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April 22, 2008

## Seattle to expand urban forest



**Nick Feldman**

*By Nick Feldman*

April 22, 2008

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) plans to plant more than 800 trees this year as part of a continuing effort to expand the city's urban forest.

In November 2006, voters passed a \$365 million transportation levy, which combined with tax revenue provided funding for Seattle's Bridging the Gap program. As a result of Bridging the Gap, SDOT planted 681 trees in 2007. Neighborhoods which received trees included Green Lake, Ballard, Madison Park and Rainier Valley.

The city hopes to plant 60,000 street trees by 2037 to help combat global warming. A medium size deciduous tree — one that sheds its leaves in the winter — will absorb about 1.5 metric tons of carbon dioxide over its lifetime, according to the SDOT Web site.

Their goal is to prune 25,000 street trees and plant 8,000 new ones over the life of the nine-year levy. All of the trees are watered and maintained by SDOT crews.

“Eighty percent of the American population is living in urban areas, and they want to see more greenery,” said Bruce Bare, dean of the College of Forest Resources. “Urban forestry is becoming a very popular enterprise.”

Bare suggested that there are many desirable benefits of urban forestry: wildlife habitat, carbon absorption, wind protection, shade and aesthetic beauty.

The SDOT Urban Forestry team is evaluating potential locations, and neighborhood residents are encouraged to propose new planting sites online at the Community Trees Web site at [seattle.gov/trees](http://seattle.gov/trees).

Sites need room for between 50 and 100 trees, which usually covers both sides of a street for a distance of five to six blocks. Continuous planting is done to improve the ease and efficiency of maintenance efforts.

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