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## municipal codes

# STREET TREES

**Urban trees help slow global warming by capturing carbon dioxide, reducing building energy loads.**

**POLICY** Section 425, Municipal Code  
**AGENCY** Planning and Development Department

**LOCATION** Providence, Rhode Island

- + L+A Landscape Architecture with RISD & Roger Williams University
- + Providence City Forester
- + Rhode Island Tree Council

The trees in your neighborhood are important contributors to the urban ecosystem, decreasing ambient temperatures, storing carbon, cleaning air and improving water quality. For a city to realize measurable ecological benefits from urban trees, the United States Department of Agriculture estimates that 25 percent of the urban environment must be canopied.

### HOW IT WORKS

Cities across the United States are implementing new tree planting campaigns. In 2003, the City of Providence initiated the Landscape and Tree Preservation Ordinance, a policy that requires property owners who receive a building permit to increase the amount of tree coverage on their property to 25 percent. According to the City, the ordinance will yield 40,000 trees in Providence by 2020.

Prior to enacting the policy, Providence conducted a cost benefit analysis and found that every dollar spent on trees provided three dollars and thirty-three cents in benefits. According to The State of Providence's Urban Forests Report, "These trees provide \$2.0 million in benefits annually, a terrific investment of city resources towards community health and well-being."

### BENEFITS

Recent studies also indicate that trees help reduce air pollutants that trigger respiratory diseases. In addition to the health benefits of street trees, proximity to urban parks and nearby street trees increases property values by as much as 10 percent.

- + Creates microclimates that mitigate urban heat
- + Captures air pollution and carbon
- + Provides habitat for birds and other wildlife

The landscapes at Rau Fastener (above) prototype "grove" planting. To achieve 25 percent canopy, Providence will have to plant 15,000 trees.

