



Department of Public Works

## Engineering Division

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April 18, 2023

City of Madison Forestry

Subject: Permit for Tree Removal for Robin Greenway

Dear City Forestry,

The City of Madison Stormwater Utility (SWU) hereby applies for a permit to remove trees within the greenways located at 4609 Gregg Rd (Robin Greenway) and 338 Orchard Drive per MGO 10.101. These tree removals are requested as part of the [Robin Greenway and Orchard Drive Culvert](#) stormwater utility project.

### Background

In 2022, a storm downed trees that caused service outages and damaged nearby residential buildings within Robin Greenway. This event, along with removal of downed trees, and restoration of utility services caused damage to existing vegetation, leading to increase erosion and slope instability.

This initiated the [2023 Budget Finance Committee Amendment 4](#), a request by Alder Tishler to upgrade and repair stormwater infrastructure within this greenway. This budget amendment includes funds to replace the upstream culvert through Robin Greenway, construct a maintenance access path, and develop a plan for land restoration.

The SWU hired a certified arborist in fall of 2022 to tag and complete an inventory of all of the trees within the greenway identifying the species, DBH, and health of each tree.

In spring 2023, SWU staff began a public engagement process to identify community priorities for the 2023-budgeted project. This included public information meetings on February 9 and March 14, as well as a neighborhood site walkthrough on April 11. The SWU worked with City Forestry on reviewing existing conditions, tree removals, and review of draft plans presented at the March public information meeting.

The public engagement process presented detailed information from the certified arborist inventory and obtained feedback regarding tree removal and land restoration preferences. The public engagement process significantly informed the design and tree removals requested with this permit. A summary of the feedback from the February and March public information meetings is posted online at the below location:

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/documents/projects/PIM%20Engagement%20Results.pdf>

### **Tree Removal Locations and Information**

Included with this request, is a map that identifies the proposed tree removals, as well as a list of proposed tree removals with their condition and tag number.

The SWU is requesting the following trees for removal. This list includes properties located at 4609 Gregg Rd Robin Greenway and 338 Orchard Drive:

- (36) Trees proposed for removal due to construction conflicts.
- (10) Trees proposed for removal because they are dead.
  - At two separate public input meetings, meeting attendees identified that they want trees that are dead to be removed.
- (8) Trees proposed for removal due to being in very poor condition, as identified by the certified arborist.
  - At two separate public information meetings, meeting attendees identified that they want trees that are in very poor condition to be removed. At the second public input meeting, meeting attendees identified that they would also like trees in poor condition removed. Trees in poor condition will be evaluated in future years in phased approach identified below.
- (59) Trees proposed for removal due to invasive status. This includes the following species listed on the WDNR Invasive Species NR 40 regulated and restricted list: Black locust, Buckthorn, Burning bush, Siberian Elm, Burning Bush, and White Mulberry. This also includes on species listed in the WDNR Invasive non-regulated list: Norway Maple. Additionally, this includes removal of box elder, an invasive native plant but not listed on the WDNR Invasive NR 40 list.
  - At two separate public input meetings, meeting attendees identifies that they preferred removing all invasive species when given options on tree removals related to invasive classification.

Tree removal quantities listed above are approximate based on the topographic survey and certified arborist report at the time of survey. Additional removals may be required if field conditions or tree conditions change from time of survey to construction, but will follow the same categories (construction, dead, very poor condition, invasive) based on feedback from public engagement.

### **Tree Removal Timeframe**

Tree removals are anticipated to occur in the following timeframe:

- Phase One: Spring/Summer 2023: Removal of Tree ID 1548 a very large black locust in very poor condition. Work is being coordinated with MGE to address hazards and proximity to MGE secondary line.
- Phase Two: August 2023 – February 2024: Removal of trees that conflict with construction of the culvert, maintenance access path and grading, and nearby dead, very poor condition or invasive trees.
- Phase Three: February 2024 – June 2024: Removal of trees outside construction limits that require specialized low compaction equipment, and/or construction of the maintenance access path in Phase Two. Phase Three will also include native planting and seeding, including planting additional trees.

### **Phased Approach**

This project incorporates a phase approach to land restoration based on input from the public engagement process. This includes two methods for phasing:

- This project proposed keeping six large, healthy black locusts and one healthy Norway maples as part of a phased and volunteer-based approach to land restoration. The neighboring residents have agreed to assist with treating re-sprouts of these aggressive species. Staff will evaluate these efforts in a few years to determine effectiveness and need for additional tree removals.

- Additionally, while several of the existing trees are in poor condition, there were mixed results from the meetings on whether these should be immediately removed. As part of a phased approach of replanting and removals, staff will re-evaluate these trees in future years to determine if additional removals are necessary.

A public hearing at Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee for tree removals is scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Upon Forestry's receipt of this permit application, the SWU shall notify residents of the hearing, and submit mailing affidavits to Forestry.

Sincerely,



For

Jim Wolfe, P.E.  
City Engineer