



## Northern Kentucky Urban & Community Forestry Council (NKUCFC) 2008

### Issue Paper: Challenges of Urban Forestry

The overall challenge of Urban Forestry (the care, management and planning of urban forest) is to increase awareness and understanding about the value and benefits of urban forests, the proper care of urban forests, and the need for urban forests to be considered essential infrastructure when planning and managing communities. Without this awareness and understanding there will be a lack of support for implementation and funding of urban forestry programs.

Management challenges include maintaining tree and planting site inventories, quantifying and maximizing the benefits of trees, minimizing costs, obtaining and maintaining public support and funding, and establishing laws and policies for trees on public and on private land. Those charged with urban forestry best management practices also need to be champions for the discipline rather than considering it a hassle.

Urban forestry also presents arboricultural challenges of limited root and canopy space, poor soil quality, deficiency or excess of water and light, heat, pollution, mechanical and chemical damage to trees, and mitigation of tree-related hazards.

Underlying the above challenges is the challenge of integrating information from many different perspectives and coordinating the roles, responsibilities, policies and projects of city departments, utility agencies, and partners for planning and managing the urban forest.

#### DISCUSSION ITEM

What is needed to unify an effective response to the above challenges so that we may realize the many benefits of urban forests, and that our public health and safety will not be compromised here in Northern Kentucky?

#### Additional Challenges

- Lack of appropriate tree planting spaces due to increased densities and more impervious surfaces
- Pressure to develop on hillsides and stream corridors where tree clearing will reduce significant benefits to communities, and can jeopardize health and safety
- Invasive non-native plant species are seriously threatening urban forest ecosystems
- Pest, such as Emerald Ash Borer, and disease can have sudden and devastating effects, especially in areas that lack species diversity
- Limited selection of tree species that work well in urban conditions
- Need qualified certified arborist and urban foresters
- Tree topping being accepted

Note: The 'State of our Urban Forests', a study by American Forest (a nationally respected organization that collects data on tree cover and monitors the nation's urban forest) recommends that cities aim for a 40% tree cover (equivalent of 20 large trees per acre) to ensure their ecological, economic and social sustainability.