To: **Tree City USA Communities**

From: DCR Urban & Community Forestry staff

Date: April 1, 2017

RE: **Tree City USA 2017 Applications (new and recertification) – DUE DEC. 31, 2017**

Thank you for your interest in applying for certification, or in becoming recertified as a Tree City USA. Tree City USA is a national honor given by the Arbor Day Foundation (ADF). Each state is responsible for reviewing the applications and forwarding them to ADF. DCR Urban and Community Forestry staff reviews each application to make sure each is complete, accurately reflects your program, and has current information. We are all proud of what our Tree City USA communities accomplish. We appreciate the work you do to earn this special recognition and appreciate your additional efforts to maintain such high standards.

We encourage you to apply online using the Online Web Portal (it will remember a portion of your information from year-to-year), but you may submit a Paper Application if you prefer.

If you use the web portal, please be sure there is a *valid email address in the portal contact email field*, as this is how we will communicate with you regarding your application.

- Your application MUST be submitted by **December 31, 2017**. **Please note that the online portal will become active for 2017 applications in the fall of 2017.** Communities that are recertifying will automatically be notified about when the portal will be available for applications. We will also announce it in our *Citizen Forester* newsletter.

    If using the paper version, please mail an ORIGINAL and one COPY of your application to:

    Mollie Freilicher
    DCR Community Action Forester
    P.O. Box 484
    Amherst, MA 01004

- Your recertification application and online login information should have been mailed to you directly by the Arbor Day Foundation. Web portal and paper recertification, Growth Award, and first-time applications and other resources are available at:
  http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/apply.cfm

- Please use the **checklist** (on page 4) to help you compile the information necessary to complete the application (online or paper version).

<div style="border:1px solid red; text-align:center;">

Please do not e-mail us a copy of your application.
If you wish to file electronically, please use the online portal: https://portal.arborday.org/

</div>

How to Meet the Tree City USA Standards

STANDARD 1: Tree Board or Department

- If you have a tree *department*, please enclose a description from a municipal annual report, budget justification, or other existing description. If none of these exist, please describe where your department sits in municipal government, who staffs it, and what the department's responsibilities are.

- If you have a *tree board or committee*, please include the names of all members (including addresses/e-mails) and other documentation (if new: bylaws, brochure, mission statement, articles of incorporation, or minutes from adoption by town meeting or city council).

- For communities that **share responsibilities with a non-profit partner**, this application needs to be formally presented by the municipality, with budget and program information representing both. Please be sure each partner is aware of the application's submittal.

- A narrative description of your program is always helpful.

STANDARD 2: Community Tree Ordinance

- **Communities in Massachusetts are automatically qualified for this criterion,**
  as long as one of the following is included with the application:

    o If you operate under the guidance of *M.G.L. Chapter 87*, please include **evidence that you enforce MGL Ch. 87** [a sample hearing notice (dated), correspondence] or that your city council or town meeting has adopted this law.

    o If you have adopted a **local ordinance, subdivision regulation, or other forestry policy**, please include it with your application. Your ordinance should mention Chapter 87. You may also provide a **web link** to where it can be downloaded. (We are in the process of collecting digital copies of all state tree-related ordinances.)

STANDARD 3: Community Forestry Program with an Annual Budget of at Least $2 Per Capita

- **2017 BUDGET:** Please include documentation for your total budget. **The budget must either be FY17 or a budget for the calendar year of 2017**.

    o Because you are applying for an award for 2017, we cannot accept FY'18 budgets. Please be sure that the budget **clearly shows budget expenditures for the tree program**, either showing a stand-alone budget for the program, or, if part of a larger, departmental, e.g., DPW, budget, with notations to indicate the portion of that budget spent on the tree program.

- **Important:** Please include **supporting documentation** from your municipality. Supporting documentation may include a budget printout, budget printed on letterhead, or letter on letterhead stating the tree budget.

- **Other sources:** Remember to include other funding such as **grant income**. You may also include other spending not already in the tree budget, **but note that you may only include 20% of the total cost for each of these**: leaf /brush pick-up, biomass recycling, utilities (pruning, removals).

- **For paper applications, fill out the REQUIRED [attached two-page worksheet](#) from the DCR Urban and Community Forestry Program.** This is important in evaluating the overall performance of the Tree City program and helps us demonstrate where funding is needed. (For online applications, this information is captured through the online portal.)

- **[WORK PLAN](#):** As a Tree City USA you are **required to submit an annual work plan**. This demonstrates that your community looks forward in planning for the year and that you have a systematic approach to your urban forestry program. A work plan that is updated frequently qualifies for this standard. Please include a total of trees planted, removed, and pruned in 2017. A sample work plan can be found [at the end of this document](#).

