



## Tree Guidelines for Valley Communities Prove Trees Do More Than Provide Shade

The Local Government Commission has a new publication, *Tree Guidelines for San Joaquin Valley Communities*, produced for us by the U.S. Forest Service's Western Center for Urban Forest Research and Education. The guidebook covers information needed to start a tree planting program in your community — including the costs and benefits of maintaining shade trees.

Trees are good for more than just shade. In fact, few local government programs have as many benefits as tree planting! These benefits include:

### Increased Property Values

A recent study revealed an increase in home sales prices of \$508 (in current dollars) for each large front-yard tree.

Other studies show that people are willing to pay 3 to 7 percent more for a house in a well-treed neighborhood compared to a home in an area with few or no trees.

### Energy Savings

Simply planting shade trees on the west and east sides of a home will save the homeowner about \$75 a year. Also, the temperature of a well-treed neighborhood can be reduced 5 to 10 degrees, further reducing air conditioning requirements and increasing savings.

Trees also reduce wind speeds, producing a more comfortable micro-climate.

### Reduction of Stormwater Runoff and Flooding

Leaves and branches retain rainwater. Tree roots break up the soil, making it more porous and increasing its capacity to absorb the rain water that makes it to the ground. This reduces the need for more expensive and less attractive flood control measures. In real-life situations, trees have been shown to reduce urban runoff from 2 to 7 percent; the more trees, the less the runoff, of course.

### Enhanced Sense of Community

Studies show a stronger sense of community in a tree-shaded neighborhood, perhaps because people in these neighborhoods spend more time outside, and thus have the opportunity to meet and become friends.

### Better Air Quality

Trees absorb gaseous pollutants. Sacramento County's six million trees remove 1,606 tons of air pollutants every year. Trees also intercept dust and other harmful particulate matter. When trees shade parked cars, the



*Trees keep the neighborhood cooler.*

amount of gas which evaporates and dirties the air is reduced.

### Improved Human Health

Research indicates that views of vegetation and nature bring relaxation and sharpen concentration, one reason that people are more likely to walk along a tree shaded street. This exercise is critical to the overall health of both young and old. And along the way, a tree shaded street will reduce exposure to cancer-causing ultra-violet light and keep you cooler — especially important during the hot San Joaquin summers.

It does take time, energy and money to maintain a tree. There are costs associated with buying the tree, pruning it, watering it, and disposing of leaves. There can be pavement damage when proper precautions are not followed. But when our researchers added up the costs and the benefits, they found that when a tree matures (in 20 years), the benefits outweigh costs by up to \$65 every year for every single tree!

Tree Guidelines for San Joaquin Valley Communities also provides information about what to look for in selecting a tree and which trees grow best in the Valley. The guidebook helps you select the right tree for the right location, and also lists sources of grants and technical assistance. For a free copy, call (916) 448-1198.

### PROJECTS. Turlock's City Hall Returns to Downtown.



A former elected official and city manager from a Valley community once said, "If you want a neighborhood to redevelop, build civic facilities in these areas and the private sector will follow..." This is the approach taken by the City of Turlock to revitalize their commercial core.

The City has transformed an historic building located a short block off Main Street, creating a new location for the Turlock City Hall. Built in the early 1900s, the building was previously used for auto sales and service. It now stands as a proud new addition to the downtown while preserving a piece of the City's history.

In partnership with the Turlock Downtown Association, the City is also poised to begin funding and constructing major utility, parking lot and streetscape improvements over the next two years. Sharing the opportunities and risks with the downtown property owners has led to new private sector confidence in investing in downtown improvements.

For details: Hope Paulin, Turlock  
Economic Development/Redevelopment  
(209) 668-5542 x 220



*City Hall returns to Turlock's downtown by renovating an early 1900s building.*

### PLANS. Cities, County Adopt Growth Alliance Policies.



The Spring 1998 edition of *Livable Places News* described a groundbreaking effort to adopt a new pattern of growth in Fresno County which would protect the San Joaquin Valley's threatened farmland while creating more livable communities. The Alliance, including the Fresno Chamber of Commerce, Building Industry Association of the San Joaquin Valley, American Farmland Trust, Fresno County Farm Bureau, and the Fresno Business Council recommended that a series of policies be adopted by the County's local governments which include narrower streets, neighborhood revitalization, mixed use districts, neighborhood centers, revitalized downtowns; urban growth boundaries and multi-jurisdictional coordination of land use planning. The Alliance reports that the County and all the cities within the county have adopted these policies in concept. The next step will be to provide area communities with model implementing ordinances.

For details: Greg Fitzpatrick,  
American Farmland Trust,  
(559) 627-3708.

## Fresno Provides Incentives to Infill Developers

The City of Fresno already has in place a policy intended to implement one of the goals of the Alliance — neighborhood and downtown revitalization — and it is a success. Under the program, the City charges lower fees for the permits needed to develop or rebuild structures in Fresno's older neighborhoods. Just one year after the implementation of the program, 80 projects were undertaken that might not have happened without the reduced fees, including the expansion of some major businesses. Another happy surprise has been that private homeowners have taken advantage of the lower fees to make improvements to their homes that might not otherwise have been made.

For details: Al Solis, Development  
Department Director,  
(559) 498-1591.

## PLACES. Downtown Housing Reviving Town Centers.

According to the Director of the National Main Street Center, Kennedy Lawson Smith, downtown housing brings in a captive market for downtown businesses and can provide a base for maintaining economic success. Building housing for seniors and affordable housing is particularly appealing to developers because public funds are available to subsidize such efforts. And housing in or near the downtown is of interest to seniors who may wish to be able to live where services are within walking distance.



Among the places providing or developing downtown housing for senior citizens are the cities of Lindsay, Lodi, Newman, Woodlake, and Clovis. In Lindsay and Lodi, old hotels were brought back to life. Clovis is remodeling an old hospital for senior housing and Woodlake started from scratch with a new building. Newman is constructing new senior housing, while older downtown buildings have already been revitalized with businesses occupying the bottom floor and affordable housing above.

The City of Kerman has created a mixed-use overlay district for a block of their downtown that they hope will eventually include senior housing.

The City of Lindsay is working on four infill projects in or within walking distance of their downtown that will add over 150 primarily single-family residences. Two sites are on school district land, and all of the sites are based on neotraditional designs that incorporate public gathering spaces.

For details: Contact LGC  
(916) 448-1198