

**MINNEAPOLIS TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**Meeting of April 21, 2022**  
Held remotely via Zoom  
**Decision/Consensus/Assignment items are set out in bold.**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ARE RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED TO REVIEW THESE MINUTES CAREFULLY  
FOR ASSIGNMENT AND ACTION ITEMS PERTAINING TO THEM**

The Meeting of the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission (MTAC) of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) convened at 5:30 p.m. on April 21, 2022, with the following Commission Members in attendance: Co-Chair Peter MacDonagh (U of M), Steve Nicholson (MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee), Carol Sersland, Tim Keane, Susan Olmsted, Giuseppe Marrari, Steve Collin (Public Works), Don Willeke (Mayor's Representative), Ralph Sievert (MPRB Forestry Director), Curt Hartog (Executive Director for MPS Facilities, School Board Representative) and MPRB Commissioner Steffanie Musich (District 5).

Not in attendance: Co-Chair Peggy Booth

Guests in attendance: Philip Potyondy (MPRB Sustainable Forestry Coordinator), John Kruse (representing the Seward neighborhood).

**CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES**

Co-Chair MacDonagh called the meeting to order. Introductions by Board members were made. **The MTAC meeting minutes for March 17, 2022, were approved.**

Willeke requested that there be discussion regarding the MPRB resolution passed at the day before meeting the Master plan to cut trees on the Mall. On hold until the new Business portion of the meeting.

**2021 AMERICAN FORESTS EQUITY WORKSHOP–  
SUMMARY PRESENTED BY PHILIP POTYONDY AND SUSAN OLMSTED**

Potyondy presented an overview of the workshop, sponsored by American Forests:

**MAJOR POINTS AND TOPICS OF NOTE AND INTEREST**

- Tree equity mapping tool
- Breakout groups
- Focus groups
- 2<sup>nd</sup> day multiple sessions

Overview of the Tree Equity tool was presented by Olmsted. Tree equity is about ensuring that all people experience the benefits of trees.

<https://www.americanforests.org/tools-research-reports-and-guides/tree-equity-score/>

Olmsted presented the tool and the maps that are used to determine a city's tree equity score and the parameters that are used to create the 'score'. The basic data used are US Census data. Land use data may or may not have been incorporated. Another factor would be the original habitat/ecosystem such as prairie or oak savannah or hardwood forest.

Here is an illustration from the website describing attributes used in the evaluation.

### Tree Equity Score

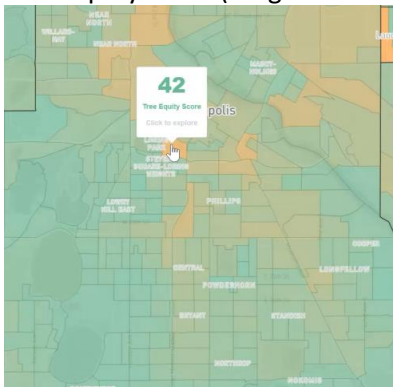
A map of tree cover in any city in the United States is too often a map of race and income. This is unacceptable. Trees are critical infrastructure that every person in every neighborhood deserves. Trees can help address damaging environmental inequities like air pollution.

The score evaluates data from each neighborhood's:

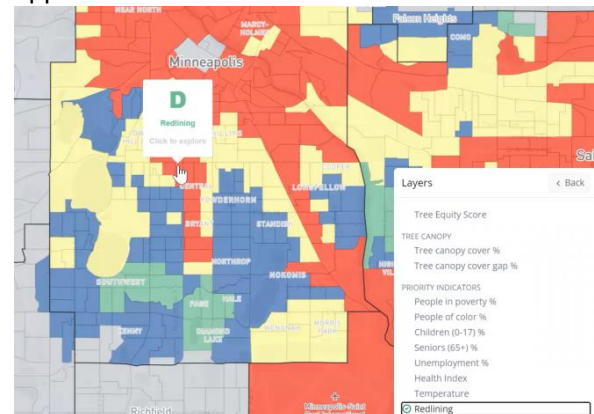


These metrics are combined into a single score between 0 and 100. A score of 100 means that a neighborhood has achieved Tree Equity. To learn more, visit our [methodology page](#).

This is a map showing an area of Minneapolis and one neighborhood's (or block group's) Tree Equity Score (range is from 1 to 100).

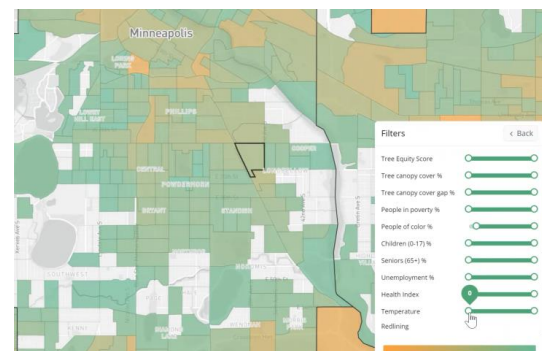


This map shows the filters that can be applied.



Marrari asked if this is a tool that could be downloaded and modified for a city's use? There is a subscription to the "Tree Equity Score Analyzer" with functionality for a deeper dive into decision making. The Forestry Department is currently using this type of data to geographically analyze and determine priorities.

