



GREAT RIVER GREENING

January 14, 2025

Councilmember Rebecca Noecker
Saint Paul City Council
15 W Kellogg Blvd, Suite 310
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Councilmember Noecker,

On behalf of Great River Greening, I am writing to express our strong support for the proposed Tree Preservation Ordinance, which amends Title IV of the Administrative Code to include Chapter 92, titled *Tree Preservation for City Sponsored Projects*. This ordinance is a critical step forward in protecting and enhancing Saint Paul's urban tree canopy, which provides invaluable ecological, social, and economic benefits to our community.

Trees play a vital role in purifying air, sequestering carbon, reducing urban heat island effects, managing stormwater, and creating habitat for wildlife. As noted in the 2019 Saint Paul Climate Action & Resilience Plan, neighborhoods with lower tree canopy coverage, many of which are Environmental Justice communities, face disproportionate risks from extreme heat, poor air quality, and higher energy costs. By prioritizing tree preservation and replacement in city-sponsored projects, this ordinance aligns with the need to address these inequities while fostering healthier, more resilient neighborhoods.

At Great River Greening, we use science-based restoration practices to ensure that urban and natural ecosystems can withstand the growing challenges of climate change. This ordinance mirrors our values by mandating sustainable practices, such as creating Tree Preservation Plans, adhering to ANSI A-300 standards, and ensuring equitable investment in tree replacement where preservation is not feasible.

This ordinance also aligns with Great River Greening's *Cooling Minnesota Communities* program, through which we are working to combat urban heat islands in Saint Paul. Through this initiative, we are planting trees in heat-vulnerable areas, including at school campuses, distributing trees to residents, and watering trees planted by the City to ensure their survival. The Tree Preservation Ordinance complements our efforts by institutionalizing practices that will enhance and sustain Saint Paul's tree canopy for generations to come.

We commend the ordinance's focus on long-term tree canopy health, its emphasis on Environmental Justice communities, and its recognition of trees as a vital part of Saint Paul's infrastructure. Thank you for your commitment to building a greener, more equitable future for all Saint Paul residents.

Sincerely,

Kateri Routh
Executive Director
Great River Greening