

# What is a city?

In a nutshell...It is a place for social and economic exchange.

**What is a street?** It is the public realm. The structure that provides access to (and creates value for) private property. It is the connecting framework of the city. It is by far the largest area of public space.

**What ISN'T a street?** It should **NOT** be solely dedicated to the automobile or transportation.

**Everything we design, plan or construct should be evaluated thru the lens of:**

1. Building places that create community identity and are socially engaging & enduring.
2. Creating places that allow for the healthy choice to be a reasonable choice.
3. Making places that are ecologically sound and environmentally responsible.
4. Creating places that capture value and are financially resilient.

**Every building, every property, every street, every park is in relationship to everything around it. It is communicating a posture and a purpose.**

**Street Trees may be the most cost-effective way to meet these goals because:**

1. Street trees frame the street and narrow the visual perception of space, causing **drivers to slow** to a more appropriate speed
2. Street trees and the tree lawn they reside in **separate** sidewalks and pedestrians from fast moving cars.
3. Street trees reduce **crime**. Because of the better walking environment, more people will be walking creating more eyes on the street to deter crime. CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design)

4. Street trees create a more **comfortable** place to walk. This makes walking a reasonable option and can improve physical **health** and neighborhood **social** interaction.
5. In commercial districts, street trees **increase revenues** by creating a safer, more comfortable place to linger and shop.
6. Street trees **organize** the streetscape, reduce chaos and mitigate the effects of marginal properties.
7. Street trees reduce **flooding** by intercepting a large volume of rainfall during storm events.
8. Street trees provide **weather** protection to pedestrians. Light rains, scorching sun and wind are shielded by tree canopies. Temperature reductions up to 15 degrees may be experienced thanks to shade and evapotranspiration.
9. Street trees reduce **pollution**. Carbon dioxide, volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter are reduced by trees, easing asthma and health concerns.
10. Street trees are the most effective way to reduce urban **heat islands**. Temperatures can be reduced by up to 7 degrees.
11. Street trees are aesthetically pleasing. They soften the harsh urban & suburban elements and make the neighborhood more **beautiful**.
12. Street trees reduce the **time** in travel perception. Green, treed travel routes are more enjoyable and less stressful, making the drive seem shorter.
13. Tree lawns provide a location for **snow** storage between the street and the sidewalk.
14. Shade from street trees can extend the life of **asphalt** as much as an additional 50%. Expansion/contraction and UV exposure caused by direct sunlight works to shorten the life of pavements.
15. Street trees provide **habitat** and contribute to the **food web**.
16. Street trees make places **more valuable**. All the above points contribute to making a place more desirable and raising property values. This, in turn, generates more property taxes, causes more re-investment and creates a more stable neighborhood. A single street tree can increase property values to nearby homes by over \$12,000.

### Street tree myths:

1. **Street trees can't coexist with underground utilities.** Most underground utilities can happily coexist with street trees. In a perfect world, it would be nice to compartmentalize each nugget of our city, but that isn't ever possible. Sacrificing street trees for this goal is foolish when we think holistically about our city.
2. **Street trees destroy curbs and sidewalks.** Though this does occur, it most often occurs when the wrong tree species is selected or when insufficient space is provided for the tree. If we acknowledge the enhanced lifespan of shaded pavements, the net cost might be break even.
3. **Street trees are dangerous to drivers.** Though a car can exit the roadway, crash into a tree and cause injury, studies prove that serious accidents are actually reduced when street trees are present. This is because of reduced speeds and more attentive driving on these streets.

4. **Trees are expensive.** They more than pay for themselves when we look at all the financial benefits we receive from them related to increased property value, prolonged pavement life, flooding reduction, pollution removal and many other benefits.
5. **Trees are hazardous during storm events.** Proper species selection can greatly reduce storm damage costs, and inconvenience.

We know what makes valuable, lovable and human-scale cities and streets. Unfortunately, we make thousands of seemingly logical compromises that undermines

### Next steps:

- Set guidelines for street tree locations & layout.
- Require all new and reconstructed streets to match this requirement.
- Remove all language that discourages street trees in safe locations.
- Develop a street tree master plan.
- Fund tree plantings and maintenance.
- Publicize street tree planting efforts and communicate to residents & business owners the value of their street trees.

