

Executive Summary
March, 2008

Chattanooga's street trees are a valuable municipal resource and a critical component of the City's infrastructure. Trees are also an important part of Chattanooga's identity and history. This is evident in the older sections of town where large willow oaks (*Quercus phellos*) still stand from tree planting efforts at the turn of the century. Planting trees has always been a priority in Chattanooga; however, the need to manage the health of the City's urban forest has become a more recent and important issue. Therefore, in 1989, the City of Chattanooga recognized the importance of tree care and initiated an Urban Forestry program to provide professional management in the effort of sustaining and enhancing its urban forest.

Recent research suggests healthy trees can serve municipalities by reducing stormwater runoff, energy consumption, and air pollutants. Trees also provide significant economic benefits, including increased real estate values and attractive surroundings for commercial businesses. Trees are an integral component of the urban environment and a city's infrastructure. Their shade and beauty contribute to the community's quality of life while their very presence significantly mitigates the City's environmental impact.

Realizing the positive impact of the urban forest and the need for a greater understanding of this municipal asset and its management, the City of Chattanooga commissioned an analysis of its street tree resource. This analysis combined sample inventory data with benefit-cost modeling to produce information concerning this important natural resource's structure, function, value, and maintenance needs. This document presents the analysis and results of a cost-benefit study that quantifies the municipal services provided by trees and accounts for annual urban forest management expenditures to determine the net annual value of Chattanooga's public trees.

excerpted from the *City of Chattanooga Municipal Forest Resource Analysis*