

# TreePeople Summer Report



Patrick Henry Middle School planting  
Photo credit: Adam Corey Thomas

When people hear about “TreePeople,” they often think primarily of our Coldwater Canyon Park, or our commitment to planting and caring for trees across Los Angeles. Since our inception in 1973, we’ve become one of the largest environmental organizations in Southern California with the hope of empowering communities to take responsibility for their environment. But our work goes far beyond just planting trees...

Imagine your home is nestled right between the I-5 Freeway and a Los Angeles public airport. Your house doesn’t have a lot of shade to help keep the noise out, the cars driving by constantly emit pollution right outside your doorstep, and the asphalt surrounding your home retains all the heat. This is the real life situation for Pacoima Middle School, home to 1,114 students in the San Fernando Valley, and exactly why they were the perfect candidate for TreePeople’s Living Schoolyards Project.

Part of the LAUSD system, Pacoima Middle School serves grades 6–8 with a student population that is

predominantly minority students of color, with 85% of the student body coming from low-income households (on free and reduced lunch). The 23-acre school site is mostly covered by dark and impervious asphalt and with very few trees or plantings... but not for long!

## TreePeople is removing 14,000 sq ft of asphalt

and installing gardens, trees, and drought-resistant landscaping. The project includes a bird and pollinator garden, a native species garden with tables for learning, a shade tree perimeter by the freeway to reduce noise and air pollution, and more green space in recreational areas. Construction for this project began in June 2023, and we are excited to unveil the brand new campus to students for their Fall 2024 school year start.

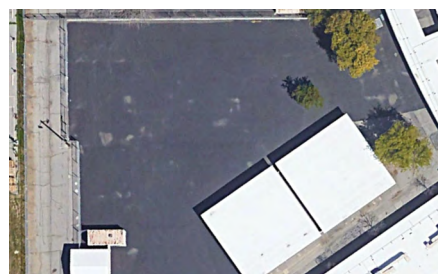
From the very inception of this project, we prioritized the voices of those most affected by this work: the school community. Our bi-lingual community organizers and environmental education teams held listening sessions for parents

and community members to best understand what it is they wanted for these students. But of course, the most interesting feedback came directly from the students. Through surveys and workshops, students were able to speak directly to TreePeople about what it is they wanted for their outdoor space, giving them a sense of purpose and responsibility for their environment.

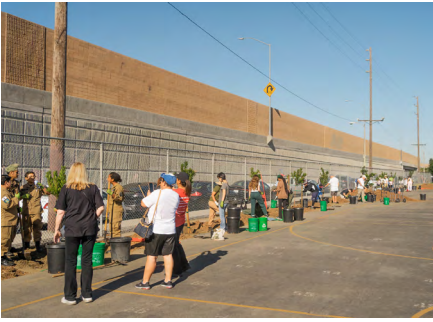
School Greening also includes **education**, providing lessons and activities to schools emphasizing hands-on-learning, outdoor activities, and real-world applications. While each school is being designed and “greened,” students, teachers, and parents will learn the importance and benefits of having a green school and how to maintain it. TreePeople’s model revolves around sharing tangible urban forestry skills that community members and students can utilize for future jobs.

**“I consider my school an extension of my home.”**

*Quote from teacher*



Pacoima Middle School, before and after



Pacoima Middle School planting  
Photo credit: Miguel Angel Vargas

## But our work doesn't stop with just Pacoima Middle School...

### Vista Continuation High School

The Principal at Vista High advocated directly to TreePeople, explaining why their campus was a perfect candidate for our work and affirming their commitment for new greening opportunities. This continuation school is home to exclusively at-risk youth who most need regenerative quiet spaces. The school is sandwiched between trucking and bus depots, and directly abutting the busy I-710 freeway. TreePeople will convert and expand impermeable surface space with shade trees in lunch areas, an outdoor learning garden and a quiet reading garden, container gardens on paved surfaces that can't be removed, new tree wells across the campus, and native plant and tree installations in landscape across the campus to create calming space—including family access areas at the school entry, increasing total green space and shaded seating for safe outdoor activity. **This initiative will remove 11,100 square feet of impermeable surface, plant 23 trees, install**

**600 native plants, create 5 outdoor learning environments, and engage 186 students and 12 educators in various educational activities and volunteer events.**

