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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'



## 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'

## 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'

## 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'