A third filter has the capability to focus in on certain areas based on the factors listed:



## DISCUSSION OF RELEVANT ISSUES TO MINNEAPOLIS' URBAN FOREST & the MTAC

What can Minneapolis teach other communities about our advances in achieving tree canopy in 'deficient' areas? What is a reasonable tree canopy goal? What does the community look like compared to the map score? How does this tool stack up against the Minneapolis data and its application? Is there a role for MTAC in hosting these conversations and helping to move this dialogue forward?

Musich asked if the workshop included discussions about methods to persuade absentee property owners to plant more trees around multi-unit dwellings. Potyondy replied that the discussion acknowledged that this is a challenge across all communities and there will be work to continue to try to solve this.

Olmsted noted that the website includes Ordinances and policies addressing these types of issues, under 'resources'.

Nicholson: Get Minneapolis on the League of Cities agenda to discuss this tool and its application. Contacts are Karen Zuma and Craig Johnson.

Another cool resource discovered during the workshops is the Climate Change Tree Atlas. Check it out! <https://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/atlas/tree/>

### **MPRB FORESTRY UPDATE**

Sievert report: 3300 trees planted of the 9,000 inventory. 400 trees per day. Tree keeper software's improvements is beneficial in tracking progress.

MPRB Forestry currently has three to four arborist vacancies. Interview and activities will occur at McRae Park in May. Forestry Outreach Coordinator (FOC) position was posted and have received 11 applicants for the FOC with the deadline for submittals next week.

Potyondy gave a presentation to the MPRB on climate resiliency. See MPRB Newsletter for happenings (Ralph sends an email with this link).

Question was asked about tracking the trees that have succumbed because of last year's drought. But it's complicated to assign a specific reason for a tree's death. But there may be a correlation. The Department continues to work with Robert Buck on the tree survivability research project which tracks a sample of trees.

Potyondy attended the Green Leadership Community Institute conference with Jeremy Barrick last month. It was the inaugural year. Potyondy remarked that it was valuable to get connected with colleagues around the country and find out about what others are making happen. The retired USFS Chief spoke with the takeaway about her leadership journey.

### **2022 ARBOR DAY, APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup>, 4-8 PM Modest Brewing: 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!**

The event will be based at Modest Brewing (505 N 3<sup>rd</sup> St) <https://modistbrewing.com/>. MTAC will have a table and may have seedlings to hand out. It will be a relaunch of the 2020 festival (which

was cancelled due to COVID) at the North Loop location where 130 trees were planted (30 trees this year). There will be music, and tree planting – U o M will be joining the activities and focusing on engagement. Building Better Forests will not be available this year as they have in the past. Could the MTAC develop something to engage attendees and create a festive environment? A form of scavenger hunt with the reward being a seedling was one suggestion.

Organizers and participants: Downtown Improvement District, food trucks, Brass Messengers (a fabulous brass band playing high energy music – loud too!) among others.

**Philip will send a notice to the MTAC members with the details of the event – this is in the newsletter that Sievert emailed to the MTAC.**

<https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/news/2022/04/12/the-minneapolis-arbor-day-celebration-heads-to-north-loop-on-april-29/>  
<https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/arborday>

### **Recent Past MTAC Guest Speakers – Discussion**

MacDonagh introduced this topic: presentations have included large tree transplanting, Cedar Lake Master Plan, public works and green infrastructure. What are our thoughts on the presentations and what would we like to see in the future?

Willeke proposed to invite the MPRB President, Meg Forney, to join an MTAC meeting to review the Board's role in guiding MTAC's mission and actions to enhance the urban forest. What authority does the MTAC have to be proactive than reactive in the planning process?

Discussion continued around the Park Planning process, the specific instance of the proposed tree removal in the Mall location (between Hennepin Av and Lake of the Isles along 29<sup>th</sup> Street).<sup>1</sup> Could something be built into the planning process that's a metric /or score that decreases the score when mass tree removal is proposed? This would notify the planners that an alternative may be necessary. There was an instance in which Craig Pinkala advised against removing trees for the McRae Community Center plan. He is part of the Technical Advisory Committee, and his role is after the Master Plan is approved and then he works with the project manager/neighborhood to mitigate tree removal.

Keane: suggested a tree impact analysis of the project to Michael Schroeder and others.

Olmsted: language that could be included in the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the plan?

Musich: **place language in the Annual Report to the Park Board proposing MTAC be involved earlier in the planning process.**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/tmptsi\\_the\\_mall\\_approved\\_plan\\_nov\\_2020.pdf](https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/tmptsi_the_mall_approved_plan_nov_2020.pdf)

And

[https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park\\_care\\_improvements/park\\_projects/current\\_projects/the-mall-park-trail-and-site-improvements/](https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care_improvements/park_projects/current_projects/the-mall-park-trail-and-site-improvements/)

Musich: is the Forestry Department referencing the Master Plans when they are planting? Sievert replied that they are. Tree Keeper creates polygons where trees should NOT be planted – like sliding hills or proposed park development. Who digitizes the polygons (i.e. from the building documents) into the database?

**Further discussion around tree plantings or not planting** with park planners: Michael Schroeder.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Commission's Meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Carol Sersland – Commission Secretary