

NEW MEXICO

NEW MEXICO STATE FORESTRY

Albuquerque NeighborWoods is a neighborhood tree planting program in Albuquerque, NM that uses an innovative tool developed by Portland State University and funded by the USDA Forest Service to prioritize where trees should be planted for maximum health benefit. The program demonstrates that we can improve the health of the urban forest while also improving the health of the people that live in it.

Albuquerque was troubled to find itself identified as having the third highest urban tree canopy loss of major cities in the nation¹, and started work on several urban forest initiatives to reverse the trend. City Councilor Isaac Benton wanted to include a neighborhood tree planting program as part of those efforts, and reached out to the NM Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the New Mexico State Forestry Urban and Community Forestry Program, and partnership coordinator, Tree New Mexico.

After evaluating successful efforts in other cities, the team developed the Albuquerque NeighborWoods program that engages neighborhood leaders in tree care training, conducting neighborhood tree and planting space inventories, and working with landscape architects to design their neighborhood's urban forest.

Wanting to be strategic about the neighborhoods selected, the team turned to the "Healthy Trees, Healthy People" program at Portland State University. This program provides various tools to communities to enable them to design urban forest canopies that most effectively improve public health². One of these tools is the 'Trees and Health App', which uses geospatial data to find the hottest and most polluted areas in the city as well as its most vulnerable populations, and prioritizes tree planting locations to maximize the positive public health impacts of new trees. This 'Trees and Health App' tool was used in Albuquerque to prioritize neighborhoods for planting. Once the trees are planted, the neighborhood receives follow-up visits from a certified arborist as the trees get established.



Newly planted trees in the Wells Park Neighborhood. Photo Credit: Jennifer Dann.

To date, four communities have become Albuquerque NeighborWoods. More than 800 trees and shrubs have been planted in these neighborhoods, where the impacts from transportation-related air quality and urban heat island effects are felt the most. The health of Albuquerque's urban forest and the people that live in it are on the mend!

¹ Nowak, David J. and Eric J. Greenfield, 2012, Tree and impervious cover change in U.S. cities, Urban Forestry & Urban Greening 11(2012) 21-30.

² www.treesandhealth.org



The Albuquerque NeighborWoods Team planting trees in the South Broadway Neighborhood. Photo Credit: Rob Loftis.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

New Mexico State Forestry, Urban and Community Forestry Program
<http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD/CommunityFor/Community.html>