

APPENDIX IV: SELF-GUIDED ASSESSMENT OF FORESTRY PRACTICES

Setting goals is an important step toward ensuring that forestry programs are implemented in a deliberate manner and are focused on achieving the identified goals. The goal-setting exercise might focus on implementation goals, such as planting a certain number of trees; or environmental and quality-of-life goals (e.g., decreasing flood events in residential areas, reducing temperatures by providing shade along streets). Some agencies or departments might embark on a more focused, near-term goal-setting exercise that identifies the implementation of specific programs to support broader forestry goals, such as establishing a Relative Performance Index to understand the age, health, and condition of publicly owned trees, by species.

USFS, [American Forests](#), and the [National Association of Regional Councils](#) have developed a free, online [Community Assessment and Goal-Setting Tool](#) to help decision makers and practitioners assess their department's or agency's current forestry program and set achievable goals to align those programs with best practices. This tool can be used to effectively prepare a community for Tree City USA recognition.

In addition to the resources mentioned above, Delta Institute has developed the following assessment framework for department or agency personnel to assess the goals, outcomes, and existing practices of a forestry program. This self-assessment allows personnel to make decisions about how best to align current and future programs with the best practices described above.

Community Goals

Identifying community goals is essential for creating an urban forestry management plan that is responsive to local needs, values, and aspirations. By engaging residents in the goal-setting process, planners can develop strategies that are relevant, effective, and sustainable, ultimately leading to healthier and more vibrant communities.

Goal	Briefly describe the goals that your department or agency have set for forestry-related activities.
1	
2	
3	

Targeted Outcomes

Identifying targeted outcomes helps communities create a more focused, measurable, and adaptive urban forestry management plan that can effectively meet the needs of both the community and the environment.

Targeted Outcome	Briefly describe the desired outcomes that will result from reaching the goals described above.
1	
2	
3	

Targeted Outcome	How well do the outcomes align with your goals?
1	
2	
3	

Targeted Outcome	Are the targeted outcomes quantifiable or qualitative? If so, how? See Table 4, below, for potential outcome metrics.
1	
2	
3	

Table 4: Potential Forestry Outcomes

Quantitative Outcomes Table	<p>Investments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total local public dollars invested. • Total local public dollars leveraged. • Total federal public dollars leveraged. • Total private dollars leveraged
	<p>Green Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of trees planted. • Number of trees maintained. • Number of species planted or maintained. • Square feet on new canopy added
	<p>Reduced Environmental Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated net reduction in surface temperature. • Gallons of runoff treated or captured. • Net tons of CO2 emissions sequestered
	<p>Community Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total jobs created. • Total jobs maintained. • Total volunteers engaged. • Total neighborhoods served
Qualitative Outcomes Table	<p>Government Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree board created or maintained. • Plans or inventories created. • Ordinances created. • Initiatives or programs created. • Initiatives or programs supported.

Existing Programs and Initiatives

Identifying existing programs and initiatives provides communities with valuable insights, resources, and opportunities to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of their urban forestry management efforts. By building on what already exists, communities can create stronger, more integrated, and more impactful management plans that benefit both residents and the urban environment.

Briefly describe the departments, governing boards, or agencies that oversee and/or implement forestry-related activities.	Should additional groups/individuals be involved?	If so, which ones? Describe their role.

Briefly describe any ordinances or guidelines that apply to forestry-related activities conducted by your department or agency.	How do these policies and regulations support your goals?

Briefly describe any events or additional programming used to engage residents or other community groups around forestry-related activities.	What's worked well?	What lessons can be learned from these activities?

Funding

Often, community groups and municipalities need a “starting point” to assess their needs prior to submitting forestry-focused grant requests. This is a simple starting point to canvas current forestry funding in your community.

Briefly describe how forestry-related activities are currently funded (dedicated local funding, pass-through grants, etc.).	How much of your department/agency’s funding goes towards tree planting and maintenance?	What are the benefits and drawbacks associated with these sources of funding?

S.W.O.T. Analysis

This exercise is designed to identify the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities associated with your department or agency’s ability to conduct forestry-related activities:

	Strengths: Describe what your organization excels at.	Weaknesses: Describe challenges that your organization faces.	Opportunities: Describe favorable factors, external to your agency or department, that can provide an advantage to your organization.	Threats: Describe factors that could potentially harm your agency or department.
Forestry-related				
Non-forestry related				

Considering Equity and Inclusion in the Forestry Goal Setting & Assessment Process

To incorporate DEI principles into the Forestry Goal Setting & Assessment process, consider the following diagnostic questions:

- What forestry-goals in your community specifically benefit low resource communities?
- Of the targeted qualitative and quantitative outcomes illustrated in Table 4, which can be associated with projects occurring within low to moderately resourced communities?
 - What ordinances, policies, and guidelines exist that advance forestry (and its benefits) in low to moderate resourced communities?
- Is there programming in your community intended to engage low to moderate income residents around forestry-related activities?
- What funding sources (or existing programs) exist in your community that support tree planting and maintenance in low to moderate resourced neighborhoods?
- What are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats that relate to your department or agency's ability to advance forestry-related activities in low to moderate-resourced neighborhoods, in contrast with the wider community?

While aspects of goal setting and self-assessment are broader than the topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion, incorporating a DEI lens helps to provide a municipality or agency with an understanding of whether their forestry-related activities successfully address environmental health or quality of life concerns in underserved areas.