



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

Date: April 28, 2014

To: Honorable Cam Gordon, Health, Environment & Community Engagement Committee

Subject: Minneapolis Tree Advisory Committee Annual Report

Recommendation: Receive and File

Department Information

Prepared by: Lorrie Stromme, Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

Approved by: Paul Aasen, City Coordinator

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

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 designee (Robin Garwood), mayoral designee, 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, the Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee, and Tree Trust.

Minneapolis has one million trees, including 200,000 street trees and 50,000 in parks. Each year, Minneapolis street trees provide a total of \$24.9 million in combined energy savings, reduced stormwater runoff, increased property value, and improved air quality.

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

Highlights of 2013

- The City provided over 1,200 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 fruit trees and large-canopy trees.

- 1,527 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. Also, 177 infested ash trees were removed from private property.
- Emerald Ash Borer confirmed infestations continued to expand in Hennepin and Ramsey counties and into Superior, Wisconsin – just across the state border from Duluth.
- The “Solstice Storm” on June 21 resulted in the loss of 1,800 trees in the city.
- The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board planted 5,282 trees in boulevards and parks.

Recommendations:

Implement the Ash Canopy Replacement Plan

- Remove 40,000 public ash trees over 8 years and replant 40,000 diverse tree species (in addition to annual tree-planting goals)
- Increase the MPRB tax levy and appropriation for tree removal and replacement to 2.4%

Establish and fund the “Tree Advocate/Tree Cop” position in Park Board Forestry:

- Give trees a seat at the table at Project Development Review
- Protect existing trees from loss caused by infrastructure development and construction damage

Increase young tree care and watering

- Increase public watering of trees (MPRB, Conservation Corps, residents, etc.)
- Use a snow-emergency-style call/email/text system to alert residents to water trees during droughty conditions
- Create a volunteer tree-steward network to water and monitor young trees

Increase City funding for the popular, successful City Trees Program

- Encourage the replacement of privately owned ash trees
- Continue to increase the numbers of large shade trees and fruit trees in private yards and commercial spaces