



City Forest Credits Carbon Planting Project Application

1. Project Name

Reforestation Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Fall 2019 - 2021)

2. Project Type

Planting

3. Project Location

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The project meets the location criteria as it is within an incorporated city.

4. Project Operator

Trees Forever

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5. Project Description

Trees Forever is a non-profit with a three-decade history of success in Iowa. Approximately 1,125 trees will be planted from fall 2019 to fall 2021 by Growing Futures teens and community volunteers in publicly-owned areas around the City of Cedar Rapids. The primary focus will be to plant trees along city streets in the right-of-way. Some trees will be planted in city parks.

In 2019 the organization launched Growing Futures, a youth-centered worker program, to address critical social, economic, and environmental needs in Iowa's two largest cities, Cedar Rapids and Des Moines. In partnership with both city governments and sponsors such as TransAmerica, Alliant Energy, and Microsoft, Growing Futures uses a thoughtfully designed and hands-on approach to give Iowa's young people needed workplace skills and open doors for them to green careers while, of course, planting more trees. Trees for this project will be planted by Growing Futures teens and community volunteers.

6. Project Impacts

This project combines several community priorities such as:

Storm Recovery

In August 2010, a devastating windstorm known as a derecho swept west to east across Central Iowa, harming more than 700,000 acres of timber. Cedar Rapids in particular was hard hit with the storm toppling or otherwise damaging approximately 65 percent of the tree canopy with an estimated 669,000

trees lost. The recovery effort is already underway, with Growing Futures tasked in Cedar Rapids and in Des Moines with a portion of the necessary tree planting.

Community Connections

Trees Forever, the cities of Des Moines and Cedar Rapids, and financial partners such as Microsoft, TransAmerica, Wright Tree Service and Alliant Energy share a vision for improving local tree canopies by planting more trees and caring for the ones we have. The collaboration looks to engage youth of diverse backgrounds and focus their work on under-resourced communities that lack tree cover and grow a tree canopy that provides real and lasting benefits for generations to come.

Improve Life for Iowans

Trees improve quality of life. Residents and government officials alike are increasingly aware of this well-documented truth. The beauty of trees builds a positive sense of community and pride in the places we live. Trees are a cornerstone in achieving sustainability goals. A single mature tree can provide \$3,790 in value over its lifetime, a 250% return on investment.

Workforce Development

Growing Futures is a workforce development program that will support the youth in our communities. See more details under “additional information” below.

7. Number of trees to be planted and general planting-design

Cedar Rapids: minimum 660 trees in 2021 plus 465 trees from Fall 2019 – Fall 2020.

Trees will be planted by Growing Futures teens and community volunteers in publicly-owned areas around the city. Trees Forever typically maintains a 60 percent overstory to 40 percent understory ratio. The five main species planted are oak, hackberry, Kentucky coffeetree, crabapple, and redbud. The primary focus will be to plant trees along city streets in the right-of-way. Some trees will be planted in city parks. The trees will be planted following the single-tree dispersed method described in the CFC Planting Protocol with spacing 10 feet or more apart.

Trees Forever is the main contractor managing the City of Cedar Rapids’ tree planting efforts. We work closely with city officials to determine tree planting locations, neighborhoods to target, tree species make-up and more. After approval from the city on tree planting plans, Trees Forever manages all aspects of the plantings and on-going maintenance. Trees Forever will place all trees into a two-year care rotation where trees are mulched, watered, and, monitored nearly every week, particularly over the summer months. After this point, trees rotate off Trees Forever’s establishment phase and move into a monitoring phase for the next 23 years of the protocol with check-ins done throughout at regular intervals over these years and beyond.

8. Additional Information

Growing Futures is, we believe, one of the first programs of its kind in the country to couple carbon credits, quantified ecosystem benefits, and the social and economic benefits of youth engagement and workforce development in an urban setting. The goals of the Growing Futures program are to:

Grow leaders by employing and training young people

While complete statistics are not available, it is known that unemployment rates for youth, African-Americans and Hispanics in Iowa are substantially above the state average. In 2020, unemployment among Iowa’s youth was estimated at 10-14.9 percent, compared to the statewide average of just 5.3

percent (source: Schultz Family Foundation and Mathematica). Still more alarming, the Greater Des Moines Partnership has reported that Iowa in recent years has had the nation's highest rate of unemployment among African-Americans at 14.8 percent.

Limited employment options translate directly into reduced earnings. Whereas the median earning for Iowa men was more than \$50,000 in 2018, African-American males earned just \$32,400, their Hispanic counterparts \$40,700 (source: iowadatacenter.org).

Trees Forever and its partners believe that early entry into the workforce and a concentrated effort toward building employment skills, particularly the so-called soft skills so in demand among employers, will help address these inequities.

Grow more beautiful, greener communities and neighborhoods

As trees grow and thrive because of the care they receive from Growing Futures youth, residents Cedar Rapids will reap benefits in the form of cooler temperatures in neighborhoods, reduced air pollution, lowered rates of asthma, and even lower stress and longer lifespans.

Grow more trees in underserved communities

Research shows a large discrepancy in tree cover between high- and low-income neighborhoods. We must ensure there is equitable distribution of tree benefits to all neighborhoods in our community.

Deliver verified carbon credits and quantified environmental benefits

This project will deliver verified carbon credits and quantified stormwater reductions, energy savings, and air quality improvements.

As the program takes root, the effects will be lasting and far-reaching. Young people employed in caring for the environment grow holistically, becoming more well-rounded citizens and workers. As a result, Iowa's communities are stronger and our employers more competitive thanks to the presence of trained and qualified employees.

Tree service companies face a debilitating shortage of labor. Trees Forever has many partners in the industry who lament the difficulty of finding trainable workers, let alone those already equipped with beginning arborist skills. Those same partners have had minimal success launching apprenticeship programs in Iowa's and the nation's high schools; thus their enthusiasm for Growing Futures. One Iowa-based company, Wright Tree Service, has already committed more than \$200,000 in donated equipment to launch and now expand the program. We are confident that other tree service companies will follow their lead.

Quite simply, it is fun to imagine the young people who this summer will put spade to earth to plant their first trees maturing into the arborists and foresters of the future.