

# City of Minneapolis

## Request for Committee Action

**To:** Health, Environment & Community Engagement  
**Date:** 6/20/2016  
**Referral:** N/A  
**From:** City Coordinator Office  
**Lead Staff:** Gayle Prest  
**Presented by:** Peggy Booth  
**File Type:** Receive and File  
**Subcategory:** Report

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**Subject:**

Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission Annual Report.

**Description:**

Receiving and filing annual report from the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission

**Previous Actions:**

May 4, 2015: ([15-00545](#)) Health, Environment & Community Engagement Committee - Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission Annual Report  
June 16, 2014: Health, Environment & Community Engagement Committee - Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission Financial Recommendations  
April 28, 2014: Health, Environment & Community Engagement Committee - Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission Annual Report  
July 8, 2013: Regulatory Energy and Environment Committee - Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission Annual Report

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**Ward/Address:**

All Wards

**Background/Analysis:**

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, mayoral designee, five citizen representatives, two representatives from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, staff from Minneapolis Public Works, a representative from Minneapolis Public Schools, a private arborist, a developer/business representative, and representatives from the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee.

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. The 2016 report was presented to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board on May 4.

## **2015 Highlights**

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) planted 7,817 trees in boulevards and parks, emphasizing diversity with 127 species in 39 genera and 19 families of trees.

The City provided over 1,300 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. Over 13,000 trees have been planted since the program started 10 years ago.

The MPRB continued implementing its Ash Canopy Replacement Plan to remove 5,000 ash trees each year for 8 years to slow the spread of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and to plant new public trees. Losses are accelerating. Since its initial discovery in Prospect Park in 2010, EAB has spread to 28 neighborhoods in the city.

University of Minnesota Forestry Professor Gary Johnson reported to the Transportation and Public Works Committee the results of a study that established the correlation between sidewalk replacements and boulevard-tree failure. As a result, MTAC, MPRB Forestry, the Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and Public Works reviewed and critiqued an updated Urban Forest Policy. The policy provides standards, guidelines, and practices that protect, maintain, and manage the urban forest.

An MPRB arborist has worked in the “acting” role of Forest Preservation Coordinator. He has met onsite with sidewalk and other infrastructure contractors about proper methods to protect existing public trees. He has conferred with Public Works and Planning staff in Site Plan Review. His impact is highly valuable, but his position is not fully funded.

Brewing a Better Forest, a private initiative by Minneapolis arborists, continues to incentivize citizen involvement as a means to water boulevard trees.

### **MTAC’s Recommendations:**

- **Save existing trees**
  - Stress tree protection in Requests for Proposals for public projects (City and MPRB)
  - Require tree-protection information in public decision-making (City and MPRB)
  - Require every project to show how it saves the most healthy trees (MPRB and City)
  - Require Tree Protection Plans in Site Plan Review processes (City)
- **Fund the full-time Forest Preservation Coordinator position**
- **Involve MTAC early in projects that may impact trees**
  - Appoint an MTAC representative to key Citizen Advisory Committees (MPRB)
  - Consult with MTAC at the initiation of city-sponsored projects (City)
- **Guarantee care of public trees**
  - Develop a reliable plan to water newly planted trees (MPRB and City)
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of gator bags (MPRB)
  - Train and direct park staff to keep mowers and weed whips away from trees (MPRB)
- **Increase tree-canopy cover and tree-planting**
  - Expand the City Trees Program (City)
  - Monitor canopy cover by updating the Satellite Tree Canopy Study (City)

### **Financial Review:**

**No financial impact.**

### **Attachments:**

1. MTAC\_PowerPoint