



2021 Urban Forestry Annual Report

(From the ordinance, Chapter 51: Urban Forestry)

(1) The Urban Forester shall collect and maintain all records and data necessary to objectively evaluate progress toward the purpose, intent, and goals of the Urban Forestry Program. The Urban Forester shall prepare an annual report. The report shall be submitted to the UFB (Urban Forestry Board) for approval and then presented to the Director of Public Works. The annual report shall be submitted to the Mayor and City Commissioners.

(2) The annual report shall include:

1. The number, location and type of projects subject to the Urban Forest Program;

- With only a few trees in South Covington and Devou Park left to prune, we're on track to wrap up the first phase of the pruning cycle this coming year, which will be the 7th year of the multi-year pruning cycle. It's typical for the first phase of the pruning cycle to take longer (5-10 years), but we're on track to move into a 5-year cycle in the future as long as we have adequate staff.
 - a. New research out of Milwaukee, WI estimates that request-based pruning (which increases significantly for cycles longer than 6 years) costs *twice* as much as pruning done as a part of a pruning cycle.
- Ongoing strategic planning with Covington Urban Forestry Board
- Provided interdepartmental assistance
 - a. Working with economic development on gateways program
 - b. Working with code enforcement to assess tree risk
 - c. Working with zoning on the neighborhood development code application as it relates to trees and landscaping
 - d. Working with City Beautification on Christmas tree recycling
- Community Engagement Survey went live last March; survey was developed in collaboration with Xavier University business students; data was collected from 369 participants and results were presented with last year's annual report.

- Spring Tree Plantings - 116 total trees planted in the spring, covering 23 different cultivars of tree
 - a. Arbor Day Celebration in Westside/Peasenburg neighborhood May 1 – planted 58 trees with volunteers. Multiple community partners contributed to the success of this event, including Glier’s Goetta Company and the Center for Great Neighborhoods. We implemented a new policy of sending “letters of intent to plant” prior to every major planting, which appears to be helping with public communication. Several of the streets planted had zero street trees before the planting.
 - b. The police department requested we renovate their landscaping. Some old Callery pears were removed in the wells surrounding the station, then replaced with a variety of more appropriate trees for the space. The memorial garden was also renovated, with trees and numerous perennials. This project added 12 total trees.
 - c. Citizen requests from other neighborhoods had our team planting another 26 trees throughout the city.
 - d. Austinburg received a CDBG allowance for tree planting, which resulted in 21 trees planted by volunteers near the school for Great American Cleanup on April 22.
 - e. Monte Casino added 1 tree as part of a CDBG-funded, Great American Cleanup project as well.
 - f. Annual Linden Grove Arbor Day Seedling Giveaway – gave away hundreds of seedlings in partnership with Linden Grove Cemetery and Arboretum, and Bartlett Tree Experts, who provided part of the seedlings.
- Major Treatment Projects
 - a. Ash trees for emerald ash borer
 - b. Sweetgums to reduce fruit drop
 - c. Iron/manganese for nutrient-deficient oaks
- Fall Tree Plantings – 138 total trees planted across 28 species
 - a. Make a Difference Day volunteer planting on Oct. 30. 80 trees were planted in West Latonia. Community groups such as Center for Great Neighborhoods and Ohio Valley Forestry Fellowship contributed greatly to the success of this event.
 - b. Licking Riverside also approached me about doing a planting. Utilizing Tree Mitigation Funds, we were able to plant 21 trees throughout the neighborhood.

