2350 Bayless Place rain garden community input

Below are comments from community members on the decision regarding the rain garden at 2350 Bayless Place:

Elizabeth Dirksen

The rain garden vastly improves the health of our neighborhood and is a key aspect of our ecosystem. The garden supports all sorts of bugs, and wildlife while not posing a hazard or risk to anyone. On many occasions I have seen flocks of monarch butterflies enjoying the garden, which I might add are still on the endangered list.

Rita Juran

We need to start thinking and talking about the plants that are going to save our air, water, and earth. Native plants and trees do not conform with typical city standards. I see it all over the country, a push to conform our lawns, gardens, and houses. A height standard for life saving native plants is equivalent to a height standard for trees (which, by the way, is another trend in our country).

The models used for regulations are antiquated. When I walk through South St. Anthony Park, I see boulevards and yards with a plethora of native plants, some well over 36 inches. Is the City of St. Paul going to ask all of its residents to remove the plants?

I finally see neighborhoods that are flourishing with native plants and trees. Lawns that are going without chemicals and constant mowing. There is a new beauty that helps protect our water and our air.

Please promote a greener, healthier city. I find that too much time has been dedicated to the removal of a beautiful life giving garden. The tax payers dollars would be better spent finding solutions to real problems, saving money to enhance our city for future generations.

Chris Bach

Seeing such a large space in the neighborhood dedicated to flora while also serving as a local rain garden is such a bonus for this neighborhood. My kids love walking past this area on the way to the playground and noticing all the flower, bees, and of course butterflies!

It's our favorite part of the walk and such a unique treasure for the neighborhood. I've never had an issue of visibility while driving around and limiting the height of all the plantings, including the ones not even near the road, seems short sighted. It adversely affects the benefits of the plants while simultaneously decreasing their beauty and providing a less hospitable habitat for pollinators.

St Paul prides itself on being green and pushing forward sustainable initiatives. Here you have a popular garden that achieves all those goals and is beloved by the community. It should be commended and held up as an example to be replicated across the city.
Nancy Dilts

I was very involved in the original 2013-2014 collaboration among the City of St. Paul, the Capitol Region Watershed District, and the St. Anthony Park Community Council to improve Hampden Park and add significant stormwater management features to the neighborhood. The project resulted in keeping tens of thousands of gallons of stormwater from the Mississippi River every year, as well as adding beautiful and environmentally beneficial rain gardens around the neighborhood. This years-in-the-making project was fully endorsed by the city, the CRWD, and the neighborhood, and added significant aesthetic and environmental value to the neighborhood.

In addition to providing stormwater management, the rain garden in the boulevard at 2350 Bayless Place is a gorgeous native planting that supports pollinators such as honey bees and monarch butterflies and is a glorious asset to the neighborhood. I find it extremely discouraging that the City is planning to withdraw its support for this kind of sustainability measure that specifically meets one of the City's Climate Action Goals to "protect natural ecosystems." This garden in particular, because of its size, has significant impact. To require the native plants in the garden to be 36" or less tall would decimate them.

Surely the historical significance of this highly successful collaborative project - one of the first of its kind in St. Paul - and the unique qualities and benefits of this rain garden would compel the City to not only allow the rain garden to remain intact, but also to rethink how it approaches the regulations for these projects. This isn't just a boulevard garden that a resident unaware of height regulations planted. This rain garden was installed with approval and funding by both the City and the CRWD as an intentional contribution to creating a more sustainable St. Paul. Why would the City destroy it?

Marcia Hayes

I speak in support of the rain garden. I also ask that the council do the work involved in lifting the three foot limit on boulevard plants. Rain gardens protect our bodies of water, rivers and streams. They provide habitat for insects. Milkweed, required by monarchs to reproduce, are taller than 36 inches. This regulation does more harm than good.

Christina Evans

I am proud of the rain garden and what it offers to our neighborhood. It is at a critical point where many people can appreciate and feel the calming impact of its beauty, it is visited not only by the people from the immediate streets but also people and family visiting the playground or joy of the people.

The Twin Cities are ahead of much of the country in the approach to moving away from the monoculture grass epidemic and encouraging plant life that brings much needed vibrancy in plant and insect life to the ecosystem. Not to mention the impacts of rain gardens on water quality. This rain garden is providing a health, spiritual, and environmental benefit and it would be a shame to see it jeopardized in service of adherence to a code that might not make the most common sense.

I am proud of the rain garden and the effort of thoughtful individuals across the twin cities that are working to make spaces that are about healthy ecosystems. Hoping that we can keep the rain garden healthy and strong.

Ann Comers

The rain garden is a huge benefit for our neighborhood and to the city at large. So many pollinators are happily fed as well as stormwater cleaned. The water quality of the Mississippi River is improved because of rain gardens. Please allow the Bayless Place rain garden to remain as is.

Elizabeth Logas-Lindstrom

The height limit on native boulevard gardens is unnecessary (does not pose a safety hazard in our community) and harmful to our ecosystem. Most native Minnesota prairie plants that can withstand harsh boulevard conditions such as drought, poor soil, and salt will push or exceed the current height restriction limits.

Please consider amending local ordinances to allow local prairie plantings in boulevards or bring it to a public vote. We should do all we can to support pollinators, wildlife, and beauty in our community.

Liam Stewart

I emphatically do not support the abatement of the rain garden at 2350 Bayless Place. The garden is a joy to have in the neighborhood and has become, like the other rain gardens and many boulevard gardens, a part of it. I love walking past it and would be deeply saddened to see it be endangered. At a time where we are increasingly encouraging diverse ecosystems and recognizing their importance, endangering a significant one is a mistake.

The city's approach to boulevard enforcement is, frankly, inconsistent, complaint-driven, leaves little if any recourse for those affected, and at the mercy of inspections they will likely not know happened. Gardens may stand even though they do not meet regulations while another nearby one may be razed simply because of a single complaint (which property owners are not privy to).

The 2350 rain garden deserves better than this city and the city must do better in its regulations pertaining to and management of boulevard gardens whether through permitting, fair and appropriate enforcement or other means.