



## **Request for City Council Committee Action from the City Coordinator's Office**

**Date:** July 8, 2013

**To:** Honorable Elizabeth Glidden, Chair, Regulatory, Energy and Environment Committee

**Subject:** Minneapolis Tree Advisory Committee Annual Report

**Recommendation:** Receive and File

### **Department Information**

Prepared by: Lorrie Stromme, Program Coordinator, Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

Approved by: Paul Aasen, City Coordinator

Presenter in Committee: Peggy Booth, Co-chair of Minneapolis Tree Advisory Committee

### **Financial Impact**

No financial impact.

### **Background**

The Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission (MTAC) was formed in March 2004 by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB). MTAC's mission is to enhance the Minneapolis urban forest and improve its long-term health. MTAC members include a city council designate (Robin Garwood), mayoral designate (John Slack), five citizen representatives, two representatives from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, staff from Minneapolis Public Works, a developer/business representative, and representatives from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis Public Schools, the Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee, and Tree Trust.

Each year, MTAC presents its report on the State of the Minneapolis Urban Forest to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Minneapolis City Council.

### **Highlights of 2012**

- The City provided over 1,500 trees to city residents for planting in their own yards through the City Trees Program in partnership with Tree Trust, a local nonprofit. The distribution included 110 cherry trees and 300 Honeycrisp apple trees.
- In 2012, 879 unhealthy and declining ash trees were removed and replaced from boulevards and parks through a Minnesota Department of Agriculture grant to help combat emerald ash borer. This was about the same number as were removed in 2011.
- Emerald Ash Borer confirmed infestations continued to expand in the metro area, including at the Fort Snelling golf course, Northeast Minneapolis, and Lakewood Cemetery.

- The May 22, 2011, tornado in North Minneapolis resulted in the removal of 2,600 trees on public property destroyed during the storm. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) planted 3,100 trees in North Minneapolis in 2012, and over 5,500 trees citywide.
- In 2012, in response to the North Minneapolis tornado - and thanks to a grant from State Farm Insurance - Tree Trust staff and volunteers distributed over 900 trees (including 100 Honeycrisp apple trees) to North Minneapolis residents to plant on private property.
- Minneapolis was recently named as one of the top 10 U.S. cities for urban forests by the conservation organization American Forests. Other cities in the top 10 are Austin, Charlotte, Denver, Milwaukee, New York, Portland, Sacramento, Seattle, and Washington D.C. American Forests estimates that the city's urban forest has a structural value of \$756 million and reduces energy use by \$216,000 per year. But Minneapolis trees are facing challenges, including the escalating presence of emerald ash borer, which threatens to kill up to 200,000 ash trees – about 20% of the city's tree canopy.

## **Recommendations**

### **Emerald Ash Borer– Act NOW!**

1. Accelerate the strategic removal & replacement of 5,000 public ash trees this year:
  - during road projects
  - under power lines
  - up to 20% ash per block throughout the city
  - target smaller ash for immediate removal & replacement.
2. Conduct cost-benefit analysis for chemical treatment of highest-value trees.
3. Increase public awareness and engagement.

### **Plant More Diverse Trees**

1. Sustain the City's tree canopy through increased tree care and planting large-canopy trees.
2. Increase species diversity – try more species.
3. Extend partnership with U of MN to test new tree varieties.
4. Replant at least 5,000 street trees per year – we will need 20,000/year to keep up.
5. Seek outside funding for more tree-planting.
6. Continue expanding diversity in the City Trees Program.

### **Water Our Trees Campaign**

1. Assure regular watering of all young trees.
2. Make best practices our standard practices ... direct stormwater to trees, use mulch ...
3. Be prepared to quickly implement drought response watering plans.
4. Promote watering when it's needed, via multimedia: tweets, Facebook, YouTube, emails, etc.