant award to prepare 19 tree pits on Bowers Street adjacent to Kelly Elementary School in the Flats neighborhood of Holyoke.
- City of Lowell – \$20,000 grant award to prepare 15 tree pits as well as conduct weekly watering and stewardship of 150 newly planted trees in coordination with DCR.
- City of Salem – \$16,439 to prepare 5’x 10’ tree pits throughout the DCR planting zone.
- City of Springfield – \$9,500 grant award to prepare 16 3’x5’ tree pits in the DCR planting zone.
- City of Westfield – \$20,000 grant award to prepare tree pits for a proposed green space located at 56-88 Elm Street.

- Groundwork Lawrence – \$15,000 to conduct door-to-door canvassing, literature mailings and tabling at community events to raise awareness of GGCP tree planting within the Haverhill DCR tree planting zone, and communicate the benefits of urban canopy.
- Groundwork Southcoast – \$15,000 to conduct door-to-door canvassing and disseminate literature in the New Bedford DCR tree planting zone, as well as increase awareness of the program via social media.
- Growing Places – \$19,980 to grow community awareness of the GGCP in Leominster and Fitchburg; connect DCR foresters with new landowners for tree planting in the DCR planting zones; and work with the City of Fitchburg to explore Tree City USA designation and facilitate the application as needed.
- Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust – \$15,000 to attend community events and neighborhood meetings to raise awareness of GGCP; distribute multi-lingual GGCP literature to households within the Lowell DCR planting zone, and conduct social media outreach.
- Salem Sound Coastwatch – \$15,000 to facilitate outreach to churches, schools, neighborhood associations and community leaders in the Salem GGCP planting zone; attend Salem Tree Commission monthly meetings; and conduct pop-up events and disseminate information to residents about the GGCP via mailings, lawn signs and door knocking.

“The Greening Grant announced today is a living, enduring tribute to Governor Baker’s commitment to land conservation and quality of life through tree planting,” said Mayor Joshua Garcia. “The shade from the urban canopy reduces energy costs, the reduction in impervious surfaces where each tree is planted has an environmental benefit and the addition of green space in the urban and industrial Flats is good for the soil and the soul.”

“Since its inception the Greening the Gateway Cities Program has brought nearly 35,000 new trees to urban areas throughout our Commonwealth,” said State Senator John Velis (D-Westfield). “From cleaning and cooling our air, to reducing energy usage and noise, the benefits of increased tree coverage are abundantly clear. I am thrilled that Holyoke and Westfield are among the communities receiving this next round of funding and am grateful to the Baker-Polito Administration for their continued investments in this truly innovative program.”

“As a state legislator, I believe this is the power of local government – having the Governor and agency heads here with their local staff and our municipal leaders,” said State Representative Patricia Duffy (D-Holyoke). “I truly appreciate seeing the Governor recognize the priorities and passions of our local government, especially in the fight against climate change.”

For more information regarding the Greening the Gateway Cities Program, please visit the program’s webpage.