


Petaluma gets \$1 million to plant more trees

The Petaluma Canopy Project brings the city, ReLeaf Petaluma and other nonprofits together to plant more than 2,500 trees over three years. | 



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Heritage oaks at Oak Hill Park on Tuesday, October 12, 2021. (CRISSY PASCUAL/ARGUS-COURIER STAFF).

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PETALUMA ARGUS-COURIER

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The city of Petaluma announced it has received a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service to expand its tree canopy over the next three years.

The plan is to plant about 2,550 trees, said Wendy Jacobs of ReLeaf Petaluma, a local nonprofit that will undertake much of the day-to-day project management.

The tree-planting initiative is part of the Petaluma Canopy Project, a collaborative partnership between the city and local nonprofits including ReLeaf Petaluma, Daily Acts, Rebuilding Together Petaluma, Point Blue Conservation and Cool Petaluma.

The project will "plant trees around parks, schools, residential areas, and our riverbank, with the aim of restoring native species," according to a news release.

Part of the strategy is to prioritize areas where the city's low-income residents live and gather, "which typically have fewer trees than other parts of the city," the release said.

More trees support the city's climate goals, reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and decrease noise, water and air pollution. The shade they provide also lowers ambient temperatures, the release said.

Each of the organizations involved will collaborate in different capacities that include ecological restoration projects; providing organizational, resource and program support; volunteer outreach; and fund matching, Jacobs said.

Only native species will be planted, including blue oaks, coast live oaks, sycamores and Northern California walnuts, with "possibly a few redwoods," Jacobs said.

The project will also "harvest and plant acorns to expand our native oak canopy, and provide a 'treebate' and education program for private property," said Patrick Carter, assistant to the city manager.

Jacobs added that part of the grant funding will support ReLeaf Petaluma's "Teen Tree Corps," an internship program that connects youth ages 14 to 18 with volunteers who teach them

about the forestry industry, forestry industry careers and tree care.

Though the city applied for \$2 million in funding and received half, or \$1 million in the “very competitive grant,” the project leaders aim to plant more than they were allocated: 60% of trees with 50% of the funding they initially planned for, Jacobs said.

“It’s a huge honor to be funded for this,” she said.

The USDA awarded \$1 billion to 385 projects "to plant and maintain trees, combat extreme heat and climate change, and improve access to nature," according to a USDA news release.

Those interested in volunteering for the project can visit the ReLeaf website at releafpetaluma.org or email admin@releafpetaluma.org.

You can reach Staff Writer Jennifer Sawhney at 707-521-5346 or jennifer.sawhney@pressdemocrat.com. On Twitter [@sawhney_media](https://twitter.com/sawhney_media).

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