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Saint Paul Tree Preservation Ordinance

CITY OF SAINT PAUL



Tree Preservation Ordinance Overview

City of Saint Paul

Purpose

- Recognize that trees are a vital part of the City's infrastructure
- Establish a citywide framework to protect and manage trees during City-sponsored construction projects
- Align reconstruction efforts with the goals and policies of the Saint Paul 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the Climate Action & Resilience Plan as they pertain to the City's urban tree canopy

Long Term Goal

- Create a proactive, accountable, and transparent system that protects and expands Saint Paul's urban tree canopy



2013
White Oak - *Quercus alba*
Cherokee Park
DBH 37" | Height 55' | Canopy Width 60'



Tree Preservation Ordinance Overview

City of Saint Paul

Why it Matters

- Significant canopy loss from:
 - Emerald Ash Borer
 - Infrastructure reconstruction & development pressures
 - Climate impacts including droughts and stronger storms
- Trees provide major public benefits:
 - Heat reduction
 - Stormwater management
 - Air quality improvement
 - Public health and neighborhood livability
- Lower-canopy neighborhoods face greater heat and pollution impacts



2012

Merrill Magnolia - *Magnolia x loebneri* 'Merrill'

1391 Goodrich Avenue

DBH 15" | Height 25' | Canopy Width 28'



What the Ordinance Requires

Applicable City projects must include:

- Tree inventories and site surveys
- Certified arborist involvement
- Formal Tree Preservation Plans (TPPs)
- Early evaluation of alternatives to preserve existing healthy canopy
- Defined Tree Protection Zones (TPZs)
- Construction protection standards and inspections
- Replacement planting when preservation is not feasible



2012
River Birch - *Betula nigra*
1960 Margaret Street
DBH 36" | Height 70' | Canopy Width 76'



What the Ordinance Requires

Overall Goals

- Coordinate planning efforts to preserve existing healthy canopy whenever possible
- Reduce avoidable tree loss and damage during construction activities
- Reestablish mature canopy when preservation is not warranted or possible by setting minimum requirements for tree planting



2011

Bur Oak - *Quercus macrocarpa*

507 Holly Avenue



Tree Protection During Construction

Required protections include:

- Tree fencing and signage before construction begins
- Restrictions on equipment, excavation, and storage within critical root zone
- Root and soil protection standards
- Low-impact construction methods near trees:
 - Air excavation
 - Trenchless technology
 - Hand digging
 - Construction mats



2013
Blue Beech - *Carpinus caroliniana*
Como Park-Streetcar Station
DBH 7"(x3) | Height 15' | Canopy Width 20'



Tree Protection During Construction

Oversight

- Weekly arborist inspections and reporting
- Immediate correction of violations
- Continuous coordination between contractors, Public Works, and Forestry

Contractor Responsibilities

- Immediate reporting of tree damage
- Forestry permits required for pruning, root removal, and tree removal
- Maintenance of tree protection throughout project



2020
Eastern Cottonwood - *Populus deltoides*
1409 Edgerton Street
DBH 149" | Height 97' | Canopy Width 106'



Restitution for Damages

Financial Responsibility for Tree Damage:

The ordinance establishes clear financial accountability for damage to public trees during construction

Restitution applies to:

- ☐ Unauthorized tree removal
- ☐ Improper root cutting
- ☐ Soil compaction or excavation damage
- ☐ Damage from equipment or staging
- ☐ Work performed without required permits



2018

American Elm - *Ulmus americana*

1201 Hague Avenue

DBH 62" | Height 92' | Canopy Width 95'





Replacement Planting

When trees cannot be preserved:

- Replacement planting is required
- Focus is on long-term canopy restoration and increasing diversity, not just number of trees planted
- Parks Forestry determines:
 - Species selection
 - Planting locations
 - Minimum standards for establishment/long term growth



2021

Temple Juniper - *Juniperus rigida*

169 Goodrich Ave

DBH 11" | Height 25' | Canopy Width 24'



Public Input and Transparency

Process includes:

- Early project notifications
- Public input opportunities during design phase
- Multilingual communication and online updates
- Annual reporting to City Council on:
 - Trees preserved, removed, and replaced
 - Costs and implementation challenges
 - Lessons learned and policy improvements



2021
Blue Beech - *Carpinus caroliniana*
2134 Highwood Ave E
DBH 10" | Height 18' | Canopy Width 35'