### Eastman Ave Elementary

Located in East Los Angeles, Eastman Ave Elementary School is a 100% asphalt campus, which increases temperatures, prevents stormwater capture, and discourages physical activity. This is exactly why their Principal, Laura Naulls, has been advocating for a green school for over five years. TreePeople is reimagining their outdoor space to include a nature trail, athletic fields, reading gardens, and pocket shade plantings to enhance recreation, reduce heat and air pollution, and improve stormwater capture. **This project will transform the Eastman Ave campus by removing 40,800 square feet of impermeable surface, planting 68 trees and 800 native plants, and providing space for five outdoor learning environments and recreation opportunities.**

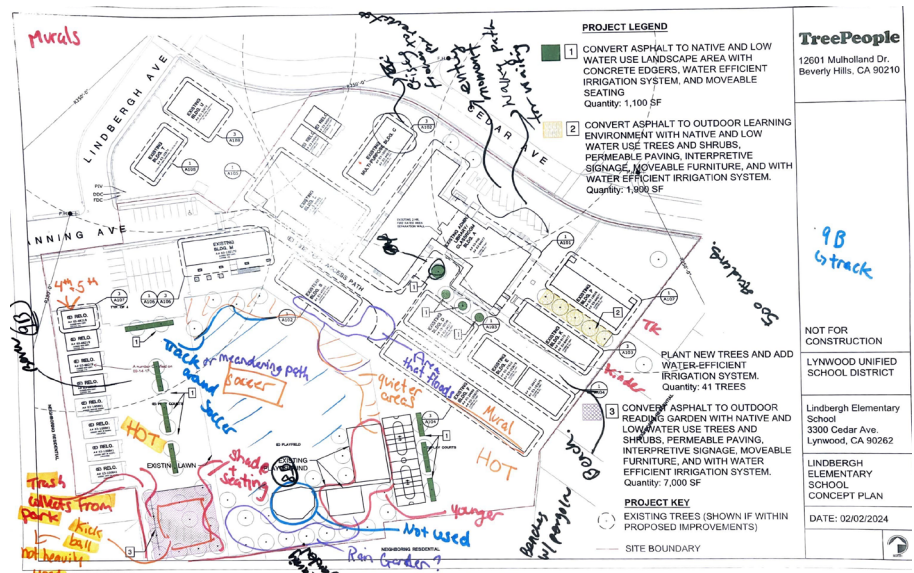
“How would you like to use outdoor space on your campus?”

“I would like my child to enjoy oxygen from the green trees.”

Parent survey from Eastman Ave Elementary

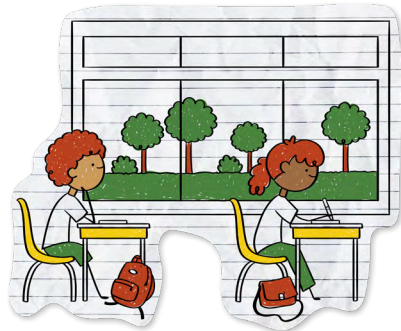
From deciding on which schools to work with, to creating beautiful design concepts (by the way, we have our own design team in house!), engaging the community, getting approval of the plans, and finding partners to work with, TreePeople manages this entire process from start to finish. It's a lengthy process, but we are committed to giving these students the learning environment they deserve. Both of these schools are in the design phase and aim to be completed by the end of 2026.

Parent and community feedback on Lindbergh Elementary School concept plan



# And that is just the beginning! Although TreePeople's School Greening team is newer, they already have a full roster of schools they are partnering with.

