



Minneapolis
Tree Advisory
Commission

July 25, 2011

Ms. Elizabeth Glidden
Council Member
City of Minneapolis
105 Fifth Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Honorable Council Member Elizabeth Glidden:

At the Minneapolis Regulatory Energy and Environment Committee meeting on May 2, 2011, staff was directed to “work in conjunction with the Tree Advisory Committee, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Public Works and other stakeholders to develop recommendations for policy and program changes based on the information in the Tree Canopy Mapping Project. These recommendations will be made with the overall goal of increasing tree canopy coverage throughout the City. Staff will return to the Regulatory, Energy and Environment committee with these recommendations by August 8, 2011.

The Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission, which includes two Public Works department staff and MPRB staff, has discussed this issue over multiple meetings and is making the following recommendations:

1. Use the GIS data as a baseline to compare areas before and after major storm damage. Conduct new studies on areas damaged by storms. Due to the smaller geographical area, these supplemental studies will be less expensive than a citywide review. This additional information can be used to both understand the extent of damage, especially to trees on private property, and to prioritize relief efforts.
2. Make the GIS data accessible. The City should host the data and make it available through an easy, intuitive interface on the City's website. This is an essential first step before the targeted outreach and communication in recommendation in item number 4 (below) can be effective.
3. Analyze the GIS data along with other relevant information to determine the best places to plant trees to benefit other City goals, including but not limited to:
 - a. Managing stormwater quantity and quality.
 - b. Reducing urban heat island effect, especially from parking lots with no tree cover.
 - c. Increasing energy conservation through planting trees to the west and east of buildings.
 - d. Improving air quality.
 - e. Improving pedestrian experience along high-volume pedestrian corridors.
4. Conduct a targeted outreach and communicate this information to the general public to encourage tree planting in places identified by the analysis in item number 2 (above). This outreach should be targeted for particular audiences, including but not limited to:
 - a. Residents. Options include: presence on the City's website, communications from policymakers, outreach to the media, and utility bill inserts. The City Trees program should also prioritize those

- residents who have identified gaps in tree cover, especially those who would see energy conservation gains from tree planting.
- b. Neighborhood Groups. Neighborhoods can help the City reach residents and businesses, and can seek funding from outside sources to encourage tree planting. The City can reach out to neighborhoods through the Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee's Neighborhood Environmental Network, the Neighborhood and Community Relations department, and the Neighborhood Community Engagement Commission.
 - c. Rental Property Owners. The City has regular contact with rental property owners, including communications from the Inspections Department and the Minneapolis Police Department's Virtual Block Club.
 - d. Businesses and Institutions. Many opportunities for tree planting, including parking lots and open turf areas, are on commercial or industrial properties. Encouragement to plant trees could be included in the Pollution Control Annual Bill, information about the Storm Water Utility Fee, and other contact with the City.
 - e. Realtors. Tree canopy increases property values. Targeted outreach to the realtor community could help to encourage tree planting.
5. Update the GIS layer at least every five years, either by repeating this City-led initiative or by working with partners such as the Metropolitan Council to pursue a metro-wide tree canopy analysis.

We appreciate this opportunity and strongly believe that the Tree Canopy Report is of great value.

Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission members include: John Uban, John Erwin, Chad Giblin, Don Willeke, Gay Noble, Jeanne LaBore, John Slack, Karen Zumach, Kit Richardson, Lois Eberhart, Lorrie Stromme, Paul Ogren, Peggy Booth, Ralph Sievert, Robin Garwood, and Shannon McDonough (alternate).

If you have any questions, please contact me at (612) 720-8286.

Sincerely,



John Uban, Chair
Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission