

# Benefits of Trees in Business Districts

**Trees Obtained for University Avenue  
in North Park**



**North Park Main Street  
3074 University Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92104**

ph. (619) 294-2501 fax (619) 294-2502  
npbid@northparkmainstreet.com  
www.northparkmainstreet.com

## **North Park Main Street is coordinating the planting of trees.**

North Park Main Street is aiming to create an environment where shoppers linger and stroll through the district as they do in Hillcrest and other popular areas. This fall, North Park Main Street was fortunate to receive over 80 trees as part of a mid-city tree planting in commercial districts. El Cajon Boulevard, Adams Avenue, and other commercial streets in North Park will be planted as well. You have been selected to have a tree in front of your business as part of the beautification of University Avenue between Texas Street and I-805.



Chinese Flame Trees on 30th Street

**Before accepting trees for our district, North Park Main Street studied the effects of trees on commercial businesses in other cities and neighborhoods nationwide.**

Merchants often have concerns about trees in business districts. The 3 most common reasons for opposing trees are:

1. Trees block signs
2. Trees block display windows when viewed from the street
3. Trees obstruct the ability to load and unload merchandise in front of a building

The trees for University Avenue were chosen with merchants' concerns in mind. As a service to North Park businesses, Nowell & Associates Landscape Architects carefully selected 3 different species of trees, each with business-friendly characteristics.

*Chinese Flame Trees* were chosen for much of the business district. They grow to a height of 40 feet with a canopy higher than most trees, therefore blocking less signage and display windows. Chinese Flame Trees have bright yellow flowers and showy fruits that will add color to the neighborhood from June through December. The deciduous tree also adds color through leaves which turn yellow in the autumn. You can find Chinese Flame Trees on 30th Street between Lincoln Avenue and North Park Way.

*Pink Trumpet Trees* will be planted on University Avenue east of Ohio and Ray streets. The 30 foot tree has branches and foliage that are not as dense as other species. Because they do not block signage as much, they are ideal for areas of the district with two-story buildings and a higher concentration of businesses. Pink Trumpet Trees are deciduous, with beautiful pink flowers that bloom in late winter.

*Australian Willow Trees* will be planted on University Avenue west of Granada Street. The trees are graceful and fine-textured, with long leaves suggestive of a weeping willow. The evergreen Australian Willow Trees will be planted on the south side of the street to balance the existing Palm Trees on the north side of the street. You can find Australian Willow Trees on Utah Street alongside Jefferson Elementary School.



### **Are trees good for business? Yes. Here's what we found:**

One reason pedestrians give for not walking in older commercial districts is the barren environment absent of greenery and shade. In Southern California, the glare from sidewalks is especially harsh and unpleasant. Without trees, sidewalks and building facades act like furnaces, reflecting additional heat onto pedestrians. By contrast, streets in tree-lined areas are typically ten degrees cooler.

A recent study by the University of Washington found customers not only prefer shopping districts with trees, but are willing to pay more for products purchased there. A recent article on the study, entitled "Believe It Or Not, Trees Will Affect Consumer Spending Patterns in Downtown," (nationally-distributed *Downtown Idea Exchange*, July 1, 1999), noted:

- Customers were found to travel longer, farther, and more often to tree-enhanced shopping districts. They stayed longer, and were willing to pay more for both products and parking.
- Study participants rated "Amenity and Comfort" of tree-lined sidewalks about 80% higher compared to non-shaded streets. Also, "Quality of Product" ratings were 30% higher in districts having trees, and customer service was considered better on these streets.
- When asked to estimate a price for each of 15 items in a "basket of goods," participants consistently priced goods significantly higher in districts with trees than in those without trees. It did not matter what type or price range of product was being sold.
- Merchants also showed a general preference for trees, but they consistently underestimated the effect of trees on customer behavior and buying decisions.
- Other studies, cited by traffic behavior expert Michael Wallwork, P.E., consistently show that drivers slow down to enjoy the experience of driving on a tree-lined street, and pay more attention to their surroundings. In short, trees draw attention to the buildings behind them.

## What Do Neighboring Merchants Say?

We asked merchants in Hillcrest their opinions of having trees in front of their businesses.

**Carla Coshow, owner of The Flame, 3760 Park Boulevard, ph. 295-4165, fax 246-6807**

“The planting of trees enhanced the look and feel of the neighborhood. Park Boulevard in Hillcrest was a barren street. The trees made the area more pleasing visually and more pleasant to walk.”



**Cindy Lehman, manager of California Bank & Trust, 3737 Fifth Ave., ph. 299-9700, fax 298-9471**

“The bank paid for the concrete cuts to have a tree placed in front of their building. The planting of trees has made a barren sidewalk have a more ‘warm & fuzzy’ feeling. I am constantly being told by our customers that the trees make them want to walk down the street. Visibility is very important to the bank, but this can be solved through the appropriate planting and pruning of the trees.”



**Bob Grinchuk, owner of The Wine Lover and former President, Hillcrest Association 3968 Fifth Ave., ph. 260-0661, fax 299-7055**

“The right kind of tree can soften the sidewalk and make it more inviting. Trees are always a concern to merchants, but no one wants them removed. Trees, however, need to be kept trimmed. We discovered that visibility of signage can be mitigated by the choice of the right type of tree.”



**Bruce Reeves, Ace Hillcrest Hardware, 1007 University Ave., ph. 291-5988; fax 291-5987**

“Trees make the sidewalk more pedestrian-friendly which we see as a plus. Our display windows are important and we feel that the selection of trees (Gold Medallion) was important. Because of our need for visibility, we were concerned about placement. We monitor the pruning to make certain that we retain our visibility.”