TreePeople has planted over **30,000 trees** on school campuses



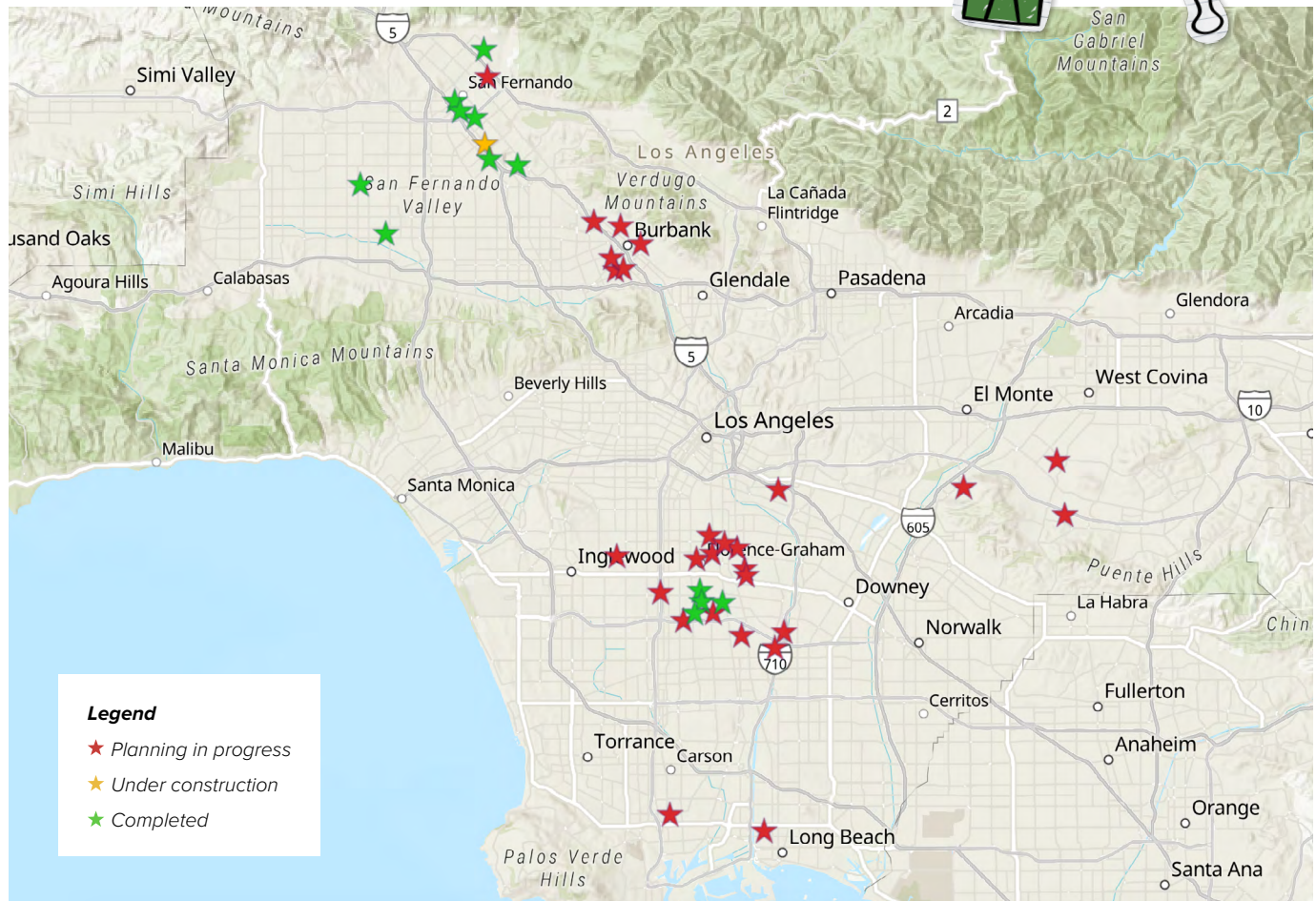
TreePeople has raised almost **\$20 million** in public and private funding in 2022 and 2023 to transform over two dozen K-12 campuses across LA County school districts



TreePeople will convert nearly **500,000 sq ft of asphalt** at local public schools

TreePeople is supporting over **40+ School Greening sites**

## Map of School Greening Sites



Our motto for these schools is 'go big or go home.' TreePeople envisions these schools full of reading gardens, native plant learning gardens, nature trails with native plants, shade trees, low-water natural grass athletic fields, container gardens, and more.

This is all made possible because of YOUR support! By donating to our work, you can help us ensure all our plans are achievable. You can allow us to dream bigger, do more at these school sites. You can make a difference at schools across Los Angeles.



96<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School planting  
Photo credit: Saxon Miller-Jones



# “No kid dreams of playing on asphalt.”

**Our School Greening work is just beginning! TreePeople has 27 schools in the design phase with construction set to begin.**

There are 3 ways to support our School Greening efforts:

- Donate to our work: [treepeople.org/ways-to-give](https://treepeople.org/ways-to-give)  
*Become a TreePeople member and join The Canopy, our new monthly giving program! By donating monthly, you help our work year round.*
- Help us plant trees: [treepeople.org/volunteer](https://treepeople.org/volunteer)
- Join our newsletter: [treepeople.org/sign-up](https://treepeople.org/sign-up)

