



SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION AGENDA

Thursday, February 15, 2024

6:30 p.m.

Coon Rapids City Center

Civic A

Call to Order

Roll Call

Adopt Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes

Old Business

2. Landscape Standards - Next Steps
3. Earth Month - Next Steps

New Business

Other Business

4. Staff Updates
5. Chair and Commissioner Comments

Adjourn



Sustainability Commission - Regular

1.

Meeting Date: 02/15/2024

SUBJECT: Approval of Minutes

Approve minutes from January 18 meeting.

Attachments

January 18 Minutes

COON RAPIDS SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR JANUARY 18, 2024

The January 18, 2024 meeting of the Sustainability Commission was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

Commission Members Present: Kate Anderson, Chris Backes, Kelsey Brodt, Peter Butler, Eve Commerford, Keygan McClellan, Lynne Riley, Josh Zeller

Commission Members Absent: Elzaki Ishag

Staff Present: Olivia Dorow Hovland

1. Adopt Agenda & Approve Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Brodt, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adopt agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Commissioner Brodt, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve minutes of the November 16, 2023 Sustainability Commission meeting, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

2. New Commissioners Oath of Office

Ms. Dorow Hovland administered the Oaths of Office to Commissioners Riley and Zeller.

3. Landscape Standards – Next Steps

Commissioner Riley asked if the Commission's landscape standards work relates to the new state law that says that cities cannot prohibit native planting areas and rain gardens.

Commissioner Brodt said that the city allows native plantings and rain gardens. The current initiative focuses on larger developers.

The Commission discussed next steps for compiling a report on their research. Ms. Dorow Hovland presented a suggested outline for the report. She stated that she will draft a report for the Commission to review and approve at their next meeting.

Commissioners suggested using "payback period" as a framing to make the case for native plants, as they reduce long term maintenance costs.

Commissioner Brodt suggested getting the city forester to weigh in on any tree preservation ordinances.

Commissioner McClellan noted that the forester plants non-native trees, and suggested a hierarchy of suggested trees that prioritizes native trees.

Commissioners noted that it is difficult to find wholesale price differences between native plants and non-native plants. Commissioner Backes suggested using an illustrative percent price markup.

4. 2024 Work Plan Mapping

Ms. Dorow Hovland presented a suggested month by month annual plan to the Commission.

Commissioner Riley suggested tabling at the Recycling Center when they have their special events. She noted that this would help get information out to a captive audience who is already engaged with sustainability.

Commissioner Brodt suggested talking to the Anoka Conservation District about the Earth Day clean-up event. Commissioner Riley suggested using grant money to buy t-shirts for the event.

Commissioner Brodt also suggested organizing a volunteer event for National Public Lands Day in the second half of the year.

Commissioner Riley asked if the group had any active partnerships with schools in the city, and suggested asking them to table with us, or inviting them to a Commission meeting. Commissioner Brodt noted that Anoka Ramsey Community College has a sustainability group.

Commissioner McClellan asked the city to promote the Audubon Society's lights out program during the spring migration season. The program runs from March 15 through May 31 and any buildings that want to participate can fill out a form online.

Commissioners suggested calling for Earth Month award nominees one more time in the newsletter.

5. Staff Updates

Ms. Dorow Hovland shared the following list of updates:

- The city received an Active Transportation Planning grant from MnDOT
- The Native Plant Sale will happen again this year
- The city is submitting its EECBG application in the next few months and will use the funds for LED lighting upgrades
- The city is sending out mailings to new homeowners to promote Home Energy Squad visits
- Ms. Dorow Hovland has been appointed to join the Metro CERTs steering committee
- The Recycling Center's new odds and ends trailer is open, as is the reuse room

6. Chair and Commissioner Comments

Motion by Commissioner Backes, seconded by Commissioner Riley to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 pm. The motion passed unanimously.



Sustainability Commission - Regular

2.

Meeting Date: 02/15/2024

Subject: Landscape Standards - Next Steps

From: Olivia Dorow Hovland, Sustainability Planner

INTRODUCTION

Staff attended the September 21 Commission meeting to present on the city's landscape standards. Commissioners had the opportunity to ask questions about how landscape standards are incorporated in the development process and what opportunities there may be to update the standards.