STANDARD 4: Arbor Day celebration and proclamation of Arbor Day   *(Return to checklist summary)*

To meet this standard, your application must include:

- **Evidence of an Arbor Day celebration occurring in 2017**. This could be a dated clipping from the newspaper, or, if the newspaper didn't cover the event, a press release, invitations, a program detailing speakers and entertainment for the event, thank-you letters, speeches or speaking points, or photographs. Photographs alone will not suffice. **Be sure event materials mention Arbor Day.**

- Likewise, the proclamation of Arbor Day, **signed** by your Mayor/Manager or Select Board, must be **dated in 2017**. In Massachusetts, the last Friday in April is traditionally Arbor Day. You may proclaim *any day* Arbor Day, but you must give the date of *your* Arbor Day. Please submit a copy of your signed proclamation. You do not need to include the original with your application.

- Please be cautious about combined Arbor Day and Earth Day observances. If you choose one celebration for these two holidays, please explicitly document the Arbor Day portion of the celebration as stated above.

- **Do not assume that Earth Day = Arbor Day.** Tree City USA applications are sent to the Arbor Day Foundation, thus this emphasis. Likewise, be cautious about clean-ups, spring festivals, and the like. These are great community events, but please make sure materials indicate that the event is also an Arbor Day celebration.

Application Signature

- **The application MUST be signed by the Mayor, City/Town Manager, or Chair of the Select Board**. Applications signed only by the tree program manager are not acceptable.

QUESTIONS?
Please contact:
Mollie Freilicher   413-577-2966   mollie.freilicher@state.ma.us

Growth Award-Next page

Growth Award:

This award is intended to recognize special accomplishments of Tree City USA communities. To be eligible for a Growth Award a community must have been a Tree City USA last year and applied for recertification this year. The basis of the award is *growth* in the program, documented by innovative programs and projects undertaken in the course of the year. Ongoing annual programs, even if they are extraordinary, will not alone qualify for the award.

The intent of the award is to recognize **innovative** and **enhanced** efforts in urban forestry in communities and not to be a higher tier of Tree City USA awards for well-established and well-funded programs to earn each year.

Communities must earn 10 points according to Growth Award eligible activities, which are *new* or *significantly improved* this year.

Categories include
A: Education and Public Relations
B: Partnerships
C: Planning and Management
D: Tree Planting and Maintenance.

Has your community received a grant or completed an inventory this year? Started a setback planting program? Begun a new partnership with a local nursery or organization? Those, and other activities, can qualify for this award!

Please document your special program or growth area with **attachments** and **supporting documentation**. If you have questions on what kind of supporting documentation to include, please contact Mollie Freilicher and refer to Growth Award materials on the [Arbor Day Foundation website](#).

Communities that earn the Growth Award for ten years receive special [Sterling Tree City USA Designation](#).

Apply for the Growth Award through the online portal or submit a [Growth Award application](#) along with your community's paper Tree City USA application.

QUESTIONS?
Please contact:
Mollie Freilicher   413-577-2966   mollie.freilicher@state.ma.us

Tree City USA Checklist Summary

❑ Paper application postmarked/delivered by **December 31, 2017** or online application submitted by December 31, 2017.

❑ If mailing a paper application, submit **original** and **one copy** of the entire application (not just the cover sheet).

❑ **Standard 1**: Provide documentation of department and/or tree board/committee.

❑ Standard 2:
  o Attach documentation that the municipality has adopted Chapter 87 or evidence of enforcement of Chapter 87 (e.g., a tree hearing notice dated in 2017).
  o Attach copy of municipal tree ordinance, if you have one (or provide a web link).

❑ Standard 3:
  o Provide municipal budget documentation to back up your $2/capita budget figure (must be FY'17).
  o Fill out the attached two-page worksheet (*Massachusetts 2017 TCUSA Standard 3 Worksheet*). (A version of this worksheet is part of the online portal.)
  o Attach municipal Work Plan with FY17 or calendar year 2017 accomplishments. You can upload your work plan in the "Additional State Questions" section of the online portal.

❑ Standard 4:
  o Attach 2017 (dated and signed) Arbor Day Proclamation copy – do not send original.
  o Attach evidence of 2017 Arbor Day celebration (dated materials).

❑ Application Signature
  o Signed by the Mayor, City/Town Manager, or Select Board.

❑ Submission
  o For paper applications, the signed application page should be the cover sheet on the top of the application packet; do not use binders or plastic covers when submitting your application. Simply staple or use a binder clip to secure the application together.
  o If using the paper version, please mail an ORIGINAL and one COPY of your application to:
    Mollie Freilicher
    DCR Community Action Forester
    P.O. Box 484
    Amherst, MA 01004

  o Please do not e-mail your application. If you would like to apply electronically, please use the online portal.

Please do not submit unnecessary amounts of information, or information that is not requested above. Support letters are not needed for this application.

~ This form must be submitted with your paper application for Tree City USA~

COMMUNITY: _____ ☐ **FY 2017 or** ☐ **Calendar 2017**

COMMUNITY CAPACITY QUESTIONS:

1) Who manages public street trees in your community?

Name: _____ Title:_____

Contact: _____ Email:_____

What certifications or degrees are held by the Tree Warden, Arborist or other members of your department? (Provide title/certification/#)

Do you contract with arborists or urban forest professionals to assist in your community? For what purpose?

