

**From:** Devereux, Jan

**Sent:** Friday, October 05, 2018 10:27 PM

**To:** Woodbury, Catherine <[cwoodbury@cambridgema.gov](mailto:cwoodbury@cambridgema.gov)>

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**Subject:** tree ordinances that require a minimum canopy be maintained

Catherine,

Please share this with Deana Moran from CLF and the other members of the UFMP task force. It came in an email from an organization called the Mayors Innovation Project.

Thank you,

Jan

### **The Benefits of Healthy Urban Forests**

Though urban forests continue to be vulnerable to disease, development, and neglect, there are many strategies cities can take to prevent urban forests' decline. At our Summer Meeting in Grand Rapids, we heard from a panel of mayors and city leaders across the country who recognize the many benefits of healthy urban forests and the initiatives taken to protect them.

**One of the most actionable ideas cities can take to protect their tree canopies is to pass tree canopy ordinances that mandate a minimum tree canopy percentage.** In the Town of Chapel Hill, [Tree Protection Ordinance](#) requires that the minimum tree canopy coverage be at least 20 percent and up to 40 percent, depending on zoning. Other cities have set tree canopy goals to reach by a specified date; cities that set such goals, however, should pay close attention to the types of trees they intend to plant. Native trees, as well as those that are especially efficient at absorbing ground water, are preferable.

Cities can also leverage community engagement to encourage urban forest stewardship among their constituency. Planting trees are only one facet of maintaining healthy urban forests; cities should also ensure that there are resources in place to maintain the trees they have planted. In Grand Rapids, Mayor Rosalynn Bliss has partnered with [Friends of Grand Rapids Parks](#) to promote community engagement in tree maintenance through their [citizen forester program](#).

Finally, cities should continue to educate the public about the many benefits of maintaining healthy urban forests. These benefits run the gamut from improved mental and physical health, air quality, reduced crime, increased property values, and even economic development. Karen Firehock, Executive Director of the [Green Infrastructure Center](#), notes that trees are “the [original green infrastructure](#).” In cities where flooding and storm water excess is an issue, trees can offer a simple yet highly effective solution. There are many reasons why city dwellers should be enthusiastic about the trees in their communities, and mayors and city leaders play a large role in communicating these reasons.

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For updates on City Council issues and events visit <http://jandevereux.com/>

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