

Organic Land Care and Turf Initiative

City of Springfield Department of Parks, Buildings and Recreation Management



**Mason Square
Terrace**



**Harris School
Grounds**



**Sweeny Athletic
Field**



**Forest Park
Athletic Field**



Camp Wilder



Tree Top Park

Program Overview - The Springfield Department of Parks, Buildings and Recreation Management in conjunction with representatives from the community, and the Cities of Holyoke and Northampton, obtained a Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) grant for \$20,000 to implement organic land care and turf management practices on six municipal and school properties.

Pilot Sites

1. Terrace at Mason Square
2. Frederick Harris School grounds
3. Sweeny Athletic Field at High School of Commerce
4. Forest Park Playing Field
5. Tree Top Park
6. Camp Wilder

Goals

The City's short-term goal is to pilot organic turf strategies on these six sites through and beyond the grant period. The results from these pilot sites will provide the tools, experience and a plan to meet our long-term goal to expand the program to 50 school properties and 900 maintained acres of public land in Springfield.

This transition involves replacing synthetic fertilizers that can leach into groundwater, streams, rivers and lakes with safer alternatives to support beneficial organisms and help to rebuild soil fertility.

In addition, the City will address insect and disease problems organically through proper cultural practices (aerating, watering, fertilizing, etc.), proper seed selection, and use of alternative products and beneficial insects

The challenges that the new organic land care and turf program must address in the City's parks, terraces and school athletic fields include bare spots on fields that pose unsafe playing surfaces, encroachment of poison ivy and other weeds that pose life-threatening bee allergic reactions, and adequate staffing to expand the program to additional City properties.

Project Schedule

Pilot projects funded through the grant began in the summer of 2014 and will conclude in June 2015. Organic practices will be integrated into future land care and turf projects in Springfield.

Anticipated Outcomes

Reduced costs - If the program is successfully implemented, the City may be able to reduce costs for land care as much as 20% annually.

Improved health of the soil - Organic management will have a long-term impact in improving the health of our turf and soil eco systems

