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Boston awarded \$30K toward effort to plant 100,000 new trees by 2020

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The state's recreation department awarded \$30,000 today to a four-year-old campaign that hopes to plant 100,000 new trees in Boston over a 13-year-span ending in 2020.

Earlier this summer, preservation nonprofit Boston Natural Areas Network, through its Urban Forest Program, took over leadership of the Grow Boston Greener Campaign, an initiative Mayor Thomas M. Menino [launched in 2007](#).

Despite struggling with funding and organizational changes, the initiative maintains its goal of planting 100,000 new trees to increase the city's tree canopy cover from 29 percent four years ago to 35 percent by this decade's end, Mathew Cahill, coordinator of BNAN's Urban Forest Program, said by phone Thursday.

The \$30,000 awarded to BNAN today is part of \$80,470, including \$50,470 from the federal Forest Service department, that the state's conservation and recreation's department granted to five municipalities and nonprofit groups to support local tree and forestry projects, officials said. The other four municipalities and organizations receiving grants include: the City of Beverly, the City of Newburyport, the Town of Rutland and the Worcester Tree Initiative and its partner the Worcester Youth Center.

In addition to supporting the Grow Boston Greener Campaign, BNAN will use its grant funds to re-energize the Boston Urban Forest Coalition, which brings together city, state and federal government partners along with nonprofit green groups and citizen advocates to help the city manage its urban forest resources more effectively, according to state officials.

The funding was announced this morning at the Presentation School Foundation Community Center, which plans to open in Brighton's Oak Square by the calendar year's end. The community center planted new trees paid for by \$1,100 it received through the Grow Boston Greener Campaign, which offers up to \$2,500 in "mini-grants" to interested community groups and organizations in order to plan new trees in publicly-accessible areas, according to Cahill.

Appropriate given the name of the square it sits in, the community center opted to buy and plant three oak trees with its grant funding, the program coordinator said.

"We are grateful to [state DCR] Commissioner [Edward M.] Lambert [Jr.] and everyone at the Department of Conservation and Recreation for financially

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everyone at the Department of Conservation and Recreation for financially supporting this important initiative to plant 100,000 trees,” Mayor Thomas M. Menino said in a press release. “We also appreciate BNAN’s help in managing this effort since Valerie Burns and her staff have a long and successful history of environmental leadership and stewardship in our neighborhoods.”

“This wonderful partnership between the state and city will further enhance a vibrant section of Allston-Brighton,” State Rep. Kevin Honan added in the release. “The Presentation School Foundation, which will receive funds from Grow Boston’s Greener grant program, has marshaled community resources together to promote an important community center.”

Because BNAN, working closely with the city’s parks department, took over the Grown Boston Greener Campaign only three months ago, the organization has been working on compiling, but does not yet have an up-to-date count of how many trees the campaign has planted since it launched in 2007.

However, Cahill said, the campaign’s goal of 100,000 new trees by 2020, “hasn’t changed.”

After BNAN’s first round of grant money distribution, more than 50 new trees were planted this fall from around \$18,000 in mini-grant funding that was awarded, he said. As BNAN settles more into its leadership role over the campaign, a higher amount of funding is expected to be awarded, and thus a higher number of trees planted, during the springtime grant program.

The campaign has found the average cost of each new tree, including installation materials, is around \$350, Cahill said. Generally, each tree is between six and eight feet tall and around two inches in diameter at its trunk.

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