

# Tree Canopy

## Preserve Lincoln's Urban Forest

### Target(s):

**Replace at least one tree for every three public trees lost to damage, decline or disease.**

### Lincoln Now:

One of the hallmarks of Lincoln's quality of life is its community, urban forest, which is a prominent feature of its landscape. A canopy of thousands of trees is showcased in many shades of green in the summer and vivid reds, oranges and yellows of autumn. It is also an important resource for the health and well-being of our environment and society. Trees lower heating and air conditioning costs, prevent erosion, provide wildlife habitats, reduce storm water runoff, increase property values and make our neighborhoods more livable. It is recognized that trees, both those occurring naturally and those planted and managed, are essential to the quality of life of residents and the character of the community.

Though many may not consider the urban forest to be part of the natural environment, it represents a significant community investment- exemplified in Lincoln being nationally recognized as a "Tree City USA" by the National Arbor Day Foundation since 1976- with its elimination or neglect having substantially detrimental consequences. Lincoln Parks and Recreation's Community Forestry program maintains over 125,000 public trees, of which 87,000 are located on 1,217 miles of streets. This compares to an estimated 112,651 in 2004 showing an increase of about 10.8 percent.

In recent years, starting with a devastating early winter storm in 1997, Lincoln has started witnessing a shrinking of its tree canopy. There has been tree loss in established areas of the community due to storms, disease and age. Ongoing municipal budgetary constraints have contributed to this decline, resulting in only one in five public trees lost to damage, decline or disease being replaced.