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Neighborhood Tree Planting Program helps Transform Northampton's Urban Forest

Northampton--Residents and friends of Orchard St. will plant 15 public shade trees along their street this Saturday, helping the City launch an annual program to re-tree Northampton's neighborhoods.

A collaboration between Northampton's Tree Warden, the Public Shade Tree Commission, and the non-profit organization Tree Northampton, the new program encourages any Northampton neighborhood to organize itself, gather volunteer support, and complete an online application to be selected for an intensive planting of 15-25 trees. If selected, the neighborhood will receive guidance on organizing a fall "Planting Day" that includes free trees, technical support in matching appropriate tree species with suitable planting locations (along tree belts or in front yards), and borrowed planting tools. The neighborhood itself provides the bulk of the tree-planting labor, and is encouraged to make the day special such as by organizing a community potluck after the planting is complete.

"Both longtime and brand-new residents of our block have banded together, with the help of the amazing Tree Northampton and the City, for a marathon day of planting," said Shoshana Marchand, the neighborhood organizer for this pilot project. "These new plantings, together with the remaining line of stately old maples, will create a tree-lined avenue. We can't wait to see what next spring looks like!"

The program is part of the City's larger plan to reforest Northampton following a comprehensive public shade tree inventory in 2016 that identified over 2000 potential tree planting sites. The City is on track to plant 250-300 public shade trees per year through this strategy and others, such as intensive Arbor Day plantings, and focused plantings in "high public benefit" areas such as "heat islands" in downtown, environmental justice zones, walking routes to school, bus stops, and main arteries that need traffic calming and beautification. Nearly all new public shade trees are planted by citizen volunteers recruited and organized by Tree Northampton.

An online application for the Neighborhood Tree Planting Program is on the City of Northampton's website northamptonma.gov/1935. Applications to be considered for a Fall 2019 planting are due December 1, 2018.

For Additional Information:

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