Introductory Tool Kit for Planting Projects

Is a City Forest Carbon+ Planting Project Right for You?

- Use this Master Tool Kit to help guide you through your evaluation and planning process
- Estimate your potential carbon revenues and the additional costs from following these carbon protocol rules
- Review the Further Information section to get more detail
- If you are still interested and eligible, City Forest Credits will assist you in your project design and planning

Planning Steps for Carbon+ Planting Projects:

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1. Identifying the Project Operator

- The Project Operator will be the main point of contact between the City Forest Credits Registry ("CFC" or "the Registry") and the Carbon+ Planting Project
- Project Operators will plan and execute the project with assistance from the Registry
- Ideal candidates for Project Operator will be
  - Non-profit organizations,
  - City and county officials, or
  - Anyone capable of undertaking a large-scale, long-duration planting project

2. Duties of the Project Operator

- Project Operators will need to
  - Comply with the rules in the CFC Planting Protocol,
  - Take legal responsibility for the project
- Carbon+ Planting Projects can demand significant amounts of staff time but are also capable of generating significant funding

3. Finding a Suitable Location

- The Project Operator selects a suitable location for a planting project
- The case is simplified if the Project Operator either
  - Is a landowner who will allow trees to be planted and protected for at least 25 years or
  - Is associated with a landowner who will allow trees to be planted and protected for at least 25 years
- Projects registered with City Forest Credits can be created on private or public land as long as they are within a city, town, or metropolitan area. City-owned watershed land qualifies also.
- Planting projects can be canopy-style plantings done with clustered plantings at high density or more scattered, single tree plantings, like street trees
4. Creating a 25-year Project Plan

- Planting projects have a minimum duration of 25 years in which
  - The Project Operator is responsible for short annual status reports,
  - The landowner agrees not to harvest trees, and
  - The Project Operator must collect and supply data on survivorship through spreadsheet tools provided by the Registry. This involves checking a sample of Project Trees in Years 4 and 6 of the Project, and then getting Diameter at Breast Height of a sample of trees in Year 25 of the Project
- Project Operators will need to take into account how much staff time will be involved in maintaining this project

5. Understanding Forward Credits

- The Registry will issue Carbon+ Credits based on projected CO₂ storage at 25 years:
  - 10% upon planting
  - 40% after sampling in Year 4, and
  - 30% after sampling in Year 6.
- The remainder of credits will be issued upon quantification of CO₂ stored at end of 25-year project duration. 20% of credits are held until the end of the project to guard against reversals.
6. Signing Appropriate Agreements with Registry and Landowners

- Project Operators will need to sign a Project Implementation Agreement with the Registry
- Project Operators planning projects on land they do not own will need either
  - a signed agreement to transfer credits to the Project Operator from the landowner or
  - in the case of street trees, a City must have a right of way easement and accept maintenance and liability for the trees
- Other required documentation will be provided by the Registry:
  - A 3-page Application
  - A Project Design Document, using guidance from the Registry on contents
  - A spreadsheet tool for planting data, and sampling data from years 4 and 6

7. Project Sampling and Verification as Directed by City Forest Credits

- Project sampling and verification differs between the two types of planting projects
- Canopy style planting projects require
  - Aerial imaging showing the canopy of the site and
  - Canopy estimates using i-Tree.
- Single tree or scattered planting projects require
  - At Year 4 and Year 6 determination for a sample of trees of whether they are alive, dead, or removed, and geocoded photographs for that sample of the project trees and
  - DBH measurements on a sample of project trees only at end of project in Year 25.
- The Registry will review all documentation to ensure protocol compliance
Background to Carbon Credits

The main external influence on our planet is the Sun. Heat from the Sun enters our atmosphere, but when it tries to escape, greenhouse gases (GHG) reduce how much can leave. GHG act much like a blanket keeping someone warm. The large amount of GHG in our atmosphere has resulted in a rapid warming of our planet and a shift in weather patterns most often referred to as climate change or global warming.

Most scientists agree that emissions reductions of GHG, namely CO₂, will be an important aspect of combatting global warming, but carbon sequestration projects will also play a large role. Both emission reductions and CO₂ sequestration projects are able to generate carbon credits. A carbon credit represents one metric ton of carbon either kept from or removed from the atmosphere. Credits generated through emissions reductions serve a valuable purpose but fail to generate the same co-benefits seen in carbon sequestration projects.
Carbon+ Credits and Co-Benefits

Tree plantings can mitigate storm water runoff, improve air quality, and benefit human health in addition to sequestering CO$_2$. These co-benefits and more are included in City Forest Credits’ Carbon+ Credit. Carbon+ Credits are able to be sold on the carbon market just like normal carbon credits; however, Carbon+ Credits are more enticing to local carbon buyers since they are generated locally along with their co-benefits.

