

## 250 Trees - Mission Statement

October 10, 2023

In celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the American Revolution, Concord is planting 250 trees. This living monument celebrates Concord's revolutionary past, as well as its aspirations for the future. The town's history reveals a community that has always looked forward and led with courage and vision. The planting of 250 trees is a demonstration of its commitment to a more sustainable and resilient future and is a gift to future generations of Concordians to appreciate and enjoy.

Unlike static bronze monuments of generals mounted on horseback, the 250 Trees monument will bring life to key spaces across town, enhancing our streets and our quality of life. Individual trees will combine in a variety of locations to mark two and one-half centuries of evolving freedoms and national identity. Each tree will stand as testament to our appreciation for the individuals who fought to create a new country and as a symbol of a fertile democracy.

Trees provide a visual and thermal break from long stretches of uninterrupted pavement. They take up and store carbon, reduce air and water pollution and provide flood resilience from extreme rain events. Perhaps, most simply, they provide the pleasure of shade. The 250 Trees will include a selection of trees native to Massachusetts, with a particular focus on larger street trees. The leaf canopies and root systems of larger trees provide greater long-term environmental benefits. Each tree will be selected based on a site's unique conditions and limitations, as well as the needs for any given space. Tree root systems have fungal networks that help one plant communicate to another. Trees can also communicate to us, remind us of lives that came and went before, and how today we can naturally support life for Concord's tomorrows.

250 tomorrows are difficult to visualize. The 250 Trees monument is not a reforestation, but its message is that continuity with past history carries a responsibility to Concord's future. Every tree will quietly assert our commitment to addressing climate change. Carbon sequestration is a matter of scale. We cannot offset destruction of the Amazon rainforests with 250 small acts, but we can arrange ourselves street-by-street and tree-by-tree to be heard round the world once again.

Concord's relationship to the land it occupies has always been central to its identity, and so it is appropriate we mark this significant moment in our town's history with something connected and rooted in the land - trees.