



Tall trees provide welcome shade on a Southern California street.

Tree Cover Provides Multiple Benefits

Background Information

Trees increase real estate values by as much as 15 percent, according to the National Association of Home Builders.

A 2005 report shows tree cover in Boulder, Colo. reduces stormwater runoff by an estimated six million cubic feet annually, saving the city approximately \$532,311. The average tree intercepts 1,271 gallons of stormwater annually, with a value to the community of \$15 per tree.

Tree ordinances that specifically relate to planting and managing trees can be a useful tool in maintaining a community's healthy tree canopy and protecting aquatic resources. These ordinances can be grouped into three categories:

1. Street trees: Deals with the planting and removal of trees in rights-of-ways, parking lots, etc.
2. Tree protection: Intended to protect native or historical trees. These laws can relate to removal, building near, pruning, etc.
3. View: Relates to trees blocking views or sunlight.

At a Glance

- Urban forests are an essential part of cities, rural areas, streets, backyards, parks and open spaces. They reduce the volume and intensity of runoff, as well as minimize the heat effect on receiving waters.
- A study of stormwater prevention provided by tree canopy in Boulder, Colo., showed a significant reduction in polluted runoff.
- Tree ordinances that are well written and are part of a well-planned strategy can promote community tree cover and protect aquatic resources.

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Community Strategies

- Consider adopting a tree ordinance that will maintain the existing tree canopy. However, not all trees are worth saving, and your community should be specific about which trees it wants to protect.
- Require that trees destroyed during development be replaced with desirable species.

Examples

The Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance protects oak trees 8" in diameter or more in recognition of their significant ecological, aesthetic and historical attributes.

The City of Manhattan Beach has an ordinance protecting all street trees in residential zones that are 12" or larger in diameter with the exception of Washingtonia palms and fruit trees.

The Ventura County Tree Protection Ordinance governs the trimming and removal of all oaks, sycamores and trees with a specific historical designation.



For More Information

[Built Green Communities™ Checklist www.builtgreen.org/community/community_checklist.pdf](http://www.builtgreen.org/community/community_checklist.pdf)

[Calculating the Value of Boulder's Urban Forest
http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/)

[Guidelines for Developing and Evaluating Tree Ordinances www.phytosphere.com/treeord/ordprt1a.htm](http://www.phytosphere.com/treeord/ordprt1a.htm)

[Protecting Our Waters - Street Trees http://clean-water.uwex.edu/plan/streettrees.htm](http://clean-water.uwex.edu/plan/streettrees.htm)

[Tree Preservation Ordinance - National Association of Homebuilders
www.nahb.org/generic.aspx?genericContentID=19086](http://www.nahb.org/generic.aspx?genericContentID=19086)

[Washoe County Development Code, Division 4, Development Standards
www.co.washoe.nv.us/comdev_files/dc/012505_division_four.pdf](http://www.co.washoe.nv.us/comdev_files/dc/012505_division_four.pdf)

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