

Executive Summary

Goshen Urban Tree Canopy Goal

In 2019, Goshen officially adopted a Tree Canopy Goal of “45 by ‘45” – 45% canopy cover by 2045. This will roughly double our current urban canopy cover (measured at 22% in 2013). Why? Our ecosystem depends on trees. We humans are a part of the ecosystem, which means that the quality of life we enjoy in Goshen is positively affected by the presence of living trees. In the warming decades and century of climate change to come, a healthy, vibrant, growing urban forest will be an increasingly important part of Goshen’s social, physical and economic infrastructure. Now is the time to grow our urban forest.

Number of Trees Needed

There may be various ways to measure the number of trees needed to reach the stated canopy goal of 45% by 2045. The simplest is to take the known number of public trees (roughly 13,000), accept that this number is between 1/3 and 1/4 of all the trees in Goshen (meaning Goshen’s total tree population is currently between 39,000 and 52,000), and then double this number to jump from 22% canopy coverage (in 2013) to about 45%: we need to have between 78,000 and 104,000 trees in 2045.

Who the Canopy Goal Will Benefit

Any and all infrastructure stakeholders in Goshen should be educated about the Tree Canopy Goal. Infrastructure is identified because while trees have real aesthetic value, they also play important roles in optimal functioning of the City’s ecosystem, stormwater management system, energy consumption, recreational systems, and other systems as well. Anyone who lives in Goshen and takes advantage of these systems is a stakeholder. These are the people who need to be educated about the Tree Canopy Goal, and how to participate in it.

Funding this Canopy Goal

We will have to be creative. We will need to imagine new partnerships for funding, across government, private and non-profit sources. We will need to engage all sectors of our community from individuals to corporations, schools to churches, health care providers to grocery stores, long-established residents to new arrivals. We will need to find ways to plant smaller, cheaper trees, and develop ways to care for them, and keep track of their growth. We will need to build a robust volunteer base to help in all facets of growing this new forest.

In all cases we will need money. We should target a total of 2000 trees planted each year on public and private property. We could target a quarter of these (500) as 1.5" diameter trees, and the remaining 1500 as 1- to 2-year whips, for a total community planting cost of less than \$90,000 annually.

Strategy for Achieving this Canopy Goal

Neighborhood level planning, City Department coordination, community partnerships, and a broad volunteer coalitions will create the strategic backbone of a successful urban tree canopy goal in Goshen. Each of these assets have strong track records in Goshen, with a strong culture of cooperation. Non-profits, like Trees For Goshen, will play an important role in helping to set incremental planting goals across distinct neighborhoods. Maintenance of existing canopy for safe longevity across the City will be a critical aspect of arriving at our goal, alongside a well-conceived planting program. Schools can play an important role, with support from the City, by introducing environmental awareness and activity which deepens the culture of tree care in the Maple City.