



Grand Rapids Forestry Update

City Commission
Committee of the Whole
December 3, 2024

Joe Sulak
Parks Superintendent



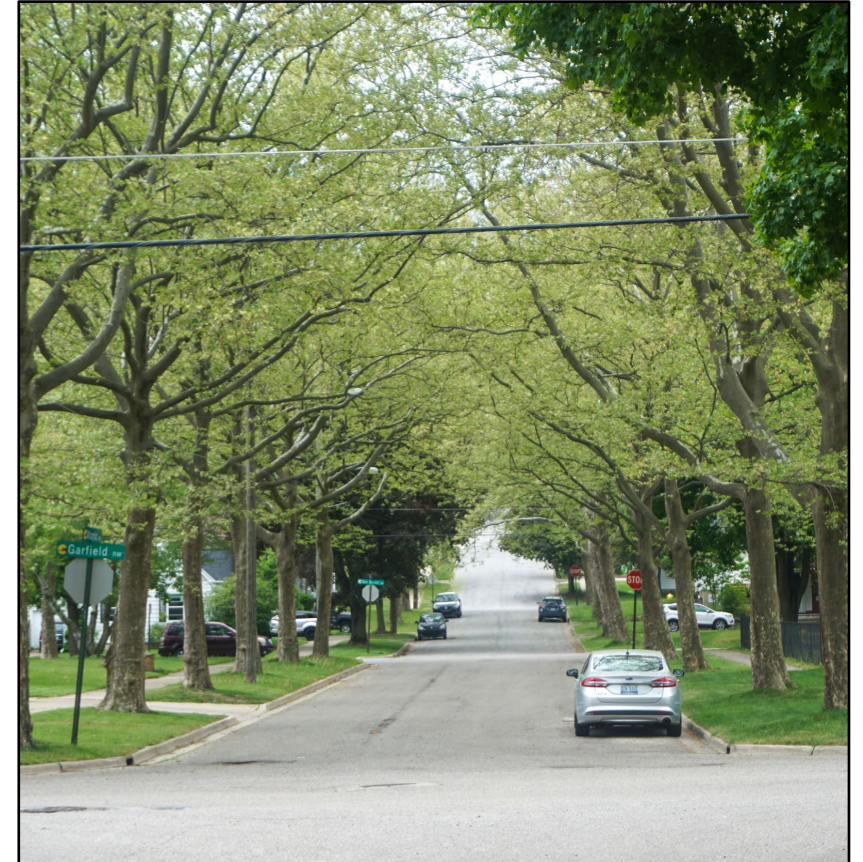
Forestry Division – Our Work

- Maintain and enhance the health and value of each tree
- Remove unfit trees for public safety and health of the urban forest
- Clear traffic signs, signals, street lights, and visibility obstructions
- Maintain road clearances
- Plan, plant, and maintain new trees through a proactive tree planting program
- Treat over 1,400 ash trees to protect against Emerald Ash Borer
- Provide 24-hour emergency response services for tree-related emergencies
- Review plans, advise, and inspect development projects
- Coordinate tree preservation, maintenance, and removal projects with local companies
- Respond to forestry-related public questions and concerns
- Diagnose tree problems and prescribe corrective/risk reduction actions
- Promote and support tree planting to increase canopy potential through partnerships



A Robust Tree Canopy

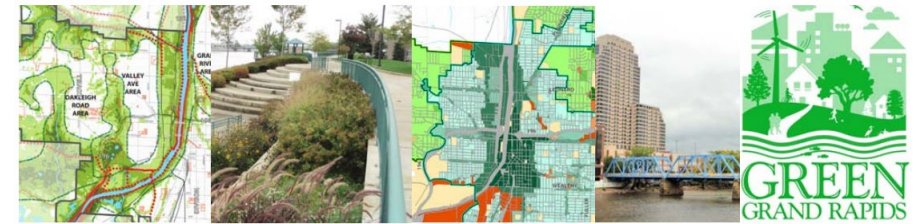
- Offers significant economic, environmental, and quality of life benefits to the community
 - Shade
 - Cooling
 - Reduced erosion and runoff
 - Greenhouse gas emission sequestration
 - Aesthetic value
 - Reduces risks of both heat and flooding - top climate hazard concerns in Grand Rapids



Focused on Forestry - Timeline

- 2007 – Creation of Urban Forestry Committee
- 2008 – Canopy Assessment #1 (34.6%)
- 2009 – City of GR Urban Forestry Plan
- 2012 – Green Grand Rapids (40% Canopy Goal)
- 2015 – Canopy Assessment #2 (34%)
 - \$2.64M ecosystem services/year
- 2016 – City Tree Inventory (86,000 trees)
 - Critical, Priority 1, Priority 2, Routine Prune
- 2016 – Adoption of Revised Zoning Ordinance
 - Canopy Protection for PRIVATE & PUBLIC Development
 - LUDS Permit

GREEN GRAND RAPIDS



Timeline (continued)

- 2017-2018 – Priority 1 project (public/private)
 - 1,558 Removals
 - 1,479 Prunes
 - 1200 stumps
- 2018 – Adoption of Revised Tree Ordinance
 - For public trees
 - Provision for Tree Manual
- 2019 Forestry Sustainability Plan
 - Multi-year, Priority 2 project (public/private)
 - 6-year transition to proactive management
- 2023 – Priority 2 project pivot
- 2024 – Forestry Operations and Management Plan
 - \$50,000 UCF Grant



Forestry Update Agenda

- Progress of Priority 2 (P2) Project
- Operations and Management Plan
- Tree Manual and Standards of Practice
 - Component of Tree Ordinance
 - Developed by Urban Forestry Committee
 - Administrative Document



Priority 2 (P2) - Project Update

	Inventory Number 2017	Work Completion 2018-2023	Balance as of 6/2023	PIVOT	Completed post PIVOT	Balance Today	% Completed
P2 - Prunes	8,887	2,800	6,087		2,682	3,405	62%
P2- Removals	3,192	2,553	639		639	0	100%

Remaining Work

- Continue Pruning as planned with contractors
 - FY25 – \$1,138,200 budgeted contract pruning
 - Projected finish calendar year 2026



Forestry Operations and Management Plan

- \$50,000 grant MI-Urban & Community Forestry Council
- Consultant - Davey Resource Group
- National comparison
 - Staff-to-canopy ratio
 - Equipment analysis
 - Proactive management routines
- Analysis of sustainable budget scenarios to support work



Grand Rapids Tree Ordinance (Title III, Chapter 42)

- Recognizes urban forest and tree canopy as a significant public infrastructure asset
- Intended to preserve, maintain, enhance, and increase the urban tree canopy
- Establishes Rules and Regulations, known as the *Tree Manual and Standards of Practice*
 - The City Manager is authorized to make the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the purpose of this Chapter.
 - The rules shall be effective upon approval by the City Commission.
 - The Tree Manual and Standards of Practice shall be published on the City's website.
 - Copies of the Tree Manual and Standards of Practice shall be kept on file at the office of the City Clerk and the Parks Department for distribution to interested parties.



Forestry Manual and Standards of Practice

Rules and Regulations of Public Trees

- Tree Permit Requirement
- Tree Planting & Establishment
- Tree Pruning
- Protection of Trees
 - Development and Construction
- Tree Removal & Felling
- Pest Management, Fertilization & Treatments
- Utility Vegetation Management
 - Above and below ground
- Coordination & Notification of Work
- Prohibited Acts
- Landmark Trees
- Appendix-I Recommended species list
- Appendix-II Prohibited species list

*** To be considered for adoption by City Commission on December 17, 2024 ***

