

Equitable Access to Green Space

OBJECTIVE: We need safely accessible green spaces, continuously woven throughout our community, without putting residents of color at risk of displacement as this investment is made. Pocket parks, street trees, and public park facilities need to be equitably distributed to provide residents with relief from pavement and buildings. Whether at a park, on a trail, or just looking out the window and seeing trees, everyone should be able to enjoy the physical and emotional benefits of being close to nature.

BACKGROUND: Some neighborhoods, particularly those where residents are primarily Black or Hispanic/Latino, are missing trees and green spaces that are present in other areas of Durham. Residents feel the physical and mental effects of this unequal distribution in tangible ways, such as the cost of air conditioning or a greater incidence of asthma because of hotter temperatures in areas with fewer trees. In addition, residents see swaths of trees removed for new development and are concerned about losing the green spaces that have been part of Durham's character for so long.

We want to be involved in decision-making when greenspace improvements are considered in our neighborhoods. We want equitable investment in maintenance and placement of green spaces throughout the community so that everyone enjoys the benefits and beauty of nature.

Quotes from Durham Residents

"No green space in a community = pay higher AC, more asthma, poorer communities"

"more open spaces with grass, plants, etc."

"Tree canopy. Willow, oaks are aging out. Expand distribution within neighborhoods. Psychological and safety benefits of trees."

"Want Durham to preserve the trees!"

"You got Hillside Park. It's beautiful. The basketball court is beautiful. The swimming stuff is nice over there. Park by Northgate is nice. East Durham is good--they did some mulch. When people there complained, they did something there. But look at McDougald Park. It's not like that."

"Trees are being placed in our neighborhoods without consideration of safety. i.e., in my community magnolia trees are being placed on the edge of people's yards in the path where residents have to walk, endangering their lives because in order to get around the tree they will have to go into the streets. The trees will eventually block motorists sight when entering main thoroughfare creating the potential for motor vehicle accidents. Other trees being placed in our neighborhoods will not offer much shade for the community"

"They could be KIDS in the WOODS. One of the healthiest things that can developmentally happen for children."