

# OAKS OF NORTH LAWNDALE

## Community Roots That Grow On Trees

### Spotlight: North Lawndale, Chicago, IL

The ways that trees benefit a community are as numerous as their branches. Planning for trees, understanding their benefits, planting them and caring for them fosters engagement, stewardship and sustainability.

When you add that to their public health and environmental advantages, trees can have a positive impact on neighborhoods for generations.

Inspired by the 7000 Oaks art installation, the Oaks of North Lawndale project partners neighborhood residents with the city and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in an effort to nurture a greener, peaceful, and re-forested community.



Photos courtesy of Foundation for Homan Square

In September 2017, SAIC set up its mobile foundry at their Homan Square campus, site of the project launch event with artist Pedro Reyes, who joined residents in the melting of weapons to create shovel heads which were used to plant the first trees.

*The Oaks of North Lawndale project could raise canopy coverage in the neighborhood to over 19%, on par with the Chicago-wide average.*

Trees would be planted over a multi-year period, providing opportunities for sustained collaboration among neighbors, artists and educators at SAIC, a local tree nursery and gardeners, the North Lawndale Employment Network and job skills training programs, along with other organizations.

### Trees in urban environments are known to...

#### ...improve human health.

- Improve air quality
- Improve respiratory health, overall well-being, and reduce stress
- Protect from harmful UV light

#### ...benefit the community.

- Reduce crime by fostering neighborhood social interactions
- Lower summer air temperatures and reduce energy costs
- Provide aesthetic benefits and promote community equity
- Enhance property values

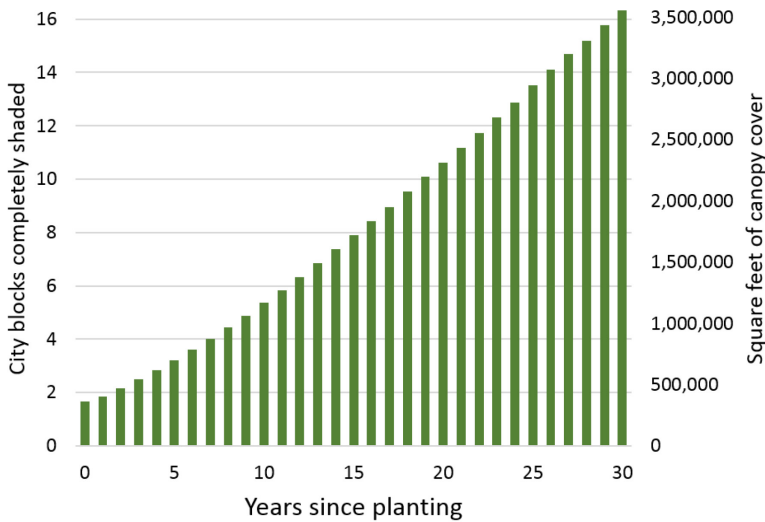
#### ... provide environmental services.

- Reduce stormwater runoff
- Absorb carbon dioxide - a greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere



*Impact from 7,000 additional trees - grown to maturity over 30 years - in North Lawndale*





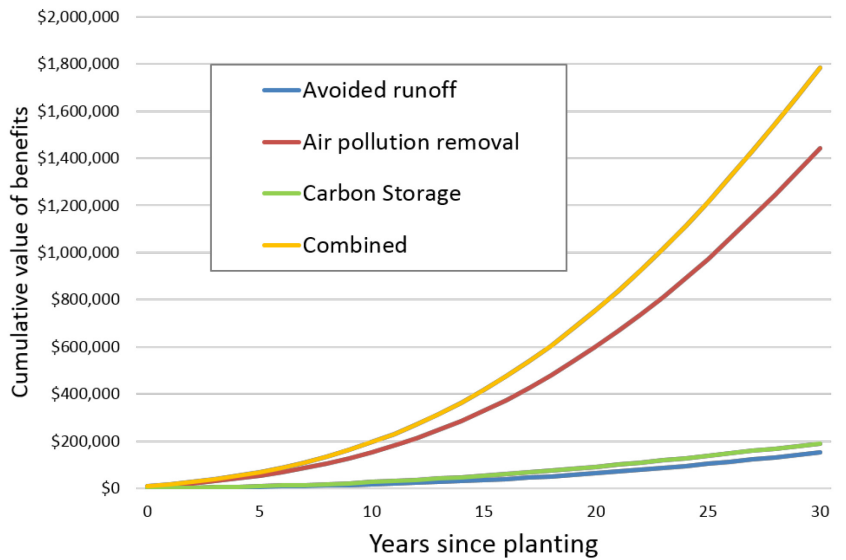
**On average, the community of North Lawndale has surface temperatures about 10 degrees higher than the regional average. By contrast, the trees in Douglas Park lower this difference by 3 degrees.**

- **Trees improve public health by removing harmful air pollutants.** Poor air quality is a common problem in many urban communities. It can contribute to serious respiratory health problems such as childhood asthma, bronchitis, and other cardiovascular health incidents
- **Trees help absorb stormwater runoff and reduce the risk of flooding.** Precipitation is caught by leaves and filtered through soil, instead of running over pavement and impervious city surfaces that can overwhelm water and sewer lines during a heavy rainstorm.

**Where the numbers come from:** The benefits and values associated with trees were estimated using *i-Tree Eco and Landscape* software from the US Forest Service. The programs use local weather, pollution, and population data to estimate how the woody and leafy parts of trees interact with the environment and the people who live there.

Tree growth was predicted using *i-Tree's Forecast* module, and assumed that all trees are cared for and survive to maturity. The growth predictions consider local climate along with the rates different sizes and species of trees typically grow. Five common trees were modeled to represent future tree species to be planted.

- **Trees help people by cooling the surrounding air and providing shade.** Higher temperatures magnify health risks, increase energy use, and worsen air pollution impacts. Increasing and protecting community tree canopy can help lessen these negative impacts.
- **Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the air and store it as wood.** Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is a greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere. It enters the atmosphere through burning fossil fuels (coal, natural gas, and oil), solid waste, and fire wood, and also as a result of certain chemical reactions (e.g., manufacturing of cement).



A typical block of newly planted street trees (left) would see an increase of more than 10,000 sq.ft. in canopy coverage, and the environmental, economic, and health benefits that come with them.

Want to get involved? Visit <https://www.facebook.com/oaksofnorthlawndale/> to learn more about the project and how to lend a hand.

Powered by i-Tree and The Davey Institute. i-Tree represents cutting-edge, peer reviewed, USDA Forest Service research packaged into tools and applications easily used by everyone. [www.itreetools.org](http://www.itreetools.org)

