

Trees Work in Our Communities



BETTER AIR QUALITY



LOWER CARBON FOOTPRINT



BETTER WATER QUALITY



LONGER-LIVED PAVEMENTS



ADDED PROPERTY VALUE



INCREASE ENERGY EFFICIENCY



REDUCE HEAT ISLAND EFFECT



ENHANCE BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE



Trees Make Downtown a Destination

The center of our communities should be a vibrant place that people are proud of and want to spend time in. Trees play an important role in creating a positive atmosphere by providing a sense of place and safety. By providing shelter and absorbing noise pollution, trees create a welcoming environment for shoppers and pedestrians. Trees add to our perception of community investment and help reduce crime and vandalism, making our communities safer. Well cared for trees add value to business properties while helping them save on energy costs.

Healthy trees in our towns help us to be healthier too, the shade they offer gets people outside and keeps them there. Having trees where we work, shop and live lowers anxiety and relieves stress. Trees absorb pollution from the air, lower the temperature in the summer and provide shelter in the winter. People drive slower down streets planted with trees while open lanes feel like “nowhere” and encourage faster driving. In a town with plentiful trees it is easy to overlook their benefits...but we notice when they are missing!

The Facts

Consumers rate shopping districts with trees higher compared to similar districts without trees (University of Washington).

A 10% increase in tree canopy resulted in a 12% decrease in crime (theft & vandalism) in Baltimore by increasing customer traffic and raising perception of community investment (University of Vermont).

Well-shaded downtowns can be 6-10 degrees cooler than those without trees, reducing energy costs and lengthening the stay of visitors (USDA Forest Service).

Trees absorb and block sound, reducing noise pollution by as much as 40% (North Carolina State University).

Trees slow and filter rainwater, reducing water pollution and costs of managing runoff and maintaining storm sewer systems (Center for Watershed Protection).

One tree can absorb as much carbon in a year as a car produces driving 26,000 miles (EPA Carbon Footprint Calculator).

Healthy trees add value to Nebraska communities.

Planning for Trees

Ideally, our homes and business areas should be planned with trees in mind, with the goal of wide planting areas, big medians, close water sources and, if needed, amended soil. In new developments, it's easier to incorporate these situations, but even in established areas changes can be undertaken when street or utility work is in progress. As your town plans updates, look for ways to create more room for trees.

- Add bump out planting areas to sidewalks.
- Widen medians to give trees more space.
- Amend soil compacted by construction.
- Improve water access to help establish new plantings.



Putting the right tree in the right place means trees integrate well with the lights, signs and utilities.

Investing in Trees

A healthy tree provides a long-lasting benefit to the community, but to grow healthy trees we need to make the investment upfront. Research has shown that proper care when a tree is young results in less cost over the lifetime of the tree. Invest in your community trees by:

- Consulting with a certified arborist on proper maintenance practices.
- Developing a tree care plan for routine maintenance and future planting goals.
- Training your crews on best practices both for planting and management.



Bump out plantings are a good place to plant trees and make pedestrian crossings shorter and more visible to drivers.

Right Tree, Right Place

To avoid common conflicts between trees and built infrastructure, it is important to choose the tree for the space. Don't try to over prune or force a tree to fit in where it doesn't belong. Before planting evaluate the location by asking questions like:

- "How tall can the tree get without interfering with power lines?"
- "How wide can the tree be without interfering with traffic access and visibility?"
- "What are the soil and water conditions like in this space?"



Many workshops are hosted across the state where city staff can learn about tree care.