



LEVERAGING MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS TO FINANCE TREES

When engaged, a community becomes invested in their city's tree canopy.

PROJECT GOALS

Columbia, a small borough along the Susquehanna River in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, is working to increase its native tree canopy by planting new trees and replacing damaged or dead trees. Trees are dispersed to private property owners and parks by volunteers and the Columbia Borough's Public Works Department. The Public Works Department plants native trees as part of street and sidewalk public works projects.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- Trees provide shade for houses, which reduces energy costs.
- Trees beautify neighborhoods and increase property values.
- Trees enhance aesthetics, which is linked to improved mental and physical health.
- Residents learn about the importance of trees and the positive impacts they have on their livelihood and community.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Trees protect residential and community areas from flooding by reducing stormwater runoff.
- Trees provide natural water filtration that leads to cleaner water.
- Trees reduce soil erosion and help soils absorb and retain nutrients, which lessens the number of contaminants entering local waterways.
- Trees improve air quality, which leads to better human health.
- Trees provide wildlife habitat.

CONSERVATION PROJECTS INSTALLED

- Planting native trees.



Trees provide shade along Locust Street in downtown Columbia, Pennsylvania. To generate additional support for tree plantings, the borough of Columbia is working to improve local ordinances and policies, as well as to develop outreach and educational strategies. (Photo by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program)

“ Each year, member contributions cover the costs of at least a dozen new trees plus needed care. The work of our really great volunteers stretches those donations tremendously.

- Amy Evans

Columbia Borough Shade Tree Commission

PROJECT SUMMARY

To achieve their goal, Columbia is working to improve local ordinances and policies, as well as to develop outreach and educational strategies that generate additional support for tree plantings. Columbia's street tree efforts are made possible through a Tree Society membership program managed by the Columbia Shade Tree Commission. Memberships include residents and local businesses who pay anywhere from \$2 for an annual student membership to \$100 for a lifetime membership. Typically, the program raises \$2,000-\$2,500 per year. These funds support the planting of approximately a dozen established trees per year; the program requires that each tree planted must be greater than 1.5 inches in diameter and over six feet tall. The funds also support caring for and maintaining Columbia's street trees and coordinating outreach events such as the annual Arbor Day celebration. The program strives to educate the public on the everyday importance of trees.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- For small towns, donations from residents and businesses can be an effective means of financing urban tree planting and maintenance activities.
- Tree membership societies not only raise funds for tree canopy efforts but also create a network of engaged partners to support and celebrate the community forest.
- Visualizing the success of the program spurs the community to participate in the membership program and in the planting and caring of trees.

THE PARTNERS AND FUNDING SOURCES

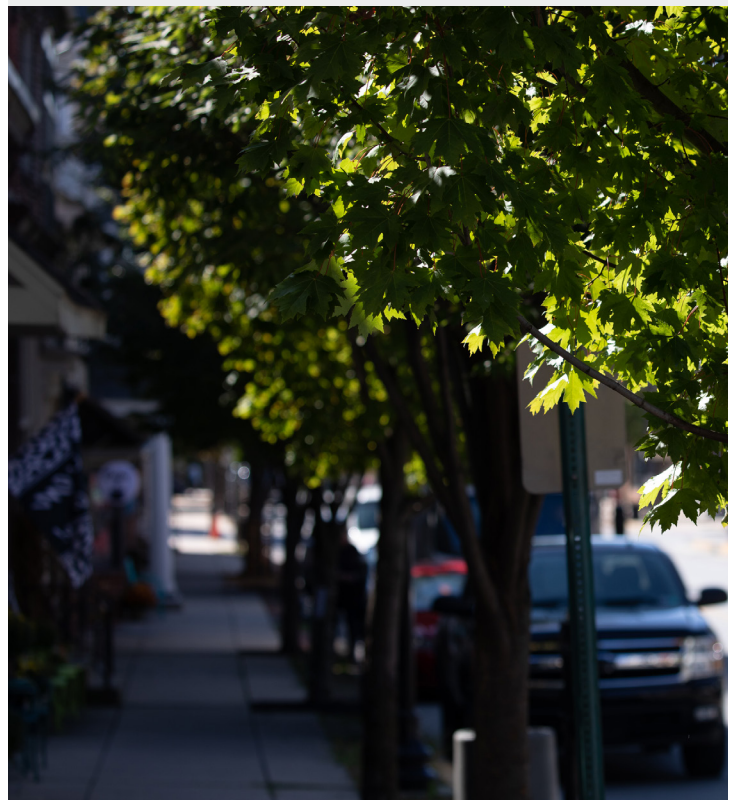
- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Columbia Shade Tree Commission (Tree Society membership program)
- Columbia Borough
- Columbia Park Rangers
- Susquehanna Heritage/Columbia River Park
- U.S. Forest Service

CONTACT

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Trees planted along streets beautify the neighborhood and increase property values. *(Photo by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program)*



Trees provide wildlife habitat, filter rainwater and the extra shade helps reduce energy costs for nearby homes. *(Photo by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program)*

