



NeighborWoods is a street tree planting program created in 1994 by the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department as an inexpensive way to plant trees along residential streets. Austin Energy supports NeighborWoods to achieve its urban heat island mitigation goals. TreeFolks is an independent, nonprofit organization that was awarded the contract to implement the program through a public, competitive process.

Street trees provide many environmental, societal and monetary benefits for homeowners, municipalities, and resource management agencies. These benefits include:

- Decreased peak energy demand
- Reduced utility cost
- Lowered ambient air temperatures
- Wildlife habitat
- Reduced road maintenance
- Decreased stormwater flow
- Improved air and water quality
- Increased property value

TreeFolks delivered **18,154 trees** to **9,808 homeowners** within the Austin Energy service area during the 2007 – 2012 service periods. That is enough trees to shade both sides of the street for more than **50 miles!** An estimated **30,000 individuals** were involved in the planting and care of NeighborWoods trees with over **90,000 volunteer hours** recorded. This level of public engagement and participation highlights the spirit and dedication of the Austin community – individuals and families are eager to invest their time to support their urban forest.

The NeighborWoods program has a substantial impact on the Austin community engaging people with otherwise little or no tree background in hands-on tree planting and care. Participants follow their newly planted trees from young, six foot trees to beautiful sixty foot tall elements of community infrastructure. By providing neighborhoods with new, Right of Way trees, homeowners take ownership of their public land and create a healthier urban forest. This level of public participation allows municipal and nonprofit organizations to focus their resources on additional tree planting, maintenance and community outreach. This model has proven effective – **average survival rates are 73%**.

Austin Energy has invested \$830,400 since 2007 to plant 18,154 street trees through the NeighborWoods program, an average cost of \$46 per tree. As these trees mature, they will provide an **annual benefit of \$1,127,906** to the Austin community. The NeighborWoods street tree program has proven itself as an effective planting and outreach tool and is an important element of Austin’s urban forestry planting and education strategy.

