

ORGANIZATION / INITIATIVE LEAD

City Forest Credits (United States), nonprofit carbon registry dedicated to urban forestry projects.

City Forest Credits (CFC) develops standards and protocols that enable municipalities, nonprofits, conservation organizations and landowners to generate verified carbon credits from urban tree planting and forest preservation. Its model connects urban forestry with voluntary carbon markets while quantifying additional local ecosystem services.

TECHNICAL SOLUTION NAME

Carbon+ Credits™ Urban Forestry
Carbon Registry and Ecosystem
Services Financing System

HIGHLIGHT TITLE

Financing urban forests through verified carbon credits and measurable local environmental benefits.

SHORT DESCRIPTION

City Forest Credits is a nonprofit carbon registry that issues verified Carbon+ Credits™ for urban tree planting and forest preservation projects across the United States. Each credit represents one metric ton of CO₂e and incorporates quantified co-benefits such as stormwater management, air quality improvement and energy savings associated with urban cooling. The system enables cities, nonprofits and landowners to finance urban green infrastructure through voluntary carbon markets, directing climate finance into visible, local projects that enhance resilience, public health and environmental quality.

EXTENDED DESCRIPTION

City Forest Credits addresses a gap in climate finance: urban forests provide significant environmental and social benefits but have traditionally been largely excluded from carbon markets, which tend to focus on large-scale rural forestry and other emissions reduction projects.

To address this, CFC developed a dedicated carbon registry and urban forestry protocols that enable municipalities, nonprofits, conservation organisations and landowners to generate verified carbon credits from urban tree planting and forest preservation. Projects must meet requirements for additionality, monitoring and permanence, with preservation commitments typically lasting 40-100 years. Credits are issued following independent third-party verification.

Through its Carbon+ Credits™ framework, each credit represents one verified metric ton of CO₂e while also quantifying ecosystem services such as stormwater interception, air pollutant removal and energy savings associated with urban cooling. The program is endorsed by ICROA, providing an external quality signal for its carbon accounting and verification framework.

By connecting urban forestry with voluntary carbon markets, the system enables private climate finance to support local green infrastructure while addressing wider urban priorities such as heat mitigation, stormwater management and air quality.



DEMONSTRATED METRICS

- Each Carbon+ Credit™ represents 1 verified metric ton of CO₂e
- Quantifies carbon sequestration and storage from urban tree planting and forest preservation
- Measures stormwater interception and runoff reduction
- Quantifies air pollutant removal
- Estimates energy savings associated with urban cooling effects
- Tracks urban canopy expansion and forest preservation area
- Preservation projects include long-term permanence commitments of 40-100 years
- Projects have been implemented in multiple U.S. urban and metropolitan areas, including Austin, King County, Chicago, Des Moines, Minneapolis and Atlanta
- Carbon credit prices have typically ranged around USD 22-45/tCO₂e, depending on project type, co-benefits and verification conditions

REAL IMPACT

City Forest Credits has created a dedicated financing mechanism for urban forestry by translating carbon sequestration and associated ecosystem services into verified credits that can attract voluntary climate finance. This allows municipalities, nonprofits and landowners to fund tree planting and long-term forest preservation projects that might otherwise depend entirely on constrained public or philanthropic budgets.

The model also helps integrate urban forests into broader climate strategies by connecting carbon accounting with locally relevant benefits such as heat mitigation, stormwater management, air quality and public health. Because projects are implemented within and around cities, climate investment produces benefits that are geographically visible and directly experienced by urban communities. By combining verified carbon accounting with measurable ecosystem services, the system also provides a framework for recognising urban trees as long-term climate and resilience infrastructure rather than solely as landscape amenities.

IMPLEMENTATION LOCATION & DATE

Developed in the United States. City Forest Credits was founded in 2015, with its urban forestry carbon protocols deployed nationally from the late 2010s onwards. Projects have been implemented in and around multiple U.S. cities and metropolitan regions, including Austin (Texas), King County (Washington), Chicago (Illinois), Des Moines (Iowa), Minneapolis (Minnesota) and Atlanta (Georgia).

The registry remains operational, supporting urban tree planting and long-term forest preservation projects through Carbon+ Credits™.

SIMILAR CASES IMPLEMENTED ELSEWHERE

Comparable initiatives include Treeconomy in the United Kingdom, Life Terra in Europe and Greenpop in South Africa, as well as forestry and ecosystem restoration projects using carbon standards such as Verra and Gold Standard.

City Forest Credits differs in its specific focus on urban forestry and metropolitan landscapes, combining verified carbon credits with quantified local ecosystem services and a financing mechanism designed specifically for trees and forests within and around cities.

TECH LEVEL

Low Tech



CO-BENEFITS

Environmental

- Increased carbon sequestration and long-term urban forest preservation.
- Improved stormwater interception and reduced surface runoff.
- Better air quality through pollutant removal.
- Urban cooling and support for biodiversity.

Economic

- Additional financing for urban forestry beyond public budgets.
- Mobilisation of private climate investment for local green infrastructure.
- Revenue from verified carbon sequestration.
- Support for long-term forest maintenance and preservation.

Social

- Improved thermal comfort through shade and urban cooling.
- Health benefits linked to better air quality and greener environments.
- Visible, locally based climate investments for urban communities.
- Improved environmental quality in neighbourhoods.

Governance

- Standardised protocols for urban forestry carbon accounting.
- Independent third-party verification and auditable records.
- Collaboration between municipalities, nonprofits, landowners and technical experts.
- Integration of urban forestry into climate finance mechanisms.

Spatial / Planning

- Expansion of urban canopy and long-term forest preservation.
- Support for green infrastructure and heat mitigation strategies.
- Integration of tree planting with stormwater and resilience planning.
- Long-term protection of urban and metropolitan green areas.

COST OF THE SOLUTION

LOW. The model is primarily a standards, verification and financing mechanism rather than a capital-intensive technological system.

Costs depend on project type and scale, carbon quantification, third-party verification, monitoring and long-term maintenance requirements. The model is designed to generate carbon-market revenue that can help finance urban tree planting and forest preservation.

MITIGATION / ADAPTATION

Mitigation

MAIN CATEGORY

Primary: Governance & Economy

Secondary: Energy & Environment

BASE INFORMATION SOURCES

- [City Forest Credits](#)
- City Forest Credits, City Forests: Function, Scale and Value white paper
- City Forest Credits project registry and project documentation

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