

PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Greening the Gateway Cities Planting Season in Holyoke

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Department of Conservation & Recreation

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BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration today encouraged residents and business owners within the City of Holyoke’s planting zone to participate in the Greening the Gateway Cities Program (GGCP) during the upcoming spring planting season, which will commence on April 16, 2019 through June 28, 2019 (the fall planting season will be from September 2, 2019 through November 16, 2019). As a participant, trees are provided free of charge and are planted by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) work crews in an effort to reduce energy use in urban neighborhoods by lowering heating and cooling costs.

“By increasing the tree canopy within urban communities, the Baker-Polito Administration is able to improve air quality, reduce energy consumption, and further beautify neighborhoods,” **said DCR Commissioner Leo Roy.** “The Department of Conservation and Recreation is pleased to have strong local partners who have worked closely with the agency to implement successful initiatives like the Greening the Gateway Cities Program.”

The Greening the Gateway Cities Program aims to plant 812 more trees in the City of Holyoke in addition to the 1,588 trees that have already been planted within the community. Since 2014, more than 19,000 trees have been planted by the GGCP in several Gateway Cities throughout the Commonwealth. The program specifically targets areas with a lower tree canopy, older housing stock, higher wind speeds, and larger renter populations. In addition, plantings are concentrated in Environmental Justice neighborhoods to benefit those most in need. Within planting areas, temperature, energy use, and other information is tracked to document the energy savings new trees provide to residents over time. Pilot cities in which this monitoring is taking place include Chelsea, Fall River, and Holyoke.

Trees in close proximity to a home shade structures and lower surface temperatures. Trees up to 1,500 feet away from a home also provide important benefits to the community, such as clean air, increase in property values, reduction in noise pollution, and the creation of habitats for wildlife. Additionally, in the winter months, tree trunks and branches help to randomize wind patterns and decrease heat loss by air infiltration in poorly insulated homes. Furthermore, GGCP tree plantings benefit the local economy through the purchasing of trees at local nurseries and employing local planting crews.

To be eligible, residents and property owners must agree to a two-year watering commitment to ensure the trees' survival. Easy care instructions are provided by DCR to tree recipients addressing watering, mulching and pruning. When a potential tree recipient registers, a DCR forester will visit their home to determine the best location and species of tree for energy efficiency. Foresters also conduct year-round site visits and are available to answer questions. To find out if you are in the planting zone and order a free tree, property owners and residents should call 617-626-1473 or visit [MAUrbanCanopy.org](https://www.maurbancanopy.org) (<https://www.maurbancanopy.org/>). For more information, please visit the [program's webpage](https://www.maurbancanopy.org/service-details/greening-the-gateway-cities-program) ([/service-details/greening-the-gateway-cities-program](https://www.maurbancanopy.org/service-details/greening-the-gateway-cities-program)).

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Department of Conservation & Recreation

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DCR manages state parks and oversees more than 450,000 acres throughout Massachusetts. It protects, promotes, and enhances the state's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

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