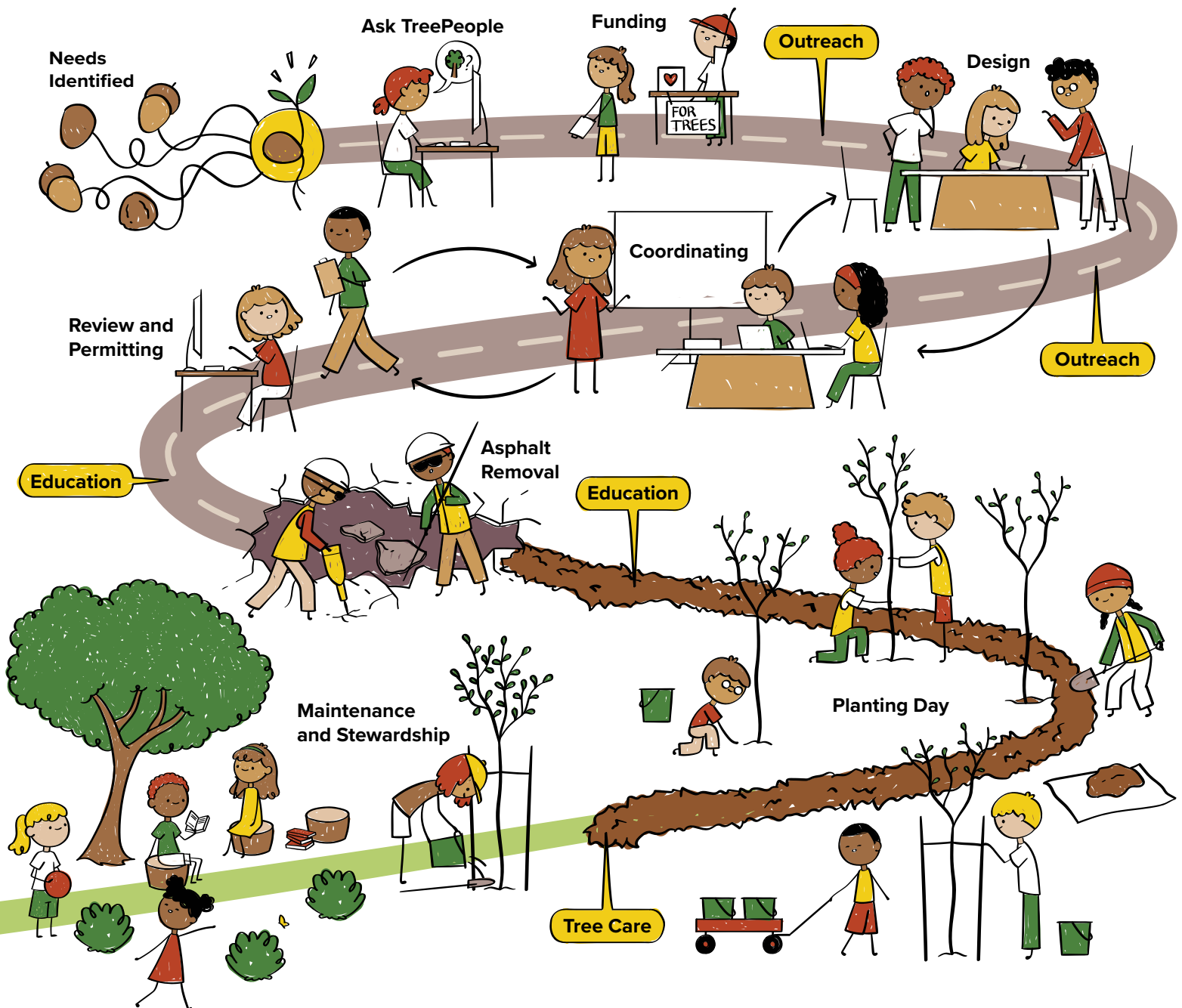


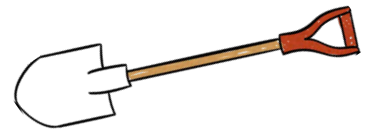
# TreePeople Summer Report

school  
greening  
— TreePeople —

## Our Journey Towards a Greener School



# How Greener Schoolyards Take Root



On the first page of this report, you'll find a visual timeline that captures the essential steps of a school greening project. From the first conversation, to the planting day, and into maintenance and stewardship, each phase reflects the intentional care and collaboration that turn a vision into a thriving, sustainable space.

The process often begins with TreePeople working in partnership with communities and school districts to identify schools facing pressing environmental challenges that are in the greatest need of transformation.

In some cases, a teacher, parent, or principal reaches out to represent a school, eager to create a healthier, more vibrant space for their students. Our team visits the school, walks the site, and listens closely to the needs and ideas of those who are most familiar with the space. Together, we imagine what a greener, more supportive environment could look like for students and staff.

