



City of Worcester  
Department of Public Works & Parks



**In the spring of 2010, the City of Worcester began planting the first generation of tree adoptions on private residential properties throughout the city. This was accomplished after the passage of the Ordinance Relative to the Protection of Public Trees by the City Council.**

**The program allows for the City to plant a shade tree within the first twenty (20) feet of the public way layout on private property. The property owner is required to care for & maintain the tree for a minimum of three (3) years. Once the three-year period has been completed, the tree becomes the full responsibility of the property owner.**

## **WHAT SIZE WILL THE TREES BE AT THE TIME OF PLANTING?**

Trees will be 2 to 2.5 inches in caliper and between 6 - 10 feet tall when planted (depending on the species). We plant these sizes because it's the best combination for survival and immediate visual impact.

## **WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO ADOPT A TREE?**

A person wishing to adopt a tree must have a suitable location on their property as defined in the 'Qualifying Criteria for Private Property Tree Adoption'. To be eligible to adopt a tree, you must be willing to satisfy and/or agree to the 'Qualifying Criteria for Private Property Tree Adoption' that is found in this booklet. You must also adhere to the Ordinance Relative to the Protection of Public Trees.

## **HOW DOES ONE APPLY TO ADOPT A TREE?**

All you have to do is completely fill out the 'Private Property Tree Adoption Program Application,' contained in this packet. Submit the completed form to the 311 Customer Service Center before January 1 for a spring planting (March – mid June) or before July 1 for a fall planting (mid-September – mid November) and then wait to be contacted.



## **THEN WHAT?**

If you and your property meet all of the criteria for tree adoption and have signed the Consent Form, the Tree Warden will contact you regarding your qualifying status. You will then be offered a specific tree for a specific spot on your property. Once that's all agreed on, you will then be asked to sign a Consent Form and Release of All Claims. Then, Congratulations — You have adopted a tree! The Tree Warden will take care of the rest of the busy work and your new tree will be delivered and planted by the DPW&P Forestry Division.

## **QUALIFYING CRITERIA FOR PRIVATE PROPERTY TREE ADOPTION**

In accordance with the City of Worcester Private Property Tree Adoption Program, numbers 1 through 7 must be met in order to qualify for tree adoption consideration:

1. Properties on which the city may plant an adopted tree must be owner occupied residences and located within the City of Worcester or comprise a portion of a residential planned unit development.
2. The current property owner seeking to adopt a tree shall not have incurred tree replacement fines or judgments within the last five (5) years.
3. The property owner seeking to adopt a tree must return a completed Application for Tree Adoption form to the Department of Public Works & Parks Customer Service Center for each tree sought to be adopted, by no later than January 1 for a spring planting or July 1 for a fall planting of each year.
4. The property owner seeking to adopt a tree must sign a Tree Planting Consent Form and Release of All Claims.
5. The property owner seeking to adopt a tree must have a suitable location for the adopted tree to be planted. This location must be accepted by the Tree Warden.
6. The applicant property shall not be for sale at the time of planting.

## Priority consideration will be given to applicant properties where one or more of the following conditions exist:

- The required front, side, or rear yard has no existing trees
- Existing canopy trees are of a species that are at high risk to contract disease or insect infestation (i.e., Ash, Elm and/or ALB host trees)
- A commitment to tree planting and landscape maintenance has been demonstrated by the property owner by demonstrating compliance with the following property maintenance standards:
  - ◇ Existing trees and landscape beds are properly mulched
  - ◇ Existing trees and shrubs are properly pruned
  - ◇ Trees and/or perennial gardens have been installed by property owner
  - ◇ Lawn and landscape beds are mowed, weeded, and edged
- Preference will be given to trees planted in eligible locations along the southerly and westerly side of any building as these locations maximize energy conservation benefits provided by the tree.



## TREES ARE IMPORTANT

Adopting a tree is not something to be taken lightly. Trees growing in urban and suburban settings have unique needs that must be met if they are to be given the best opportunity to thrive. By allowing a tree to be planted in your front yard, you will be contributing to the establishment of a legacy that will be enjoyed and benefited from by generations of city residents and visitors. Trees are valuable city assets that provide many benefits such as:

- **Trees Save Money and Energy**—trees can cut air conditioning costs by 15% - 35%. They can also slow cold winter winds and cut heating costs 10%-20%.
- **Trees Help Clean Our Air**—trees absorb gases and release oxygen for us to breathe.
- **Trees Help Clean Our Rivers and Streams**—trees hold the soil in place and reduce polluted runoff into our waterways.
- **Trees Save Tax Dollars**—trees can provide cities with reduced costs for stormwater management and improve water quality.



In order to protect these valuable assets, we need to be careful where and how we plant them. It is important that we plant the correct tree species in a suitable location. We call this planting the “right tree in the right place.” Proper planting maximizes the tree’s ability to mature faster and survive to the fullest extent possible. The Tree Warden will work with you to choose a suitable species to plant on your property.

# PRIVATE ADOPTION PROGRAM APPLICATION – Part 1

## APPLICANT INFORMATION:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## PLANTING LOCATION INFORMATION – Circle one answer for each question

1. Is your desired planting location for the adopted tree at least 20 feet from any other canopy tree?

Yes

No

Don't Know

2. Is your desired location for an adopted tree at least 15 feet from any home foundation?

Yes

No

Don't Know

3. Is your desired location for an adopted tree at least 10 feet from any driveway or impervious surface?

Yes

No

Don't Know

## PRIORITY CONSIDERATION INFORMATION – Circle one for each question

1. Is your front, side, or rear yard completely without trees?

Yes

No

Don't Know

2. Is your desired location for an adopted tree on the south or west side of your house?

Yes

No

Don't Know

**PRIVATE PROPERTY  
TREE ADOPTION PROGRAM  
APPLICATION – Part 2**

I attest that I am the owner of record of the property located at

\_\_\_\_\_

Worcester, Massachusetts and that the owner of record is in the name of

\_\_\_\_\_

(the owner of record is the person or entity who owns title to the property as of today's date)

whose address is \_\_\_\_\_

by a deed duly recorded in the Worcester District Registry of Deeds,

Book(s) \_\_\_\_\_, Page(s) \_\_\_\_\_, and is further described by the

City of Worcester Assessor's Office as Map \_\_\_\_\_ Block

\_\_\_\_\_ Lot \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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**Applicants must fill out Parts 1 and 2 of this application and return to:**

**Department of Public Works & Parks  
Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Division  
Forestry Operations  
50 Officer Manny Familia Way  
Worcester, MA 01605**