



**Request for City Council Committee Action
From the Department of Public Works**

Date: January 24, 2008

To: Honorable Scott Benson, Chair Health, Energy & Environment Committee

Referral to: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee
Honorable Gary Schiff, Chair Zoning & Planning Committee

Subject: **Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission Update on Guidelines for Street Trees, Boulevard and Sidewalks**

Recommendation:
Receive and file

Previous Directives: HE&E Action Taken 7/9/07: Received and filed report and directed staff to:
a) Refer issue of Streetscape Standards to T&PW and Z&P Committees for review; b) Request that the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission return to the HE&E Committee with recommendations;
c) Direct the Sustainability Manager to coordinate activities with those departments.

Prepared by: Lois Eberhart, Surface Water & Sewers Administrator 612-673-3260
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Approved by:

Steven A. Kotke, P. E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Lois Eberhart, and
Members of the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission

Permanent Review Committee (PRC) Approval _____ Not applicable X
Policy review Group (PRG) Approval _____ Not applicable X

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

X No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

___ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget

___ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget

___ Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase

___ Action requires use of contingency or reserves

X Business Plan: X Action is within the plan. ___ Action requires a change to plan.

___ Other financial impact (Explain):

___ Request provided to department's Finance Dept. contact when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification:	n/a
City Goals:	consistent
Comprehensive Plan:	consistent
Zoning Code:	n/a

Background/Supporting Information:

GUIDELINES for STREET TREES, BOULEVARDS, & SIDEWALKS and other Right of Way Elements

Since the July 2007 HE&E Committee direction, Public Works has been working closely with the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission (MTAC) and with Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) forestry staff to strengthen those partnerships and to work together on guidelines. This letter has been reviewed by MTAC members and has their support.

The city's sustainability initiatives have highlighted that an increase in the city's tree canopy is an important environmental indicator, and sustainability is the general theme around which the city is shaping an update to its Comprehensive Plan. It is noted that, in addition to desire for healthy trees for myriad environmental and aesthetic benefits, improved methods of incorporating trees into right-of-way may be very beneficial to the city for its stormwater management responsibilities. The city is increasingly faced with the need to reduce stormwater runoff volume and pollutant loading, and these are some of the many benefits healthy trees provide. Lois Eberhart, Surface Water & Sewers Administrator in the Public Works Department, is coordinating the initiative to develop Guidelines for Street Trees, Boulevards & Sidewalks. Anna Flintoft, Transportation Planner, who is the Project Manager for the city's *ACCESS MINNEAPOLIS: Ten-Year Transportation Action Plan*, is providing key support on the initiative.

A number of urban forest-related activities are underway. The MPRB is progressing on its inventory of Minneapolis trees. The MPRB and the MTAC have produced and are working on new publications to underscore the importance of protecting and improving Minneapolis' municipal forest. Public Works staff are developing a "trees as stormwater management" initiative, and has submitted a grant request to two of the watershed management organizations (Mississippi Watershed Management Organization and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District) that are jointly funding research. The grant proposal was not funded at this time, however organization staff expressed that the city's initiative may be able to access some alternative funding. Members of the MTAC, including faculty from the University of Minnesota Urban Forestry program and Park Board forestry staff, assisted with the grant proposal and are working with the City on the initiative.

The guidelines initiative is being undertaken with two general types of projects in mind: One is the need for guidelines for incidental projects that will affect (or be affected by) existing streets and right-of-way -- for example, projects that are submitted to Minneapolis Development Review, and/or projects that are reviewed by the Minneapolis Planning Commission. The second is the need for guidelines for new or reconstructed streets -- for example, street projects that present opportunities to improve conditions for various travel modes (vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, buses) or for various other public purposes (street trees, stormwater management, signage, streetlights, street furniture, etc.).

Specifically as to street tree guidelines, examples of documents on which the initiative will build are the city's 2004 Urban Forest Policy, the August 2006 Interim Sidewalks and Boulevards Standards and Guidelines, and the August 2007 Pilot Version of City Trees: Sustainability Guidelines & Best Practices prepared for presentation to the city and the MPRB by Tree Trust/Bonestroo (two organizations with key staff that are members of the MTAC).

Coordination of these guidelines with the *Access Minneapolis - Ten-Year Transportation Action Plan* review and approval schedule is highly desirable. The core guidelines effort includes coordination with Public Works staff from areas that work with various right-of-way components: street and streetscape design, right-of-way administration (encroachments and private utilities), right-of-way maintenance, sidewalks, paving, materials testing, street lights and signage, traffic and parking, transportation planning, sewer and storm drains, and watermains.

In addition, representatives of the following will be asked to advise on various components: MPRB forestry and environmental operations staff, CPED/Planning staff, Minneapolis Development Review staff, the city's Sustainability Manager, members of the MTAC, the watershed organizations, the Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, and the Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee.

Cc: Jon Wertjes
Charleen Zimmer
Anna Flintoft
Gayle Prest
Henry Reimer
Members of the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission
Michael Schmidt