A Local Government Guide to the Chesapeake Bay is a seven-module series created to support decision making by local officials. As a local leader, your decisions set the course for your community. Your actions determine the health and vitality of your jurisdiction, as well as that of local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. You can achieve win-win outcomes by prioritizing local economic development, infrastructure resiliency, public health, and education while also protecting your environment. This fact sheet accompanies a module about the benefits of community trees.

TREES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Community trees improve the local economy, public health and safety, community infrastructure, and education.

Trees have positive economic impacts, including increasing the value of real estate, lowering energy costs, providing services (like flood protection), and elevating tourism through outdoor recreation, a **$63.2 billion** industry in the watershed states alone.

Trees filter pollutants from water and air, keeping our communities healthy. They also provide shade to lessen extreme temperatures in urban heat islands. Lastly, they boost your community's wellbeing by reducing mental fatigue and aggression, encouraging exercise, and bringing people together outdoors.

One acre of forest produces **36 times** less runoff than one acre of parking lot. The water that is absorbed and filtered reduces the risk of damage to community infrastructure through flooding and decreases the amount of pollution entering local waterways.

Access to trees and nature improves academic performance, creativity and problem solving, focus and engagement, enthusiasm for learning, and impulse control.

ENHANCING YOR TREES

Riparian forest buffers are stands of trees strategically planted or conserved directly adjacent to waterways. Using trees in this way reduces polluted runoff into local waterways and can help meet Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements.

Tree canopy is the area of the leaves of a tree or group of trees. Take stock of the tree canopy you currently have and make a goal. In order to achieve a tree canopy goal, factor in the pieces of this equation:

$$\text{Achieving a tree canopy goal} = \text{Existing canopy} + \text{Planting} + \text{Growth (protection \& maintenance)} - \text{Losses (mortality, removal, etc.)}$$

Use the resources on the next page to find more information about funding, best practices, and more. See the module slides for a case study about tree canopy potential on school grounds in West Virginia.

Photo by W. Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Establish a tree canopy goal for your community. Engaging residents in creating and implementing a tree plan inspires them to be better stewards of their community.

Explore and diversify funding opportunities, like state and federal grants, stormwater management fees, and parks and recreation department funds, to ensure continuous funding to meet your community's tree goals.

Update local codes, ordinances, plans, and standards to encourage best practices for tree planting, maintenance, and conservation.

Get residents involved! Use internship programs to supplement staff on planting projects, create tree membership societies, and explore opportunities to involve schools in stewardship activities.

A FEW RESOURCES   -Visit the DNREC website for more information

Beyond this module, here are a few other resources you may find useful.

Chesapeake Tree Canopy Network
https://chesapeaketrees.net/
Connect with resources, stories, and best practices to understand, expand, and maintain your canopy.

Vibrant Cities Lab's Urban Forestry Toolkit
https://www.vibrantcitieslab.com/toolkit/
Explore step-by-step instructions, tools, and methods for enhancing urban tree canopy cover.

Center for Watershed Protection's Making Your Community Forest-Friendly Worksheet
http://bit.ly/CWPWorksheet
Use this checklist to review your local development regulations and see where you can make improvements.

Chesapeake Riparian Forest Buffer Network
https://chesapeakeforestbuffers.net/
Learn how to build a successful forest buffer program, including funding resources.

Financing Urban Tree Canopy Programs
http://bit.ly/FinancingUTC
Find practical strategies for funding municipal urban tree canopy (UTC) programs.

Capitalizing on the Benefits of Trees
https://news.delaware.gov/2022/01/10/urban-grants-up-to-5000/
Learn about Governor Carney's Tree for Every Delawarean Initiative. Urban forestry grants up to $5000 available.

Proceed to Module 4