



THEN &
NOW

KEEP DURHAM BEAUTIFUL
N. DRIVER ST. COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING
DURHAM, NC
2013 LEGACY TREE FUND GRANT



THEN:

Many of the largest trees in Durham, North Carolina's urban forest are surviving oaks from a period of intense civic tree planting between the early 1930's and 1950's funded by federal grants. Like many programs of the time, tree planting and its benefits – reducing carbon dioxide, protecting water quality, and beautification – were largely limited to white neighborhoods within a segregated city. Also, many willow oaks were planted throughout the city without insight to the future infrastructure of the city. In the early 2010s, all those trees started aging out (willow oaks typically live 80 years) or were extremely unhealthy due to extensive pruning around power lines.

In 2013, Keep Durham Beautiful (KDB) – an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful that works to engage and inspire individuals to take greater responsibility for their community environment – applied for a Legacy Tree Fund grant from the North Carolina Urban Tree Council (NCUFC) for a tree planting project to increase Durham's equitable tree canopy.

"We were proud to provide a Legacy Tree Fund grant to this project because Keep Durham Beautiful saw collaboration as the key to helping Durham create a more equitable urban forest for its neighborhoods," said NCUFC Executive Director Leslie Moorman.

KDB worked closely with the City of Durham Urban Forestry Division to select a tree planting site. They selected two blocks on Driver St. in East Durham identified as a heat island (an urban areas with higher temperatures than outlying areas) with many dying willow oaks. The groups then collaborated with Duke Energy to remove some trees that were dying prior to planting – effectively saving money on removal and replacing the trees.

THEN (continued):

KDB chose tree species and planting sites that considered power lines, and larger, 2"-caliper trees to provide immediate, positive visual and environment impact. Over two days, the community came together to plant over 100 trees. Durham's Urban Forestry Division used their equipment to auger and place the trees, while KDB recruited and educated community members to plant. All trees were planted on City of Durham right-of-ways and long-term maintenance is provide by the City.

NOW:

The community collaboration on the 2014 planting created a ripple effect that spread across Durham. This successful project helped Durham residents understand what a tree planting looks like and how it can grow to provide community benefits and cohesion.

"So many community members were excited and came out to help during the planting day," said KDB Executive Director Tania Dautlick. "We were then able to plant trees in adjacent neighborhoods in the following years. Many of the neighborhoods' large oak trees have been taken down, but because of the planning then, there are big, beautiful trees now that will last longer."

Additionally, in 2018 The City of Durham implemented an Urban Forest Management Plan and committed to planting 1,500 trees a year through 2025 to maintain and increase street tree canopy throughout Durham, especially in historically underserved and low-tree canopy neighborhoods.

Each year, the North Carolina Urban Forest Council awards Legacy Tree Fund grants to community groups, civic associations, block clubs, garden clubs, and other non-profit organizations for urban forestry projects involving tree planting. Since 2011 The Legacy Tree Fund has helped plant thousands of trees in communities across North Carolina. Visit <https://www.ncufc.org/Legacy-Tree-Fund.php> to donate to or apply for a grant.