2) Does your community have a tree committee, citizen's group, or non-profit organization that advocates for community trees (or other urban natural resources)?

Name of group: _____

Contact/e-mail (please attach e-mails/contact info as needed):_____

3) Do you have any kind of tree survey, inventory or resource assessment?
_____

When was it completed (and when updated, if ever)? _____

How have you used it? Actively, or does it 'sit on a shelf'?_____

4) Do you have a pest detection or monitoring protocol? _____

5) Does your community have any kind of Urban Forestry, Open Space, or Natural Resources Management Plan? (Please provide a web link to the plan.)

☐ Urban Forestry Mgmt Plan (date:_____) ☐ OTHER Natural Resource Mgmt Plan
☐ Municipal Open Space Plan (date:_____)   Please describe: _____

6) Cross-Program Communication: We encourage tree wardens to be involved in planning board, conservation commission, and other such board decisions. How is cross-program communication encouraged in your community? Is there an ordinance or regulation requiring tree warden review of subdivision plans? Please explain how, if so, this works in your community. (Feel free to say it doesn't happen!)
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7) Trees Planted _____ **Trees Pruned** _____
  Trees Removed _____

~ This form must be submitted with your application for Tree City USA~

MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY FORESTRY EXPENDITURES

The total budget figure should clearly link to the submitted FY'16 municipal budget – *if not, make notes on the municipal budget print-out to clarify* – and must equal or exceed **$2/capita.**

Thanks to your feedback, we have modified the budget worksheet below. You may use additional/other categories that more closely reflect your municipal budget. We need **back-up documentation** from your municipality, which may include a **budget printout, budget printed on letterhead,** or **letter on letterhead**.

☐ **FY 2017 or** ☐ **Calendar 2017**

Salaries   _____
Tree warden, tree crew, admin staff (may be based on a percentage of time worked on trees)

Tree Planting
May include cost of tree purchases, labor, and equipment for planting, planting   _____
materials, stakes, watering, mulching, etc.

In-house Municipal Tree Maintenance
Include pruning, insect and disease control, storm response, fertilization,   _____
watering, stump removal, equipment, supplies, etc.

Contracted Tree Maintenance Work   _____

Vehicular Expenses
Fuel, maintenance, depreciation, new/used vehicle purchases, insurance   _____

Public Outreach and Staff Training
Advertising, public education, professional training, memberships,   _____
Arbor Day event expenses

Resource Assessment Expenses
Survey and inventory expenses, software, consultants to develop management   _____
plan.

Tree Board/Volunteer Time ($10/hour, use educated estimate)   _____
(e.g. # hours **x** # weeks **x** # people)

Other   _____
Include any other expenses not already noted above (grant income, leaf/brush
pick-up (20% is allowable), biomass recycling (20% is allowable), utilities
(20% of utility work on tree is allowable), etc.

Briefly describe:_____
_____
_____

TOTAL MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURES1 ……………………..	$_____
COMMUNITY POPULATION1, 2 …………………..…………..	#_____

1 *Transfer these two numbers to Standard 3 on the application and attach this sheet to the application.*
2 *Please get updated community population (2010 census).*

Sample Work Plan

Assessments

The Tree Warden determines the status of trees and schedules any necessary work. Work is scheduled based on priority. Twenty eight requests for tree removals were assessed and removal was deemed unwarranted as a result of resident inquiries in 2017.

Pruning

Pruning is a regular part of maintaining a healthy tree. If the Tree Warden determines a tree needs to be pruned, the tree is placed on the pruning list. Work is completed based on priority. Utility companies such as _____ also complete pruning in the City to maintain their overhead lines. ____ trees were pruned by the City in 2017.

Tree Removals

Public trees may only be removed with the consent of the City's Tree Warden. Only trees that are deemed dead, dying, or hazardous can be removed. The United States Department of Agriculture's How to Recognize Hazardous Defects in Trees defines a "hazard tree" as "a tree with structural defects likely to cause failure of all or part of the tree, which could strike a 'target'. A 'target' can be a vehicle, building, or a place where people gather, such as a park bench, picnic table, street, or backyard." If the Tree Warden determines a tree should be removed, the tree will be placed on the removal list. Work will be completed based on priority. Once a tree is removed, a stump will be left and the location will be placed on the stump removal list. Once the stump is removed, the area will be loamed and seeded. If the site warrants, it will be placed on the tree replacement list. There were ___ tree removals in 2017. The City also held two tree removal hearings at the request of residents.

Stump Grinding

All stump grinding is outsourced to an outside contractor. Work is completed based on priority. Once a stump is removed, the area is loamed and seeded. There were ___ locations in 2017.

Annual Tree Planting Program

Every year the City's Tree Planting Program replaces trees and fulfills requests for trees throughout the City. Trees are planted at the discretion of the Tree Warden. The City planted ___ trees in 2017 and plans on planting ___ trees in 2018.