Next we identify, apply for, and secure project funding. Our Strategy and Impact team continuously pursues new opportunities for school greening dollars at local, state, and federal levels. With this critical piece in place, we begin the design process! Our Green Infrastructure team of landscape architects and experts works collaboratively with school partners to develop a plan tailored to the site's unique needs. Whether that means adding more shade, improving water management through rain gardens, or creating outdoor learning areas, the design is a result of input from students, teachers, and parents. Throughout the design process, we collaborate with school districts and state agencies to ensure student



*Dream schoolyard drawings*

safety and project longevity are central focus of our work. This collective effort guarantees that these spaces will serve the community for generations.

Once the plans are finalized, we coordinate with our partners in the field to test soil and break ground to prepare the site for planting. Every detail, from removing asphalt to designing outdoor learning gardens and selecting native plants and trees, is thoughtfully choreographed and implemented. Throughout this process, our Education team works directly with school faculty and staff to build the future care and natural magic of their new green school gardens into their classroom curriculum.

Then comes the moment everyone looks forward to: planting day! Students, families, and volunteers gather to bring the vision to life. It's a day filled with energy, storytelling, and a strong sense of shared purpose. These planting days mark the visible beginning of the transformation, as trees and plants provide shade, pollinator habitats, and outdoor learning opportunities for years to come. But, our commitment doesn't stop there. These efforts are supported by ongoing maintenance and stewardship, including soil health checks, mulching, and staying connected with the school community, to make sure our trees and plants thrive in their new home.

**What you see at the end of this journey is far beyond a schoolyard. It's a place where students can learn beneath the shade of a tree, reflect in the garden, and reconnect with nature: an enduring product of collaboration, community support, and dedicated care.**



*TreePeople's School Greening team*



# Greening in Action: School Spotlights



*Pacoima Middle School transformation*



Across Los Angeles, schoolyards are transforming into greener, cooler places of possibility. At TreePeople, every school greening project begins with a simple question: what if students had access to nature every day?

That question led us to three remarkable school communities: Sparks, Wilmington, and Pacoima Middle Schools. Each campus had its own vision and challenges, but all shared the clear goal of creating a healthier, more hopeful environment for young people to grow. These schoolyards are not just sites for trees and gardens. They are living examples of what happens when care and collaboration take root.

**Wilmington Middle School** is leading the way in turning environmental challenges into opportunities. Located in one of Los Angeles' most polluted areas, WMS is undergoing a transformation that tackles both pollution and water quality through innovative green infrastructure. With support from the Ocean Protection Council, this project introduces rain gardens, permeable surfaces, and native plants to manage stormwater and reduce flooding. These green spaces act as "sponges," absorbing runoff, filtering pollutants, and recharging groundwater. Students play an active role, learning about their local watersheds as they help to plant, care for, and monitor the garden's effectiveness.

*Wilmington Middle School asphalt removal*

In **Pacoima**, the school's transformation is already in full bloom. More than 200 community members came together to plant pollinator gardens, create native landscapes, and add seating areas for outdoor learning. Teachers, students, and parents helped shape the plan, ensuring the space reflected the community's values and needs.

**What began as a vision for an outdoor learning space has blossomed into a cherished sanctuary where students can learn, reflect, and grow.**

The project's success lies in its collaborative foundation, built through workshops attended by the very people who use these spaces every day.







Sparks Middle school tree planting

At **Sparks Middle School**, what began as a straightforward planting became a meaningful tribute. Families and neighbors showed up to plant 55 new shade trees, bringing much needed shade to the campus. One such tree was planted in memory of a beloved teacher whose legacy now lives on in the green space where students gather. Beyond the campus, new street trees began to appear, driven by community members who were inspired to keep the work going. Sparks marked the beginning of our CAL FIRE-funded efforts that will green 19 school campuses across LA County over the next three years!

These three campuses are living testaments to the power of community and care. With every tree planted and garden nurtured, these spaces become thriving environments where students can learn, grow, and connect.

**As each project flourishes, it becomes a reminder of what's possible when communities come together with heart, turning vision into action and creating lasting change.**

Carefully planned, community-powered schoolyards are providing shade, safety, and a sense of belonging. This work continues because you believe in it, and together, we are building a greener, more sustainable future for all.

## Planting Possibility in Every School

Stay connected and help us grow what comes next. Give a gift today and make a lasting difference by helping us plant trees, grow gardens, and bring hands-on learning to schools throughout our city.

Visit [treepeople.org/school-greening](https://treepeople.org/school-greening) to download our **new guide**, start a conversation in your neighborhood, or make a gift that brings a greener future to another school.

Thank you for standing with us. Together, we are growing something lasting.

