

# Formulating Recommendations...Discussion of Recommendations

- **The UFTF recommends including trees as an addendum to the Common Council approved Policy for funding the Undergrounding of Overhead Utility Lines.**
  - The addendum would add trees to the policy (currently they're not mentioned) and include setting aside non-TID/TIF, consistent annual funds for partial underground projects.
- **The UFTF recommends setting aside consistent annual funds for partial underground projects.**
  - Talk to the Alders about appropriate funds/percentage/etc.
  - Separate funds are important to ensure that there is funding available specific for undergrounding.
  - Idea for formal collaboration with MG&E to help identify most cost-effective locations – Engineering representation, consumer representation.
- **The UFTF recommends that the 5-year street reconstruction plan be reviewed to identify candidates for a full or partial undergrounding projects. The goal would be to prioritize locations that meet the following criteria, which includes but may not be limited to: which projects are single phase residential areas where the terrace width is sufficient for large trees? Is there space for private tree plantings? What's the current canopy coverage? Is the road popular with cyclists and pedestrians?**
  - This criteria-process could be similar to how streets are chosen for reconstruction:
    - To decide street reconstruction, there are ratings that consider sewer maintenance issues, pipe in poor condition, missing pipes, water main breaks, street ratings, street function. Most problematic streets get moved to the top of the list.
    - There are different types of projects – entire reconstructs, resurfacing, resurfacing + utilities. Roughly, 25 projects a year total. Reconstructs should be the focus since there are more opportunities.
  - Criteria could be: what projects are there? Which ones are single phase residential areas where the terrace width is sufficient for large trees? Is there space for private tree plantings? What's the current canopy coverage? Is the road popular with cyclists and pedestrians?
  - Drawing for the Minneapolis example – prioritize placing conduits in other locations.
  - Require sharing the tube
  - Cost-benefit analysis – how much canopy coverage does undergrounding get us? How does that compare with other initiatives? Would it be possible to get MG&E's pruning costs and factor that in? MG&E benefits from undergrounding, too. It's possible that MG&E could contribute to a cost-share for undergrounding. Contribution could include funds otherwise dedicated towards line/pole maintenance costs, tree trimming costs, etc.
  - Madison Canopy Street Trees Group came up with two ideas for MG&E to assist – voluntary contributions on individual bills and tree investment program (long-term loan program). The donations would need to be distributed equitably (social justice component).
  - Costs need to be verified – hence the idea for a pilot project. Is getting cost estimates the function of this particular committee?
  - For street reconstruction projects, would it be helpful to provide a best-case scenario for trees? To include undergrounding, it might be difficult. Design a street scenario with the best conditions for the most canopy.
    - **Action item:** Look up language from Minneapolis.

- **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 and develop a best-case scenario for canopy trees.**
  - Madison in Motion did recommend inclusion of sidewalk where it would 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.
- **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

- **The UFTF recommends more extensive inter-departmental coordination between Forestry and other City agencies (e.g., Engineering).**
- **Temporary easement for the purpose of planting tree**
  - Right-of-entry to repair sidewalk.
  - Easement requires document recording, survey for boundary lines. Mapping will be prohibitive.
  - If temporary easement, property owner would be free to cut down the tree once the easement lifted. Right-of-entry would be a better course of action.
- **Program for private trees**
- **The UFTF recommends that the new constructions should require 800 cubic feet soil volume for terrace trees. For downtown areas and reconstruction projects, 800 cubic feet soil volume should be implemented whenever possible.**
  - Engineering specifications – several different situations that could target soil volume recommendations: 1) street reconstructions in downtown and other highly urbanized areas that have a high density of people. Silva-cells are particularly advantageous here because you can still have pavement surface and adequate volume. Minneapolis has some language in its ordinances. 800 – 1,000 cubic feet for healthy tree. Terrace width requirements can be waived if Silva-cells are used or similar deep-structured supports. In areas where the trees have gotten too big for a grate, the grate is removed and a granite mixture is placed in the area instead. Interlocking plastic pavers have open areas that can use granite mixture; this could be a compromise if Silva cells aren't used. There's a concern about compaction and the longevity of the tree. Grates can be adjusted to a certain point, then the granite is the only feasible option. 2) New construction projects – new plats, new streets. 3) replacement trees. 4) redevelopment through Zoning and Planning. Don't make terrace width and sidewalk mutually exclusive.
  - Need to consider top soil settling – who becomes responsible for fixing any potential hazards?
  - Structural soil more attractive than a Silva Cells
  - Developers should pay to install Silva-cells or more broadly, this much volume for trees; there's no landscaping requirements. How to best implement? "Requirement to provide this many cubic feet." Include in ordinance? It is not an option to include in zoning code. It could be part of the development agreement. It would be cleaner to include in the requirements for construction staging.
  - When we do need to add lane capacity (federal funds), there's a possibility to include soil volume requirements in that. Transportation needs should not be at the cost of the trees. Federal funds are typically cost-share, and the City typically exceeds that amount.

- Trees planted might be planted too high in the grate. In current planting operations, there's a layer of stone between soil and the grate. Size of the grates vary by location. Standard recommendation is to use 4x8 grates. 4x12 isn't great from a maintenance perspective; Forestry would need to keep extras on hand for any repairs.
  - State Street example – how much traffic do those honey locusts receive? State Street has its own special construction: concrete slab bridges over the top of the terrace. This reduces the level of compaction, and it's continuous for most of the street. This approach isn't widely used because it complicates any utility repairs.
  - Library – 2 cells wide and 6 cells along the length. 350 cubic feet, roughly.
  - Monroe St – plan included language about identifying areas that could be “excavated out” to provide more space.
- Current specs are at 6” of topsoil (this is an improvement from the previous 4” requirement) – increase to 12”. Silva cells are 1’ back from the edge of the curb.
- Minimum soil volume standard; going to be tailored to each situation. 30x8’ wide terrace x 4’
- **The UFTF recommends that soil volume be included in the parking and general landscaping zoning specifications for private development.**
  - There's an overall landscape section – 1) general landscaping with a point system and 2) development frontage, if there's space between the building and the ROW.
  - Parking requirements require a percentage of landscaping; there's a requirement that a landscape architect be involved. Volume could be included in zoning code, but it'd be challenging how to administer. From a construction inspection perspective, how do you measure volume on site? Parking lot landscaping, development frontage landscaping (combo trees and shrubs). Zoning has language that, if there's not room, you could do a fence/hedge. Code includes maximum lot coverage, landscaping requirement.
  - Planning Commission doesn't go into this level of detail; this would be for staff.
- **The UFTF recommends that developing an Urban Forest Initiative that would provide consumer education and conduct outreach events, similar to the Clean Water Alliance.**
  - This initiative could be partially funded by the City; the City would be a facilitator, maybe the instigator. A goal of the initiative would be to provide consumer education about tree maintenance and increase awareness of tree-related issues.
  - Initiative could lead walks and conduct other outreach events.
  - A position could be created to hire an outreach and education specialist, who would combine education/communication and an arborist background.
    - Statewide gardener educator
    - Extension
  - Work with Extension to identify how to communicate to the public – who is most likely to be responsive? What are the messages that resonate?
  - Would want to use other sources of funding.
- **The UFTF recommends that the City work to develop an advisory board, in order to partner with the Arboretum, Extension, Urban Tree Alliance, and others to develop the brand of the urban forest.**
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