

Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission 2023 Annual Report

Trees offer numerous benefits to Minneapolis residents, contributing significantly to the city's environment, economy, and overall well-being. The most significant benefits include:

1. **Air Quality Improvement:** Trees help mitigate the effects of vehicle emissions and industrial activities.
2. **Temperature Regulation:** Trees provide shade, reducing temperatures in the city and making it more comfortable during hot summers.
3. **Stormwater Management:** Trees play a crucial role in managing stormwater runoff, reducing flooding and soil degradation.
4. **Wildlife Habitat:** Trees provide habitats for various bird species and wildlife.
5. **Aesthetics and Property Value:** Trees enhance the beauty of neighborhoods while increasing property values.
6. **Health and Well-being:** Parks and tree-lined streets encourage outdoor activities and contribute to a sense of community by improving health and reducing stress.
7. **Economic Benefits:** Trees contribute to the economy by reducing energy costs (via shading and windbreaks), attracting tourism, and increasing retail activity in green areas.
8. **Carbon Sequestration:** Trees store carbon, helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change by reducing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

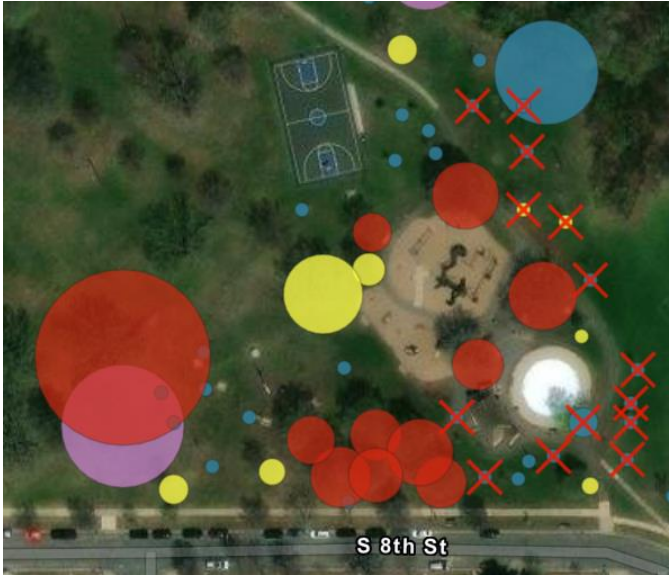
The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) and the City of Minneapolis, through its Health Department, recognizes the importance of trees. The MPRB's Forestry Department plants and cares for all trees growing on public properties. The City of Minneapolis oversees the City Trees Program which provides low-cost trees for planting on private properties. These services not only improve the city's environment but also foster a healthier and more sustainable community for residents.

In March 2004 the MPRB created the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission (MTAC). The charge of the MTAC is to advise on the enhancement of the Minneapolis urban forest and its long-term health. The goals are to coordinate issues related to trees across City jurisdictions; to evaluate issues related to trees; to report annually to the MPRB and City Council; and to explore new ways to acquire resources that increase support for urban forest establishment and management.

To fulfill its obligation of providing an annual report for 2023, MTAC is providing four recommendations for consideration by the MPRB and the City of Minneapolis. Each recommendation is based on information that MTAC has learned over the past year. If there are questions about these recommendations or if further information is needed, MTAC is available to respond.

MTAC Recommendations

1. Include the Tree Preservation Priority Report on MPRB's website



For years MTAC has urged the MPRB to improve transparency when it comes to the impact of park improvement projects on trees. In response the Forestry Preservation Coordinator developed the Tree Preservation Priority Report (TPPR) which provides a visual representation of how a park project will affect tree health. MTAC recommends that TPPRs be displayed on the MPRB website as a separate tab within current projects.

2. Continue participation in carbon offset program



The MPRB partners with Green Minneapolis on carbon offset programs. This provides an opportunity for companies or individuals to offset their carbon footprint by purchasing carbon credits. Approximately 80% of proceeds go directly back to the MPRB to fund future tree plantings. Because this partnership generates revenue to fund trees, MTAC recommends that MPRB continue participating in the carbon offset program.

3. Continue funding the City Trees Program



The City of Minneapolis Health Department partners with Tree Trust to provide low-cost trees to residents and businesses throughout the city. Funding for this program comes from the City of Minneapolis. Each year the demand for these trees is higher than the supply. MTAC recommends that the city continue and even expand the funding for this program.

4. Increase funding for the grinding of boulevard stumps



One of the services provided by the MPRB Forestry Department is the grinding of boulevard stumps. Stump grinding is needed to prepare a site for replanting of a new tree. It also improves aesthetics by eliminating stumps that sprout. At the current rate of funding residents are waiting several years for stump grinding. MTAC recommends increasing funding for stump grinding so that the backlog is significantly reduced.

Respectfully submitted by:

The Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission
December 29, 2023