

A Snapshot of how Urban Forests Contribute to a Healthy Community

Urban forestry is defined as the art, science and technology of managing trees, forests and natural systems in and around cities, suburbs and towns for the health and well-being of all people. It is estimated by the U.S. Census that 83 percent of America's residents live in urban areas. Urban forests offer diverse functions, services, and benefits that have been empirically confirmed.

Urban forests need ongoing and consistent management to remain healthy and productive. A healthy urban forest contributes to a healthy community and provides high value benefits – **economic, environmental, and social.**

City Trees Help Create a Healthy Local Economy

- **Property values are increased by the presence of yard trees.** Local governments can gain revenue on higher values through tax assessments and excise taxes.
- **Trees are good for industry and employment.** Cities with good environmental health attract the best and brightest workers which, in turn, attract businesses. In addition, trees, landscape, and gardening are parts of a green industry providing over 1.3 million jobs, many within urban areas.
- **Shoppers spend more.** Consumers will travel farther, and stay longer in business districts with a mature forest canopy, and are willing to spend 9-12 percent more for goods and services.
- **Urban forests reduce infrastructure costs.** Cities are required to meet clean air and water standards. These can be achieved with trees more efficiently and cost-effectively than traditional methods.

City Trees Help Improve the Health of the Environment

- **Trees around homes and buildings reduce energy use and costs.** A home shaded by as few as three trees can cut energy bills in half. Homes sheltered from wind have winter heat savings of as much as 10.3 thousand BTUs. The energy savings are significant when applied across a city or region.
- **Urban trees store tons of carbon** – between 400 and 900 million metric tons – and reduce smog and air pollution (NOX, SOX, particulates, etc.).
- **Urban trees provide clean air.** Trees store carbon and provide oxygen. Trees absorb air pollutants and act as natural filters to produce clean air; trees reduce air pollutants by 25% in cities and filter our airborne particles by one-quarter.
- **City forests improve water quality.** Trees slow and filter rainwater to reduce storm water flow, especially during peak loads. More trees mean less concrete for storm water control. Communities can improve the water quality of their stormwater discharge to meet federal laws by minimizing runoff and creating forest buffers for flood-prone areas.

City Trees Improve the Health of Citizens and Communities

- Well-managed urban forests can strengthen communities by empowering citizens, improving social ties, reducing crime, and revitalizing neighborhoods.
- Experiences of urban nature improve working and learning. School children become more focused and show reduced symptoms of attention deficit disorders. Office workers are more productive.
- A view of nature promotes healing. Hospital patients recover faster from surgery and require less medication for pain. Cancer patients reconnect with work and lifestyle more quickly.