

Moving from Idea to Action with the Spreading Roots Toolkit

2024

Overview

The volume and depth of urban forestry resources and tools can be overwhelming, even to a seasoned pro. This guide can help an individual or organization take advantage of the many tools within the Spreading Roots toolkit to successfully plan, organize, and sustain an urban forestry initiative.

Key Steps

PLANNING AND INITIATIVE

Imagine you are ready to start to plan an urban forestry initiative in your town, city, or county. Before you begin planning, you'll need to decide where you'll plant trees or create green space, what type of initiative you will plan, and who will be involved in the planning, maintenance, and future of the initiative.

- **Where?**
Identify the specific areas within your city, town, or neighborhood where urban forestry initiatives are needed. Consider factors such as population density, existing green spaces, and areas with limited tree cover. You can use Spreading Roots' [curated list of tree mapping tools](#), combined with community knowledge or local plans, to identify the places where urban forestry initiatives can have the most impact.
- **What?**
You'll also need to decide what type of initiative you want to plan and implement. You may want to base this decision on the [different benefits](#) urban forestry initiatives can provide. Maybe you instead want to take a look at a variety of [different types of initiatives](#) and decide from there which aligns with your goals. You also may want to consider some of the obstacles and barriers that different communities encounter, as well as make sure you're considering potential negatives of initiatives if they are not done thoughtfully or without [consideration for potential gentrification or displacement](#).
- **Who?**
Finally, you'll want to think about who should be involved. If you work at an organization, should you involve other partner organizations? Maybe you want to look around to see the types of organizations that are in your community. You also may want to involve [local, state, federal, or tribal staff](#) in planning or approving your initiative.

ORGANIZE SUPPORT

Now, it's time to organize support for your initiative in a thoughtful, community-centered way. The Spreading Roots toolkit has a series of fact sheets with insights on community engagement, as well as communication tools that can help you spread your message and organize effectively and thoughtfully.

- **Who?**

Before you start to think about who should be involved in your initiative, you'll want to consider reasons folks may or may not want to be involved in urban forestry initiatives. We've compiled some [lessons we learned during our co-design workshops](#) that can help you be thoughtful about reasons people do or don't want to participate, and how to fold in or overcome those reasons.

- **How?**

You'll want to think of how you should engage folks in your community. In addition to the lessons we learned that can inform how you engage community members; we also learned a lot about [who, how, and what to say](#) when building community support. There are also a great deal of [resources that our team has collected](#) to help you learn from previous initiatives and useful best practices, as well as best practices for common social media platforms like X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

You will also want to take advantage of the many organizing and communication tools we've assembled. Take a look at the [library of illustrations, infographics, social media posts, and mission statements](#) that have been designed to communicate with audiences about the benefits and goals of urban forestry.

PROMOTE AND SUSTAIN INITIATIVE

- **Who?**

Once you are on the way to creating and implementing your initiative, you'll want to think about getting the word out. Take a look at some of our templates for [press releases, letters, emails, and newsletters](#) that can help you craft an effective message.

- **How?**

Once you've started to create your initiative, you'll want to think about how to effectively manage and maintain your work. While not as glamorous or exciting as planting, this is an important step! You can find a fact sheet we put together here on [maintenance and management](#).

ENJOY BENEFITS AND PLAN AHEAD

Now that you've recruited, organized and thoughtfully involved your community in a successful urban forestry initiative, you'll want to enjoy (literally!) the fruits of your labor. Maybe you'll use some of our communication tools to recruit ongoing volunteer help, or publicize your work to a bigger audience. You can also think about connecting with other organizations and networks, or perhaps attending regional or nationwide conferences – which can found in [our resources page here](#).