



## Why a Community Needs to Write a Mission Statement

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### Urban Forestry

One of the most important acts that any community can perform concerning public trees, and the money spent on them, is the writing of a Mission Statement. Whether it is called a Mission Statement, Purpose Statement or Vision Statement, the document that ensues articulates the community's intent in performing its responsibilities regarding both the trees in their care and to the people they represent.

Without clear direction, the supporting groups are left to guess at what the elected officials and the community want or need. Furthermore, without a guiding principle, competing groups can, with the best of intentions, lead the program in many different directions based on their own preconceived vision, purpose, or mission. The confusion that follows will prevent a cost-effective plan from being developed. Without clear direction, tax money spent on the program has the very real possibility of being wasted.

The statement (vision, purpose, or mission) is the first of 7 steps. The statement is also the step the elected official must make; the remaining 6 are developed by supporting personnel with the appropriate technical expertise to achieve the goals of the statement.

<b>Statement</b> - What is the intent of the program?	Set by elected officials
<b>Goals</b> - Goals that must be reached to validate the statement	Developed and reviewed
<b>Strategies</b> – Strategies necessary to reach the goals	Developed and reviewed
<b>Actions</b> – Actions that will meet the objectives	Worked on annually
<b>Specifications</b> – Specific rules for the actions	Developed and reviewed
<b>Implementation</b> – Performing the necessary actions	Performed annually
<b>Assessment</b> – Review of implementation efficacy	Performed annually

A sample Statement and Goals for a community tree program might look something like this:

### Statement

*Implementing the best management practices to help maximize the Economic<sup>1</sup>, Environmental<sup>2</sup>, and Social<sup>3</sup> benefits of a sustainable Urban Forest for the residents of (Community).*

### Goals

- 1. Maintain the health and vigor<sup>4</sup> of all trees in the Urban Forest**
- 2. Plant the largest suitable tree<sup>5</sup> for the site selected**
- 3. Achieve a fully stocked<sup>6</sup> Urban Forest**

## Footnotes

1. Economic: Trees provide a tremendous economic benefit to the community. Trees have been shown to:
  - increase property value and resale value
  - reduce crime and vandalism thereby reducing insurance rates
  - improve test scores and life decisions among school ages girls reducing the need for social services
  - reduce energy consumption by reducing the need for air conditioning
  - reduce storm water runoff thereby reducing the need for expanded sewer systems

Source: USDA Forest Service  
University of Il.

2. Environmental: Trees have been shown to improve the environment of the community by:
  - removing carbon from the air as well as preventing carbon from being burned by reducing the need for air conditioning. Less air conditioning - less electricity needed, less electricity - less coal burned and less CO<sub>2</sub> and air pollution
  - filter out air pollution and particles
  - improves water quality by intercepting and slowing rainfall and allowing it to seep into the ground to be filtered rather than flooding into the storm sewer carrying street grime and pollutants with it

Source: USDA Forest Service

3. Social:
  - reduce crime and vandalism thereby reducing insurance rates
  - improve test scores and life decisions among school ages girls reducing the need for social services
  - Reduces stress

Source: University of Il.

4. Health and vigor: Healthy vigorous trees live longer and require less maintenance thereby maximizing benefits while minimizing cost.

Source: USDA Forest Service  
University of Fla.

5. Largest tree: Large trees live longer and provide greater economic benefits than small trees. Undersized trees fail to maximize the potential of the site. This failure is lost value for the community.

Source: USDA Forest Service  
Cost Model by Alan Siewert, ODNR Division of Forestry

6. Fully stocked: Fully stocked means every available site has a tree growing in it. To maximize the benefits for the community all sites need to be stocked and functioning. Allowing a site to remain fallow or empty costs the community.

Note: When restoring an urban forest, mass planting to restock to 100% rapidly is not desirable as it will cause a “Baby Boom”. Restocking requires time to develop an all age stable population.

Source: USDA Forest Service  
Theoretical Urban Forest Model by Alan Siewert, ODNR Division of Forestry