



The Right Trees in the Right Places the Right Way

Announcing TreeSmart Santa Fe A Public-Private Partnership to Increase and Maintain a Healthy Tree Canopy

TreeSmart Santa Fe is a new public-private partnership between City government and important community partners, including the Santa Fe Watershed Association and the Santa Fe Community Foundation, both of which are contributing funding at the outset.

The core principal of TreeSmart Santa Fe is that cultivating a healthy canopy is not just about planting more trees. It is about planting the right tree (and sometimes other vegetation), in the right place, with the right resources, at the right time. We need to think smart about our canopy in Santa Fe, where not all trees can thrive and water is scarce. Using data-driven insights and an equity lens in project planning, we can leverage smart trees to cool our city, conserve energy and water, and nurture vibrant, livable neighborhoods.

The TreeSmart Santa Fe initiative will help the city achieve environmental, social, and economic sustainability, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and removing carbon from the atmosphere.

Councilor Carol Romero-Wirth, Chair of the Quality of Life Committee and the Water Conservation Committee, is spearheading the launch of the initiative. In the near future, the Councilor will co-sponsor with Councilor Abeyta a Resolution to the Governing Body outlining the goals and objectives of TreeSmart Santa Fe.

Operational execution will involve various City entities, with the Parks Department, under the leadership of Acting Director Melissa McDonald, as the lead agency. The Sustainability Office, the Public Engagement Office, the Water Conservation Office, the Santa Fe Municipal Tree Board, and the Santa Fe River Commission will also be engaged with the project in various capacities.

The official launch of TreeSmart Santa Fe is planned for April 30, 2021, which is National Arbor Day. The Parks Department is assessing locations at which to hold a small, COVID-safe tree-planting ceremony.

In support of the initiative, today the City launches the website [TreeSmart Santa Fe \(arcgis.com\)](http://www.arcgis.com) as an ongoing source of information.

The TreeSmart Santa Fe plan pulls from and aligns with several City plans that support the goal of becoming the most eco-friendly and livable city in the country:

- Sustainable Santa Fe 25-Year Plan (www.santafenm.gov/sustainable_santa_fe_plan)
- City of Santa Fe 5-year Water Conservation Plan (<https://savewatersantafe.com/water-conservation-plan/>)
- Santa Fe River Corridor Master Plan (https://www.santafenm.gov/river_and_watershed)
- City of Santa Fe Parks, Open Space, Trails & Recreation Master Plan file (www.santafenm.gov/document_center/document/7643)

TreeSmart Santa Fe objectives include:

1. Develop, coordinate, and maintain environmental data with equity-based prioritization and City staff direction. Using a phase-in model, TreeSmart will focus on highest-need areas first, and expand as resources allow, as directed by City staff.
2. Work and collaborate with non-profit and other community organizations to engage residents in planning and implementing equitable projects that provide for the canopy needs of the City.
3. Work with City staff, the Municipal Tree Board, and the River Commission to coordinate an assessment of the extent of the current urban tree canopy cover. Assist City staff to complete an inventory of trees on public lands.
4. Consider public and private lands and varying projects, incentives, and programs to replace lost trees, minimize heat islands, and increase the canopy cover.
5. Develop a City of Santa Fe Urban Forest and Tree Canopy Plan.
6. Conduct a Canopy Pilot Project to test the methods utilized, complete needed canopy assessments, and kick-start a larger long-term effort to preserve and restore an appropriate urban tree canopy in the City of Santa Fe.
7. Develop and conduct public outreach to promote the Canopy Project and the Santa Fe River watershed.
8. Develop educational materials and provide training and education of volunteers with respect to watershed issues that relate to canopy cover and urban tree management.
9. Create an app or handbook for the City to increase community awareness of the techniques of planting and maintaining the plant canopy and community understanding of the value of the benefits of our urban forest in Santa Fe.
10. Identify and work to secure additional funding by means of applying for funding on the City's behalf via: private donations, grants, company sponsorships, capital improvement projects, legislative funding, and bonds.

Already, "A Fund for Santa Fe's Trees" has been established at the Santa Fe Community Foundation with a \$30,000 donation from a national foundation; further donations are encouraged: santafecf.org/give-now. The hope is the fund to grow over time, and for community members to award grants to the City and the County for projects by groups that want to plant trees, with the review of a professional arborist, and the encouragement to plant trees in appropriate locations across the area.

The Watershed Association will direct funds to particular projects that enhance the tree canopy; donations can be made here: [Donate – The Santa Fe Watershed Association](#).