The spreadsheet tools provided by the Registry allow you to directly demonstrate the amount of human health, environmental, and economic impacts produced through your projects. Co-benefits from tree plantings can increase positive media mentions for both the Project Operator and carbon buyers, along with acting as a legacy for elected or agency official pioneering urban forest carbon projects.

The Registry’s Carbon+ Credits allow companies to invest efficiently, reliably, and locally in climate solutions:

- **Local Urban Greening**: Locally implemented, visible and quantifiable environmental benefits
- **Community Impacts**: Carbon buyers can purchase credits where their constituents, customers, or employees live.
- **Co-benefits**: Uniquely bundled credits that include a metric ton of CO$_2$ with quantified storm water reduction, air quality benefits, and energy savings plus all the other benefits of trees, like bird and pollinator habitat, slope stability, and human health improvements
- **Media over Time in Cities**: Favorable media exposure for cities and local officials, NGOs implementing projects, community leaders, and local carbon buyers
- **Global to Local**: Local benefits through a national program to address a global problem
The City Forest Credit Process

The Planting Protocol involves the planting of trees in an urban area with the intent of capturing carbon. Through the help of the Registry, Project Operators can follow this protocol to design planting projects and generate Carbon+ Credits.

The Project Operator follows our rules and submits their application to the Registry. After verification, the Project Operator receives forward credits on the schedule described in Section 5 above. The Project Operator can sell those credits to carbon buyers, giving a small fee to the Registry. The carbon buyers’ dollars go directly to the Project Operator.

The Carbon Registry

City Forest Credits is a non-profit organization that has assembled a board of national urban forest stakeholders and recruited a national protocol drafting group. Our protocol drafting group developed two carbon protocols: one for city forest tree planting and a first-ever protocol for urban tree preservation. We also developed a unique Carbon+ Credit that includes quantified CO$_2$, storm water reductions, air quality, and energy savings in cooling and heating.

The Project Operator

The Project Operator is responsible for the project design, maintenance, and data collection in compliance with our protocols. They are also the recipient of Carbon+ Credits from City Forest Credits. The Project Operator’s sells Carbon+ Credits, and City Forest Credits can help put Project Operators in touch with Carbon Buyers. Other than the fees paid to our non-profit organization, City Forest Credits, by the Project Operator, carbon buyer dollars go directly to the Project Operator. Registry fees are the $500 application fee, plus a fee of $2 per credit if the buyer is buying per credit, or 5% of any grant-like, fixed funding of a project.

The Carbon Buyers

A carbon buyer is any entity in the carbon market interested in purchasing carbon credits, either for offsets or corporate social responsibility. City Forest Credits’ Carbon+ Credits have attracted buyers from both commercial and government sectors.
Work Flow Guide

1. Project Operator plans project.

2. Project Operator submits the Application Form to the Registry.

3. Registry approves the Application Form or recommends edits. Once edits are complete, the Project Operator can resubmit for approval.

4. A $500 application fee is paid to Registry by the Project Operator.

5. The Project Operator undertakes project.

6. The Project Operator submits project documentation within 6 months of application, including
   a) The Declaration of Property Ownership or Agreement to Transfer Credits,
   b) The Project Implementation Agreement,
   c) The Verification of Planting Documents,
   d) A Prepared Quantification Spreadsheet, and
   e) The Planting Data.

7. City Forest Credits issues 10% of Carbon+ Credits after the receipt of project documentation.

8. At year 4, the Project Operator performs required sampling and submits sampling documentation to the Registry.

9. City Forest Credits issues 40% of Carbon+ Credits after the receipt of year 4 sampling documentation.

10. At year 6, the Project Operator performs required sampling and submits sampling documentation to the Registry.

11. City Forest Credits issues 30% of Carbon+ Credits after the receipt of year 6 sampling documentation.

12. The Project Operator performs the final CO$_2$ quantification at year 25 and submits quantification documents to the Registry.

13. City Forest Credits issues all remaining Carbon+ Credits to the Project Operator.

Note that the Registry fees are the $500 application fee, plus a fee of $2 per credit if the buyer is buying per credit, or 5% of any grant-like, fixed funding of a project.
Selling the City Forest Carbon+ Credits

Our Early Adopter projects have been finding buyers either through us, our stakeholder group and contacts, or through their own contacts. It is best to bring in buyers to your carbon project as soon as possible as some will fund a project from its inception, much like a grant. Others may be more interested in buying credits by the ton when they become available after planting and at years 4, 6, and 25.

City Forest Credits can help carbon projects find local buyers who value the local benefits and media attention of carbon projects.

When buyers are pre-funding projects with a lump sum, like a grant, the buyer is often buying for community outreach, favorable media, sustainability, or corporate social responsibility, not to offset their emissions. This buyer can either take delivery of the Credits from the project when the Registry issues those Credits to the project, or it can donate those Credits to the Project or the community.