

ODOT, Friends of Trees and Metro continue greening the I-205 Multi-Use Path

Nov. 6 planting marked the beginning of the second season of a three-year project

More than 30 volunteers managed to fend off the rain Nov. 6, when the group gathered to plant trees along the I-205 Multi-Use Path in southeast Portland. The planting marked the beginning of the second season of a three-year partnership among ODOT, Friends of Trees and Metro to plant thousands of trees along the 16.5-mile path.

Funding for the project comes from a \$410,000 Nature in Neighborhoods grant from Metro's 2006 voter-approved Natural Area bond measure, an \$80,000 grant from East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, a \$25,000 grant from Spirit Mountain Community Fund, and generous donations from area businesses including J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co., HSBC Bank USA, N.A., Cantel Sweeping, REI, Portland General Electric, and the Portland Timbers.

"We've got a good mix of public, private and corporate money contributing to this project," said Scott Fogarty, executive director of Friends of Trees as he addressed the crowd of volunteers.

ODOT Region 1 Manager Jason Tell added that the project, which brings together nonprofits, businesses, multiple government agencies and community volunteers, is unique in Oregon and might be the first of its kind in the country.

"It's a pretty ambitious effort," he commented. "As far as I know, it hasn't been done anywhere before."



Volunteers help plant trees along the I-205 Multi-Use Path just south of Division Street. The Nov. 6 planting marked the public kick-off of the second season of a three-year project among ODOT, Friends of Trees and Metro to add thousands of trees to the path. Photo courtesy of ODOT Film & Video.

Trees along the path are meant to increase neighborhood livability, provide habitat for wildlife and songbirds, reduce air pollution, and beautify the well-traveled transportation corridor. ODOT will showcase the three-year project as a statewide model for greening opportunities within its right-of-way.

The Nov. 6 planting was the first of 11 public plantings scheduled for the 2010-2011 season. Last season, more than 400 volunteers planted 2,400 trees and shrubs at various locations along the path.

"When we're done it will be incredible to see what this corridor looks like compared to before," said Tell.

"Pretty soon we'll have a forest growing here," added Fogarty.

To learn more about the project and upcoming plantings or to get involved, visit www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1/I205_MUP and www.friendsoftrees.org/programs/green-space-initiative.