

Urban Forestry/Urban Greening Research

Green Cities: Good Health



W UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

summaries of scientific research about human health and well-being and urban nature experiences

Local Economics

How Trees and Vegetation Connect to Property Values & Retail

Knowing the monetary value of things is important in our society. What is not counted does not count in public decision making. City trees are not grown and managed for products that can be bought and sold on markets, but they do provide many valuable services and benefits. Parks, gardens and green spaces also provide intangible, but measurable values. Economists and other social scientists have devised reliable nonmarket valuation methods to represent natural assets in the decision-making calculus of communities.

Research Highlights:

- While development costs can be greater for parcels where trees are conserved (5.5% in one study), builders can recover extra costs of preserving trees through higher prices and faster sales for houses on wooded lots. (Hardie and Nickerson, 2004, MD Dept of Ag and Resource Economics; Seila and Anderson, 1982, Journal of Arboriculture)
- The presence of larger trees in yards and as street trees can add from 3% to 15% to home values throughout neighborhoods. (Wolf, 2007, Arborist News)
- Averaging the market effect of street trees on all house values across Portland, OR (population 590,000) yielded a total value of \$1.35 billion, potentially increasing annual property tax revenues \$15.3 million. (Donovan and Butry, 2010, Landscape and Urban Planning)
- Homes that are adjacent to naturalistic parks and open spaces are valued at 8-20% higher than comparable properties, with the positive price effect declining to near zero about ½ mile away. (Crompton, 2001, PAS Report 502)
- A study found 7% higher rental rates for commercial offices having high quality landscapes. (Laverne and Winson-Geiderman, 2003, Journal of Arboriculture)
- Shoppers claim that they will spend 9% to 12% more for goods and services in central business districts having high quality tree canopy. (Wolf, 2005, Journal of Forestry)
- Shoppers indicate that they will travel greater distance and a longer time to visit a district having high quality trees, and spend more time there once they arrive. (Wolf, 2005, Journal of Forestry; Wolf, 2003, Journal of Arboriculture)

More information at: www.greenhealth.washington.edu

Additional social science about green effects concerning the economics of communities can be found at the Green Cities: Good Health web site (including research sources & citations).

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