- c. Old Seminary Square obtained CDBG funds for adding more shade to Annie Hargraves Park, and requested larger caliper trees to get to more shade faster. We planted 5 larger trees, sourced from a nursery near Louisville.
- d. At the same time, we had a developer interested in planting larger trees along Main to create a fast visual impact in Mainstrasse, which resulted in an additional 4 larger-caliper trees installed.
 - a. Random citizen requests in other parts of the city made up the remaining 28 trees planted this fall.
- Fall Tree Giveaway – funded by a Road iD donation, 57 five-to-seven-gallon trees were purchased for giveaway. OKI developed the mapping tool for the giveaway, utilizing an environmental justice layer to give first priority to the neighborhoods in greatest need of increased canopy.
- Other notable outreach efforts
 - a. Social media
 - “Introduction to your Forestry Board,” 10 posts
 - “Cicada days” – including interview with Spectrum
 - “Spotlight on Invasive Species,” 18 posts
 - b. Great Outdoor Weekend and other “hike with an urban forester” events
- Submittal of applications for awards: Tree City USA, Tree City USA Growth, and (new for us this year) Tree City of the World. If our application is approved (and I believe it will be), it will be the first year a Kentucky city is recognized as a Tree City of the World.
- The combined efforts of these projects work to support many city goals, including stormwater mitigation and efforts against climate change/urban heat islands.

2. The number of trees planted, pruned and removed;

Trees Planted = 254

Trees Pruned = 241 (young tree training, pruning cycle and citizen requests)

Trees Removed = 64

Trees Treated = 108

Additional tree-related work orders (inspections, staking, stump grinding, etc.) = 82

Condition known for 24% of street tree population, up from 12% last year.

3. The cost of the Urban Forest Program

Total Budget: \$630,875 down from \$660,764 in FY20-21

Employee Pay and Benefits	\$550,376	Covers all pay, workers comp, insurance, as well as other duties like snow removal, parking lot or concrete work, tree inspections, and all seasonal staff pay
Agricultural Supplies	\$34,000	Tree plantings, supplies for chainsaws, other small equipment and upkeep, chemicals for landscaping, landscaping plantings (like new police memorial or Goebel gazebo plantings), mulch, grass seed, etc.
Maintenance & Repair	\$11,200	Repairing parking lots, buildings
Technical supplies	\$9,000	Equipment, rope, safety gear
Communications	\$6,900	Tablets, Wi-Fi, phones
Rent & storage	\$5,000	For rental stump grinders or excavators
Contractual expenses	\$4,000	For tasks we don't have the ability to do (like crane pruning)
Travel & Training	\$3,000	Continuing education – ISA credits, conferences, certifications
Office supplies	\$3,000	Adobe access, paper, ink, etc.
Other materials & supplies	\$3,000	Concrete, etc.
Dues & subscriptions	\$500	International Society of Arboriculture memberships
Equipment parts	\$400	Weed-eater heads, etc.

We also had 628 hours of volunteer time dedicated to beautification of the city, which under Tree City USA guidelines (\$21/hour) is an astounding \$13,188 worth of time that our community members have contributed to our city through the division of forestry.

4. Opportunities for improvement of the Urban Forestry Program.

Goals from 2021

- Continue working with the Assistant City Manager’s office on the Urban Forest Master Plan. Hire contractors and solicit feedback from the community to ensure a long-term plan that meets all of Covington’s needs. *Community survey completed, RFP went out, but plan not funded in current fiscal year.*
- Continue to improve our support services to other departments and divisions to better improve

our citizen service - *ongoing*

- Complete first year of young tree training program and continue into second year. *Second phase of cycle in-progress*
- Continue to stay ahead of pruning cycle with inventory, and young tree pruning; get back on track with pruning cycle after hire of new pruner - *ongoing*
- When the pandemic allows, bring back volunteer tree pruning events and host tree pruning workshop – *Workshop ready to go as soon as tree stewards program approved*

Goals for 2022

- Implement a Tree Stewards program to expedite the young tree pruning cycle, which should be closer to every 3-years.
- Continue to improve our support services to other departments and divisions to better improve our citizen service
- Continue to stay ahead of pruning cycle with inventory/assessment; complete first cycle and begin over in North Covington for second iteration.
- Implement easier permitting process for hillside stability/tree preservation portion of Neighborhood Development Code.
- Reforest the area between Devou drive and Western Avenue to aid in hillside stabilization and stormwater mitigation.

5. Progress towards the goals of the Urban Forestry Master Plan.

- Community Engagement Survey was completed in 2021, as well as an RFP for potential contractors to help facilitate writing of the plan. Qualified contractors were suggested, but funding sources need to be identified.