



RESOLUTION # 26-08

Recommending the Saint Paul City Council Amend Title IV of the Saint Paul Administrative Code to add Chapter 92, titled Tree Preservation for City Sponsored Construction Projects.

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission ("Commission") is an appointed body established to advise the Mayor and City Council on long-range and city-wide matters related to Parks and Recreation; and

WHEREAS, trees provide essential public benefits including improved air quality, carbon storage, urban heat reduction, stormwater management, erosion control, wildlife habitat, and contributions to public health and improve public safety and neighborhood livability; and

WHEREAS, Saint Paul's tree canopy has been significantly degraded by the spread of Emerald Ash Borer, with resulting long-term impacts on environmental quality and equitable access to these benefits; and

WHEREAS, urban heat islands disproportionately affect areas with lower tree canopy cover, resulting in higher temperatures, reduced air and water quality, increased energy burdens, and elevated public health risks; and

WHEREAS, these impacts are concentrated in neighborhoods with higher proportions of low-income households and historically underinvested communities; and

WHEREAS, advancing climate resilience requires intentional, equity-centered investment in tree canopy restoration, preservation, and maintenance in areas most affected by environmental harm and historic disinvestment; and

WHEREAS, the Tree Preservation Ordinance Public Input Group (TPO PIG) conducted an eighteen-month collaborative process involving residents, advocates, technical experts, and City staff across multiple departments to evaluate and refine tree preservation policy and implementation; and

WHEREAS, this process resulted in a consolidated ordinance and Standard Operating Procedures framework intended to be clear, enforceable, and operationally implementable while advancing environmental stewardship, accessibility, and infrastructure compatibility; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations developed through this process prioritize strengthened tree preservation policy, improved public engagement and accountability, and consistent, transparent implementation across City systems; and



WHEREAS, the TPO PIG emphasized that equity and environmental justice require reducing structural barriers to tree protection so that preservation outcomes do not depend on individual capacity, technical knowledge, or access to informal decision-making processes, but instead reflect consistent public standards; and

WHEREAS, the group further recommended that tree protections be applied consistently and systematically across all projects and geographies to ensure equitable outcomes not shaped by differential resources, procedural complexity, or variability in implementation; and

WHEREAS, the group emphasized a “hold harmless” approach in which existing high-canopy neighborhoods are maintained and protected while historically under-canopied and heat-vulnerable neighborhoods receive prioritized investment; and

WHEREAS, these findings support adoption of a strengthened Tree Preservation Ordinance and accompanying Standard Operating Procedures that embed equity, consistency, accountability, and environmental justice in the preservation and expansion of Saint Paul’s urban forest; and now, therefore, be it;

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission recommends the Saint Paul City Council amend Title IV of the Saint Paul Administrative Code to add Chapter 92, titled Tree Preservation for City Sponsored Construction Projects.

Adopted by the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission on June 11, 2026:

Approved:	Yeas	<u>7</u>
	Nays	<u>—</u>
	Absent:	<u>1</u>

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Attested to by:

Chelsea A Boary
Staff to the Parks and Recreation Commission