

# Formulating Recommendations...Discussion of Recommendations

- **This Urban Forestry Task Force supports the creation of a plan for undergrounding high-voltage lines for the purpose of preserving and increasing canopy trees.**
  - [MGO 19.06](#) – pertaining to the Electrical Code
  - Apply to strategic corridors – how to define strategic corridors? Prioritize areas that don't have trees (i.e., low canopy coverage).
    - **Action Item:** Define strategic corridor.
  - Use neighborhood indicators once Forestry has included its canopy tree information; can combine overlays (design district and canopy tree coverage).
    - **Action item:** Define neighborhood indicators.
  - Use the concept of design districts and use design districts to specify what we want; however, there are areas that wouldn't fall under design districts. Some design districts specify tree coverage, but it is unclear whether all do.
    - **Action item:** Is our recommendation to use Design Districts in the decision making process
  - Decisions should include discussions about how undergrounding affects the canopy – there are costs associated with large tree pruning under lines but there are benefits value of large trees versus smaller trees. The benefits also need to be part of the cost-benefit analysis.
  - Idea proposed to set aside money for underground – piecemeal approach, underground a few streets each year.
  - Two issues: 1) main streets that have many conflicts with trees and 2) residential streets where the terrace is huge and the primary conflict is with overhead lines.
- **The UFTF supports a study in order to identify of areas of the City that would benefit from undergrounding.**
  - Host the discussion about canopy coverage in other recommendations.
    - **Action item:** Is this our recommendation to have the City fund a study for undergrounding high voltage lines to determine cost/benefit ratio?
- **The UFTF supports adding the following to the ordinance: “In new developments, redevelopments, and street reconstruction projects, terraces should have a minimum width of 8’, with 10’ being optimal, and the terrace should have 10’, 12’ minimums for arterial and collectors, whenever possible.”**
  - Terrace width
    - Based on previous meetings, there's a minimum width for the road in the ordinance, there's a minimum for sidewalk. There's no minimum for the terrace width within the ordinance.
    - Reallocating both boulevard/median space to the terrace? Why not both? Decided to not get into boulevard
  - For street reconstructions, the opportunities for widening the terrace should be considered.
    - **Action item:** Is [16.23 Land Subdivision Regulations \(8\) Design Standards](#) the ordinance we would want to add the terrace width requirements
- **The UFTF recommends that developers include a tree preservation and replacement plan – which identifies public and private trees potentially impacted by staging, construction process, etc. – with the submission of their development plan.**
  - The preservation plan could include limitations on frequency of root compaction, where materials will be stockpiled, etc. The replacement plan could include more requirements than currently (e.g., more soil to encourage faster tree growth, remediation or fee for canopy loss).

- Idea for 2-year warranty? The issue would be enforcement.
- Private trees would be under the Planning Department to enforce; public tree would fall to Forestry.
- Incentives can be incorporated. It would be possible to make removing the tree very cost prohibitive.
- The current process for tree removal during development is that the alders get 72-hours to respond to the removal. If a tree is removed, then it is assessed whether or not a tree can be replaced.
  - **Action item:** Is this related to the Redevelopment general discussion listed below?
  - **Action item:** Would some of these be addressed in a Tree Technical Manual?
- **During street reconstruction projects that install curb and/or sidewalk, the UFTF recommends that every effort be taken to preserve trees.**
  - Madison in Motion did recommend inclusion of sidewalk where it would be useful and every effort would be made to preserve the trees.
  - Engineering is coordinating better with Forestry to reduce these issues; they're also using creative solutions – limiting parking to one side of the road, reducing street widths.
  - There are currently situations where people get off of buses right into someone's garden.
    - **Action item:** Do we want to recommend criteria for determining what/how trees will be preserved?
- **The Urban Forestry Task Force recommends that Housing or Zoning investigate how new development single-family lots can have at least a minimum of one tree planted per lot.**
  - No current requirements for private trees on single-family or duplex lots.
  - However, who would be responsible for any incentives/barriers?
  - Issue of maintaining trees – even if planting the tree gets landscape points, there is no penalty if the tree isn't maintained.
  - Use point system – each single-family home has to have two points?
  - No opposition to that idea, more an issue of logistics: Zoning does not want to administer a landscape requirement for one or two-family homes. If they did so, landscape plans would increase by 150,000. A proposed alternative would be to go through neighborhood covenants. Resistance from Zoning stems from ongoing maintenance. By ordinance, you must be consistent with your site plan until you get approval to change that. At the moment, for any commercial property, there is an expectation that, if the plan has a tree, Planning will find a tree or write an order for one. For a subdivision, Zoning would not be checking for compliance. It would be easy to write an ordinance to require a tree be planted, but it would be difficult to have the tree into perpetuity.
  - However, City does not enforce covenants – which are agreements that are created between developer and neighborhood, rules that the neighborhood agrees to abide by. There is no legal authority to enforce some covenants. City will only bring it up to the Zoning level but not beyond.
  - There is possibility to base the tree requirement on subdivision density. A smaller, denser area might only have room for one tree, while larger areas could accommodate more trees.
  - Recommendation can be general because they will be forwarded to other agencies. The other agencies can then work out the details.
  - Idea to generate guidance for plantings – diversity, size, location.
- **HOLD: The UFTF supports placement of underground utility conduits [use Minneapolis language].**
  - Drawing for the Minneapolis example – prioritize placing conduits in other locations.
  - Require sharing the tube
    - **Action item:** Look up language from Minneapolis.

- **The UFTF recommends that early neighborhood development plans include an inventory of canopy coverage, identify key areas for conservation, and record justification.**
  - Plans don't include current or future canopy; having this information will allow for future preservation, conservation, removal decisions.
  - Conversations need to occur among developer and Planning Commission. Make the process more formal?
  - Many development plans do address wooded areas.
  
- **HOLD: Spacing**
  - Ordinance requirements do not address spacing issues for trees. There is not an ordinance that requires trees to be every 30' for instance.
  - Light poles
  
- **HOLD: Redevelopment general discussion**
  - Removal of street trees related to redevelopment and staging areas
    - For instance, if trees are removed, developers might be required to provide soil volume at their cost to regrow that tree as soon as possible – more optimal environment
  - Involve Planning and use canopy cover goals – make it consistent – Mifflin example – neighborhood was interested in involving canopy in the plans
  
- **The UFTF recommends requiring zones free of laterals (e.g., water, sanitary) and parallel utilities for redevelopments at the beginning of the process. The site plans should also consider to the center of the road for the purpose of planting trees with adequate soil volume areas.**
  - On any site plan, they have to show where the fire lane is, for example. A standard comment could be “please define your lateral-free zones.” Private Development Coordinator would be involved in this process; this could be part of plan review and plan issuance. Engineering is working on more consistency between site plans and right-of-way plans.
  - Doing this at the beginning rather than the end; codify it.
  - Idea for developers is to flip their staging areas into areas where trees will be planted.
  - The idea of clustering utilities to provide space for trees and their soil might fall under this recommendation; however, it's not just laterals.
    - Storm sewer placement - There have been recent changes to the regulations, which complicates matters. For instance, Monroe Street had issues that, between size and depth of the pipe, there wasn't much room.
  - **Action Items:** Decide what “adequate” soil volume means