

From: [Faith Fitzpatrick](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Schmidt, Janet](#); [Lerner, Sarah](#); [Aaron Collins](#)
Subject: #82649 City Council Meeting City Staff Presentation on City Trees
Date: Saturday, June 8, 2024 3:53:01 PM

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To: City Council
From: Faith Fitzpatrick
Date June 4, 2024
Subject: #82649 City Council Meeting City Staff Presentation on City Trees

I registered virtually and attended the presentation by City staff about urban trees at the City Council Meeting on June 4, 2024. There was no chance for public comment for this agenda item after the alder Q/A session. The presentation was not made available prior to the meeting. My written comments below are in regard to the City Engineering's Stormwater Department vegetation management plans.

I was hoping Sarah Lerner would talk about the stormwater benefits of riparian vegetation but there seems to be a disconnect between Engineering's vegetation management plans and stormwater management goals even though they are intricately connected. Riparian trees play a vital role in benefiting the hydrologic pathways that exist above and below ground along the 1500 acres of greenways and ponds that are cared for by the Engineering Dept. Riparian trees improve surface water and groundwater quality, mitigate flooding, filter sediment and reduce erosion, filter groundwater, and improve aquatic and riparian habitat. Unfortunately, the nearly complete Vegetation Management Plan does not address how vegetation, specifically urban riparian tree cover, benefits stormwater. In fact, there is no mention of this connection. The benefits of riparian tree cover (and undisturbed soils) are missing in Madison's watershed planning models. Without having a bigger picture of the hydrologic and hydraulic benefits of riparian tree cover, Madison's current practice of removing mature trees along greenways has actually decreased groundwater, drinking water, and lake water quality and increased future downstream flooding. These are much bigger consequences than individuals wanting to save their favorite trees, as was mentioned by the city staff when asked by the alders about why there are so many people upset about tree removal. The water-savvy public and the people that live along the riparian corridors get the connection and see first-hand the consequences. Before Engineering finishes the vegetation plan and mistakenly removes more mature canopy forest, please form a technical workgroup that has experience linking riparian vegetation to hydrologic benefits. Have the group work out the missing pieces and solutions that the City engineers need. Recognize that native messy riparian tree species, currently considered "junk trees, or invasives" should be there and are working hard to filter

and slow stormwater for free. The science is there that shows how trees help urban water management in changing climates. Other cities like Milwaukee are creating and adding trees to their riparian zones to help with flooding and erosion problems. Why is Madison still cutting down trees? Use Sauk Creek woods as a pilot. Put the holistic health of the water first. Get a proper hydrology and hydraulics model that accounts for all the water benefits that the trees can provide for floodplains, side slopes, uplands, and lakeshore zones. Please consider getting a technical workgroup together – take advantage of the many dedicated professionals in the Madison area that are willing to help before more mature trees are removed with good intentions for the wrong reasons.

From: [Patricia Wildgen](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: West Area Plan and June 4 Council meeting
Date: Monday, June 10, 2024 7:35:17 AM

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I just read Faith Fitzpatrick's letter about the June 4th council meeting. I am outraged about several things:

1. Refusal to allow public comment
2. Dismissive attitude towards residents who object to tree removal ("People have their favorite trees")
3. Refusal to discuss and study her very scientific explanation about which trees are critical to effective stormwater management.

You are not on the council to carry out your personal opinions despite scientific evidence against your plans.

You are elected by the voters and should be guided by the well researched information they provide and by their opinions.

Patricia Wildgen
Farmington Way, Madison