



CITY FOREST CREDITS

Summary of Preservation Protocol Requirements: A Checklist for Potential Projects

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Requirements for City Forest Preservation Projects

✓ **Project Operator identified – Protocol Section 1.1**

This is the entity who takes legal responsibility for the project.

✓ **Signed Implementation Agreement – Section 1.2**

This is the agreement between the Project Operator and the City Forest Credits Registry (hereafter “Registry”) for an urban forest carbon project.

✓ **Project must be in or along one of the following (Section 1.3):**

- “Urban Area” per Census Bureau maps; see <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2010/geo/2010-census-urban-areas.html>
- A planning area for a metropolitan planning agency or entity, such as the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- An incorporated or unincorporated city or town
- Land owned, designated, and used by a municipal or quasi-municipal entity such as a utility for source water or water shed protection
- A transportation or utility right of way through one of above

✓ **Project Operator meets one of following (Section 1.5):**

- **Owns the land (and any carbon credits) upon which project trees are growing**
- **Has an easement for right of way and accepts “ownership” of project trees**
Intended to cover street trees; ownership means maintenance and liability and is intended to allow only street trees that a city or person accepts responsibility for.
- **Has a written agreement with landowner to receive carbon credits**
If the Project Operator does not own the land, he or she must have a written agreement with the owner to receive the carbon credits; this can be contained within an easement or encumbrance on the property.

✓ **Projects must commit to preserving trees for 40 years. Can preserve by recorded easement or deed restrictions if project is on private land, or, if on public land, by zoning designation AND development regulations in place that specifically protect the trees for the 40-year project duration – Section 4.1**

- ✓ **Projects must show (Sections 4.2 and 4.3):**
 - Trees now preserved by new easement or protected zoning status, and
 - Trees were not preserved by easement or protected zoning status before, and
 - Prior to preservation, Project Area was in a zoning designated that allowed at least one non-forest use, and
 - Prior to preservation, land in the Project Area met one of the three following:
 - Was surrounded on at least 30% of its perimeter by developed or improved uses, or
 - Had been sold or assessed at greater than \$10,000 per acre within three years of preservation, or
 - Would have had a fair market value after conversion to a developed or improved use greater than the fair market value prior to preservation

- ✓ **Project commences upon approval of its application by the Registry – Section 5**

- ✓ **Quantification of carbon stock and soil carbon leads to eligible credits – Section 10**

There are five steps in the quantification of credits generated by the Project. The Protocol describes these in detail. These are designed to be done by anyone moderately familiar with forestry. City Forest Credits has spreadsheets that identify data needed, with some of calculations based on formulae in the spreadsheet.

1. Estimate the biomass stock present, and adjust for uncertainty in the estimate to calculate the “Accounting Stock” (Section 10.1). This can be done using the GTR tables, or using an iTree tool with samples, or by on-site inventory
2. Calculate the fraction of the Accounting Stock that likely would be emitted as a result of development, to calculate “Avoided Biomass Emissions” (Section 10.2)
3. The Project Operator may elect to also account for growth of trees within the project area, or may choose not to count growth (Section 10.3)
4. Calculate “Avoided Soil Carbon Emissions” (Section 10.4)
5. Apply the deductions in Section 10.5 and Appendix B to Biomass and Soil Carbon calculations to adjust for development and emissions that would be displaced by the preservation of the Project Area (leakage deductions). This will reduce the creditable tonnes of Avoided Biomass Emissions and Avoided Soil Carbon Emissions to adjust for displaced development. (Section 10.5)

✓ **Monitoring and Reporting – Section 7**

Every three years throughout the 40-year project, the Project Operator must submit a monitoring report. These reports must be in writing, and the Project Operator must attest to the accuracy of the reports. The reports must be accompanied by some form of telemetry or imaging, such as Google Earth, showing leaf-on trees.

The reports must estimate the percent of the Project Area that appears to be losing stored carbon stock. If any area appears to be losing carbon stock, the report shall state the estimated amount of loss. The report shall also estimate the number of acres of significant soil disturbance that has occurred since the previous report.

✓ **Understand Reversals – Section 8**

If the Project Area loses credited carbon stock, the Project Operator must return or compensate for those credits if the tree loss is due to intentional acts or gross negligence of Project Operator. If tree loss is due to fire, pests, or other acts of god (i.e., not due to the Project Operator's intentional acts or gross negligence), the Registry covers the reversed credits from its Reversal Buffer Pool of credits held back from all projects.

✓ **Verification will be performed by third-party verifiers – Section 11**

✓ **Credits will be issued as follows – Section 6:**

- **For project areas greater than 200 acres:** credits are issued in equal amounts in the five years after third-party verification. All credits are issued over five years (with the exception of credits issued for additional growth in carbon stock after the initial quantification of CO₂)
- **For projects greater than 50 but less than 200 acres:** credits are issued in the equivalent of 50 acres per year (so that a 150-acre project will receive all credits over the three years after third-party verification)
- **For projects less than 50 acres:** all credits are issued after third-party verification

This issuance of credits over time reflects the likely staging of development over time if the project area were to have been developed. The schedule of issuance also reflects that one of the first actions taken upon metropolitan land being developed is clearing and grading. Developers often clear and grade as early as possible to “vest” development rights in the project, to discourage opposition to a project, or to reduce the cost of constructing in-ground infrastructure such as sewer and water.

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