



New Urban Plan Unveiled!

Years ahead of schedule, City of Boston releases new plan



A schematic of Boston's new Urban Forest Plan: A single tree, engineered by researchers at MIT, will replace the need to plant thousands of trees throughout the city.

In an exciting development, Chris Cook, Boston's Chief of Energy, Environment, and Open Space, announced today, April 1, the abrupt results of Boston's Urban Forest Plan. Instead of a lengthy outreach and engagement process, the city has decided to plant a single tree.

This tree, a new species called *Ulmus Bostonia*, was genetically engineered by a group of super-secret botanists at MIT for maximal growth and canopy coverage. Given the right conditions, it can reach a maximum height of 40,000 feet with a DBH of up to 6,000 feet. When fully mature, this tree is expected to increase Boston's tree canopy from 27% to 100% by 2030.

"This new tree, Boston Elm, is a testament to the local ingenuity found in our backyard," said Cook. "The work undertaken by MIT researchers is going to provide residents of Boston with clean and cool air and build a resilient city for generations to come. By planting just a single tree, we are fulfilling our various plans in one fell swoop, including our Climate Action Plan, Carbon Free Boston, Imagine Boston, and the dozens of other plans that we've developed over the past decade."

MIT researchers involved in this project, led by Prof. Bunyan, have spent decades developing a tree that is resilient to Dutch Elm disease. In the process, they created a species that demonstrated an ability to grow quickly and to extreme heights. "With a grant from the US Forest Service, we have undertaken all sorts of silly projects with trees" said Bunyan. "No one expected that we'd end up with a monster tree like this! To have it be planted across the river is such a bonus. Let's hope it doesn't fall on anyone's house!"

Ryan Woods, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, echoed the excitement. "Having an urban forest centered on equity across the city has always been a goal of our Urban Forest Plan. Having one tree to plant - instead of thousands - will make our job so much easier!"

Despite the announcement, some hurdles still remain. For one, an appropriate site for this tree has not yet been determined. Some have suggested the Boston Common while others are eyeing City Hall or Franklin Park. The removal of some buildings, such as the John Hancock Tower or Copley Hall, remain a possibility.

Another concern is about the shadow that the tree will cast. Liz Vizza, President of Friends of the Public Garden, voiced displeasure that this tree would likely increase the shade in the the Common; the city faced a similar issue years ago with a development project in Winthrop Square. "We need to carefully assess the amount of shadow that this tree will throw on public land. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has strict laws that will require careful assessment of the shadow of this tree."

Despite these concerns, this new tree promises to be a gamechanger for urban forests across the country. If the tree takes, American Forests has developed a long-range urban reforestry plan to plant this tree in various US cities every April 1.

Who We Kidding? **Join us in growing Boston's urban forest**



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