

Public Comment Ord 25-4

### **Summary of My Proposed Changes**

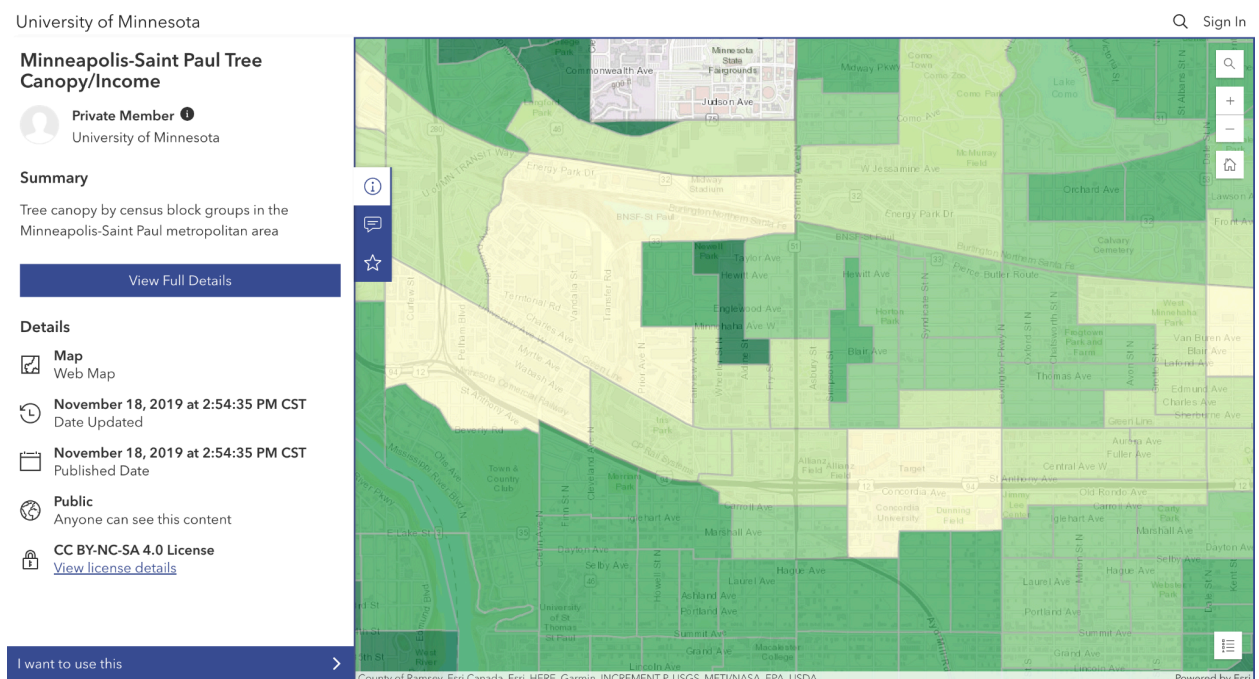
*The following three needs must be specifically outlined in the amendment, particularly in Section Sec. 92.5. where replanting requirements are defined, to strengthen its ability to realistically meet its goals.*

1. High-need areas such as Saint Anthony Park and the Metro Green Line corridor must be prioritized.
2. Replantings must occur in high-need, low-income areas of the city.
3. Replantings must account for tree quality, age, and species—not just a 1:1 count.

### **Evidence of Need**

*The following outlines data, reasoning, and actionable details for how these changes should be implemented into the amendment.*

1. Look at the following tree canopy map published by U of M, where you can see the lighter green/yellow areas denoting lack of tree canopy. Clearly there is a trend in Saint Anthony Park and along the Green Line that calls for more tree coverage.



**South Saint Anthony Park** may get overlooked as it's a very industrial area, but residential apartments and small businesses are springing up. These vast, underutilized warehouse parking lots and roads are now being used to walk dogs, host farmers markets, and provide bike paths for residents. As someone who lives in this area, I experience this need first hand. Increased tree canopy is necessary in this neighborhood as it is growing in residential use and contains many low income housing units.

**The areas along the Green Line** is the bloodline of this city's public transit and brings increased foot traffic. The light rail is what increases the demand and property value of many residential apartments and homes within its vicinity. These areas are frequently used by public transit users who, according to Metro Transit studies, are often youth, seniors and lower-income households. These foot and bike commuters deserve cooler, safer travels that would come with the increase of tree coverage. Additionally, these areas host much of our homeless populations whose health, both mental and physical, would be improved by an increase in tree canopy. As a commuter without a car, I can also speak to this need as the connecting walks between the train and my destination are practically unbearable in the heat of summer. I've been forced to carry an umbrella for the long stretches of uncovered sidewalk, but that shade doesn't provide the natural cooling capabilities of trees which emit cooler air in their photosynthesis.

2. **Replantings must be done in high need areas of the city.** Section Sec. 92.5. of this amendment lacks specifications for where trees should be replanted if it's not feasible for them to be replanted on the site. The goal of this amendment is to increase tree canopy in low-income areas, but without the explicit call for replantings to occur in low-income areas, I fear replantings will take place in areas that have low barriers for tree plantings, which tend to be higher-income areas that already have high tree coverage. It should be specified that replantings must take place in the high-need areas mentioned in the amendment and the areas I mentioned above. If this amendment isn't done, high-need neighborhoods will experience inequitable benefits, nothing will change, and this amendment will be virtually useless to low-income communities.
3. **Replantings must consider factors of tree quality and age, more than a 1:1 requirement.** As mentioned by other public comments, a tree's ability to reduce heat heavily depends on its age, size, and species. These are measurements already being recorded by the Tree Preservation Plan (TPP) when assessing tree removal/protection, so we have the data to determine what a replacement of similar stature should be. Write this into the replacement requirements found in Sec. 92.5. as it would prevent misuse of the current 1:1 requirement. If this is not done, we will end up with a lower percentage of tree canopy despite an increase in the number of trees. It is a waste of money and resources to not require similar quality in tree replacements. Most importantly, it will not materially increase the tree canopy and benefits for high-need families and individuals, thus failing to achieve the goal of this amendment and rendering it useless.