



Legislation Text

File #: 41986, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

Fiscal note pending.

Title

Requiring the City Forestry Division to evaluate the treatment of ash trees under powerlines on the same basis as other terrace trees and provide treatment accordingly with the goal of maintaining a street tree canopy in Madison's older neighborhoods.

Body

WHEREAS, "A healthy, vibrant, and sustainable urban forest provides benefits to all residents of Madison through a number of ways and not just to those who have parcels adjacent to City trees. Urban trees enhances air quality, retain stormwater run-off, increase property values, and overall quality of life. Thus, residents of all parcel types shall help uphold the quality of the urban forest in the City of Madison." (City webpage on the Urban Forestry Special Charge); and,

WHEREAS, the city's EAB policies, originally adopted in 2012, called for treating terrace ash trees of 10 inches diameter (at 4 ½ feet height) and above, excluding trees in poor condition or under power transmission lines; and,

WHEREAS, power lines have been placed underground in nearly all new developments since 1978, leaving older neighborhoods with aboveground lines and the greater loss of tree canopy under the current city tree policy; and,

WHEREAS, the Forestry Division estimated in 2013 that approximately 2,920 ash trees under power lines would be removed regardless of their health status; and,

WHEREAS, Madison's Sustainability Plan, adopted in 2012, calls for the City to: "Minimize loss of tree cover and green space in public rights of way; Promote, expand and replace tree canopy trees whenever possible and encourage landowner collaboration on strengthening tree canopy and woodlands; and create a policy to facilitate underground placement of power lines and overhead wires."; and,

WHEREAS, ash trees removed under power lines are always replaced by low growing ornamental trees which; cost nearly the same amount to plant and maintain, have significantly shorter life-spans, and do not provide the same ecological and economic benefits of large canopy trees; and,

WHEREAS, it is significantly more expensive to remove and replace a mature canopy tree than it is to treat it. The cost of preemptive removal and replanting is \$783 per tree according to City of Madison Forestry. The cost of treatment is \$71 per tree, administered every three years; and,

WHEREAS, other cities such as Milwaukee have adopted protocols requiring treatment of trees under power lines using the same criteria as other terrace trees,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in order to maintain a street tree canopy in Madison's older neighborhoods, Forestry Division guidelines and practices shall require evaluation of treat ash trees under power lines on the same basis as other terrace trees and should be provided treatment accordingly.