

Dying Trees Being Replaced by Next Generations

BY STEPHANIE HAINSFURTHER

Urban Designer C. David Day just can't leave his work at the office.

"Fernando [Delgado] and I purchased a house in the Huning Highlands Historic District," Day said. "I immediately was distressed by the missing, dying and aging street trees in the neighborhood."

In his work as president of Terra Designs LLC, Day visits western U.S. communities and is part of a team that creates Urban Master Plans for downtowns and nearby neighborhoods. Street tree plans are part of those designs. Street trees are those that grow in the public strip between the sidewalk and the road.

"Trees are integral to creation of any great place but especially within a neighborhood," he said. And so Day and Delgado, a photographer with an international rep, decided to improve the Huning Highlands street trees.

Day secured a \$4,000 Bernalillo County Neighborhood Outreach Grant for additional trees in the city's Lead and Coal streetscape improvements this past summer. Current funding of \$50,000 comes equally from the efforts of City Councilor Ike Benton and State Rep. Rick Miera to be used for trees mainly on the north-south residential streets in the Huning area. The parameters stretch from north to south from Martin Luther King Jr. to Hazeldine, and east to west along 1-25 to Broadway.

Day gathered information on appropriate species from City Forester

Joran Viers and several local landscape architects. Types of trees include Raywood ash, elm (Chinese and frontier cultivars), box elder, honey locust, hackberry, Kentucky coffee tree and Japanese zelkova, a tall, deciduous, low-water use specimen.

"Each street will be planted with just one species to produce a consistent tree canopy," Day said.

Phase 1 will cover about 35 percent of the neighborhood, and trees are expected to be planted by the end of March. Restoring all of the affected street trees will take another three years.

Volunteers such as neighborhood association President Bonnie Anderson, board members Greg Bloom and Elaine McGivern, and residents Amy Sturge, Lee Splitter and Sam Kochansky are on board. After all, homeowners will be responsible for watering trees in the strips in front of their houses. As of now, more than 50 households are signed up to participate.

"I hope with this project to create a template that can be easily replicated in other neighborhoods in town," Day said. He and Viers are discussing plans to be used by other interested parties. Lovers of leafy, green streets can get in touch with Day at Terra Designs, cdavidday@terradesigns.org.

Stephanie Hainsfurther is an associate editor for ABQ Free Press.



Neighborhood activists plant the first of many replacement trees in the Huning Highlands Historic District. From left to right: Judith Wong, Barbara Baca, C. David Day, Isaac Benton, Bonnie Anderson and Ann Carson.