



## Benefits of Becoming a Tree City



**What is a Tree City?** The Tree City program provides a framework for communities to manage and expand their public trees. More than 3,600 communities have made their commitment to becoming a **Tree City USA**.

Tree City, USA is a program of the Arbor Day Foundation, which gives this designation to communities that have satisfied certain requirements.

### **Benefits of Being a Tree City**

One benefit of the program is to educate citizens on the value of trees to our community. Through the process of becoming a Tree City, residents learn more about the value of trees.

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, trees yield 3–5 X their cost in overall benefits to the community. Trees:

- **Reduce costs for energy, stormwater management, and erosion control.**
- **Cut energy consumption by up to 25%.** Studies indicate that as few as three additional trees planted around each building in the United States could save \$2 billion annually in energy costs.
- **Increase property values across your community by 7–20%.**
- **Build stronger ties to your neighborhood and community.** Trees and green spaces directly correlate to greater connections to neighbors.
- **Improve community pride.** Participation in the Tree City USA program helps residents feel good about the place they live and work and shows visitors and prospective residents that Rush values trees.

Tree City status will give the town **measurable, dollars-and-cents benefits** by improving its chances of receiving grant support, including grants to buy, plant and care for additional trees on public land.

**Responsibilities of Being a Tree City:** The community must meet four standards.

#### **Standard 1: A Tree Board or Committee**

This group of about 7 people can include tree professionals and interested residents.

#### **Standard 2: A Tree Care Ordinance**

A tree care ordinance forms the foundation of a city's tree care program. A key section of the ordinance establishes the Tree Committee and sets forth its duties in promoting trees.

#### **Standard 3: A Community Forestry Program With an Annual Budget of at Least \$2 Per Capita**

Arbor Day's "Guide to the Tree City USA Designation" says "most communities probably already spend at least \$2 per capita." The Tree City program allows these expenditures to be included in the budget: tree purchases, watering, pruning, dead tree removal, and leaf and brush pick-up. The Town of Rush already spends several times \$2 per capita on brush pick-up, not to mention tree maintenance associated with the Emerald ash borer.

#### **Standard 4: An Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation**

Rush already does this with its Town Clean-up Day. In 2021, Rush had an Arbor Day Proclamation and Celebration, and one is scheduled for Saturday April 30, 2022, which is Arbor Day.

### **Tree Plan and a Tree Inventory**

Though not listed as requirements, the program also requires the town to have a **Tree Plan** and a **Tree Inventory**. The Inventory can make use of existing records, updated and supplemented as necessary.

### **There is no downside to becoming a Tree City!**

The Rush Tree Ordinance creates a Tree Committee which serves in an unpaid volunteer capacity and on an advisory basis. The Tree Committee simply offers the benefit of its experience and expertise to the various town boards and to the Town of Rush.