

Madison Tree Canopy Working Group Report
Lance Green – December, 2016

The “Madison Tree Canopy Working Group” has reviewed pertinent documentation, received public testimony and consulted with a variety of experts during four working group sessions from August through November 2016 to understand the City’s policies and practices regarding treatment of trees on public properties in the City.

We have begun to consider possible changes to City policy and practices to strengthen support of tree-related goals in the Madison Sustainability Plan.

These are some possible recommendations we are considering at this time:

1. Reconsider some portions of the Emerald Ash Borer Response Plan, including providing the ability of property owners to pay for treatment of Ash trees on the terrace in front of their property and the treatment of Ash trees under utility lines and during street reconstructions.
2. Develop a plan and timeline to underground utility wires that require severe trimming of nearby trees.
3. In the interim before (2) is accomplished, develop clear guidelines for trimming or elimination of trees under utility wires.
4. Start the process to develop and adopt a Tree Canopy Master Plan, including these goals at a minimum:
 - Develop a Tree Assessment and Tracking System to accurately track all terrace and Park trees and provide regular reports on the state of our publically-owned trees.
 - Adopt a “No net Loss, Only net Gain” policy for annual work with trees on public property.
 - Develop and adopt a Per-cent Canopy Coverage Goal for the City including public and private canopy trees. One 2013 study found the City had a 22% canopy cover.
 - Work to attain these goals should consider equity of neighborhoods, diverse species variation, local conditions and historic trends.
 - Develop a clear statement for invasive and disease treatment methods and goals.
 - Clearly state the means for priority treatment of existing and new trees in street building and reconstruction and developments, both new and rebuilds, including providing appropriate soil, water and space for healthy trees.