

Back of Sidewalk



The Back of Sidewalk tree planting program was designed to improve our urban forest through public/private tree planting partnerships. The term, "Back of Sidewalk" refers to the edge of the sidewalk where public way meets private properties. In the case of this program, the City will plant trees along the back of sidewalk, (up to 20 feet off the public way) on private property of interested, eligible owners.

This program provides the city a means of planting trees where in the past either the sidewalk was too narrow or overhead utilities were in the way. This program will allow the city to plant trees in more desirable growing conditions, making it likely they will survive and thrive. A typical sidewalk tree faces harsher conditions along the curb (such as oil or salt from roadway runoff). Soil conditions at the back of sidewalk are generally more suitable for plant growth. The improved environment, larger rooting area, and lack of overhead competition will help ensure a healthier tree canopy in Cambridge.

Pedestrians benefit by this program when sidewalks widths are maintained. The narrow nature of sidewalks in Cambridge make it difficult to find appropriate places to plant new trees. A growing tree not only crowds the sidewalk, but its root system.

City Arborist
David Lefcourt
dlefcourt@cambridgema.gov
617-349-6433

www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/ourservices/urbanforestry/citystreetplantingprograms/backofsidewalk