

Introduction

The City of Riverside, CA , founded in 1870s, has always had a strong link to trees. Much of Riverside's history and its initial growth was influenced by the citrus industry. The early settlers planted trees along what is now historic Victoria Avenue to beautify the gateway to the citrus groves. Palm trees lined the avenue and in the parkways; they were interplanted with several varieties of eucalyptus trees, and each block of medians had a different flowering tree. To help preserve this heritage and the benefits of these trees, this management plan was initiated.

This history has led us to our present day urban forest. Urban Forestry is a management concept that developed in the 1960s out of the death and devastation of elm trees due to Dutch Elm Disease throughout the United States.

Any inhabited area that has trees and vegetation is considered an urban forest. The discipline of urban forestry strongly advocates for species and age diversity in the urban forest so that the devastation of the 1960s does not happen again. Look at Riverside from the top of Mt. Rubidoux and you can appreciate the diversity of our city's urban forest.

Riverside's urban forest has more than 140,000 trees. Some date back to the original trees along Victoria and Magnolia avenues. There are numerous heritage trees that commemorate significant events in the history of the city such as the Parent Navel Orange Tree. These can be found in the management section on significant trees.

After the city's early growth, a new surge of growth occurred in the 1950s and 60s and then again in the 80s and 90s. These growth dates are important to the success of a management plan.

Riverside's urban forest contributes to the well-being of our residents in many ways. It improves air quality by pulling carbon out of the air and storing it in the form of wood in trees. Studies have shown that 100 mature trees can pull two tons of carbon from the air. Studies have also shown that trees remove up to 600 pounds of fine particulates from the air.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Urban Forest Research Facilities have studied a variety of trees and quality of life issues. Some of these benefits

are: increased traffic safety, reduced energy usage by cooling our homes and saving up to 23 percent on air conditioning costs, and increased property values. Trees contribute to an increase in sociological benefits such as:

- increased student performance at shaded schools
- improved recovery time where trees are visible from windows at hospitals
- reduced domestic violence at tree-lined housing developments

Studies have also shown that people prefer to shop where there are trees and landscaping. According to USDA, a large tree in Riverside will provide approximately \$3,880 in environmental benefits during its lifetime. That is more than a 300 percent return on investment.

Since 2005, Riverside has strived to be a leader in sustainability. It has now reached “Silver” status as a California Green Community. This management plan for the city’s urban forest is a vital component of Riverside’s Green Initiative. This plan will outline the present and future of the city’s urban forest for the next 25 years.

Riverside has an aging population of trees. Some are more than 50 years old and eventually will need to be removed and replaced. The tree industry knows more now than it did 50 years ago about what trees do best in our semi-arid Mediterranean climate. Proper tree selection and placement is vital to our future. This plan discusses the makeup of our tree population. It looks at the health of our trees and addresses the questions: is this the right tree in the right place; is there adequate species diversity; and how can we improve age diversity with our aging population of trees.

This plan is essential in guiding the city toward a healthy sustainable urban forest. This plan looks at what we currently have, the issues at hand, recommends a course of action based on achievable goals, details how we will achieve these goals, and includes a monitoring system to see how we are doing.