

GENERIC STREET TREE PLAN LANGUAGE

Street trees along _____ roads are not an optional amenity or a luxury. They are an absolutely essential component of the street design, as important to a street's public function as its driving lanes.

It has now been demonstrated that street trees perform the following functions:

- They protect pedestrians from moving traffic;
- Contrary to expectations, they result in fewer crash injuries to all road users due to reduced driving speeds;
- They make walking and biking tolerable on hot days, and absorb dangerous UV rays;
- They reduce urban heat islands (by as much as 22 degrees) and lower regional temperatures generally;
- They absorb CO₂ and other climate gases, as well as other airborne pollutants such as tire and brake dust.
- They absorb tremendous amounts of stormwater, reducing both property damage and sewage overflows during storm events.
- They improve property values and revenues to local businesses.
- They lengthen the lifespan of roadways—one study (McPherson and Muchnick) found that trees pay for themselves just in terms of reducing solar damage to asphalt.
- They improve educational attainment, and even reduce crime.

The absence of specific rules regarding the number, type and disposition of trees in a municipal street standard is an indication that short-term cost and maintenance concerns have been allowed to outweigh long-term thinking about community health, safety, sustainability, and economic success. Moving forward, any new roadway or any reconstructed roadway in _____ should include, between roadway and every sidewalk (or within each retail sidewalk) a complete, continuous row of large-native-species trees planted at an on-center spacing equal to mature crown width.

Unfortunately, with the exception of improved asphalt life and reduced stormwater damage, most of the benefits from improved tree cover accrue not to public works or engineering budgets but to _____ and its citizens as a whole and are ultimately monetized through increased net tax revenue in the future. For this reason, there may be little direct motivation for public works departments to invest in trees, especially given the apparent nuisance of maintenance. Within this context, it is often necessary for the tree-planting effort to be driven by the department of economic development or even the Mayor's office. If the _____ public works department does not currently perceive a mandate to plant trees, it should raise the issue up the command chain.