At the October, November, and January meetings, Commissioners compiled research and recommendations on the city's Landscape standards.

DISCUSSION

Commissioners have compiled the attached draft report on the city's landscape standards. The goal is for this report to be given to city staff and City Council. The report covers the following areas:

1. Coon Rapids' Current Standards
2. Other Cities' Standards
3. Recommendation 1: Update Coon Rapids' Landscape Standards Document
 1. Recommended Trees
 2. Recommended Shrubs
4. Recommendation 2: Consider a Tree Preservation Ordinance
5. Recommendation 3: Increase Communication on Landscape Best Practices

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Commissioners discuss changes and additions to the Landscape Standards Report.

Attachments

Current Landscape Standards

DRAFT Landscape Standards Report

City of Coon Rapids Landscape Standards

Reviewed by Planning Commission on: June 15, 2006

Adopted Administratively on: June 16, 2006

Landscape Requirements-Terms

Street Frontage - Areas located within 20 feet of a lot line abutting a public street.

Open Yard - The part of a lot not including the street frontage, buildings, or hard surfaced areas. A portion of the landscaping required in the open yard may be planted within the street frontage, but does not count toward street frontage planting requirements.

Bufferyard - Landscaped area between land uses of different intensities sharing a lot line.

Screening - Methods to used to obscure or block unsightly views.

Boulevard - The area of the public right-of-way between the curb and the sidewalk or front lot line of a property.

Landscape Plan

Landscape plans must reflect and enhance the proposed site plan and contain the following information:

- Location, size and common name of any existing plants proposed for preservation.
- Location, size, common name and quantity of all proposed plants.
- Location, size, common name and quantity of all proposed ground covers and flowers.
- Location, height and types of materials of any proposed berms, walls, fences or other screening.

Landscaping Objectives

Plants, ground covers and screening must reflect the following design objectives:

- Enhance the image and physical appearance of the development.
- Reflect and complement the context and scale of the development.
- Provide attractive and interesting open spaces and building accents.
- Complement adjacent land uses.
- Provide a variety of plants for four-season interest.

Plant Material Sizes

<i>Plant Type</i>	<i>Minimum Size When Installed</i>
Deciduous Shrub	24 inch height
Evergreen Shrub	spreading-3 gallon medium-5 gallon upright-4 feet
Ornamental Tree	1 ½ inch diameter measured 6 inches above ground
Over-Story/Shade Tree	2 ½ inch diameter measured 6 inches above ground
Evergreen Tree	6 foot height and 1 ½ inch diameter measured 6 inches above ground

All plant materials must meet standards set by the American Association of Nurserymen and be a variety suitable to the plant hardiness zone of Coon Rapids, Zone 4a. All dead or injured plant materials must be replaced at the end of the second growing season.

Location and Minimum Quantity of Plant Materials¹

<i>Zoning</i>	<i>Street Frontage</i>	<i>Open Yard</i>	<i>Parking Lot</i>	<i>Screening</i>
LDR-1 LDR-2 (single-family)	1 over-story tree located in the boulevard per housing unit per frontage Sod boulevard areas	-	-	-
MDR HDR	1 over-story tree per 40 ft. of frontage.	1 over-story tree per 3,000 sq. ft. of open area 1 ornamental tree per 1,500 sq. ft. of open area 1 evergreen tree per 3,000 sq. ft. of open area 1 deciduous or evergreen shrub per 500 sq. ft. of open area	3% of the parking area must contain landscaped islands with a minimum width of 5 ft. and underground irrigation. 2 over-story trees per parking lot island.	3 ft. sodded berm or 3 ft. high solid hedge between parking areas and street right-of-way and adjacent residential uses. Screening for outdoor activities reasonably annoying or endangering the value of surrounding properties. ²
O NC CC GC I RS Civic Use in Res. District	1 over-story tree per 40 ft. of frontage 1 deciduous and evergreen shrub per 5 ft. of frontage	1 over-story tree per 3,000 sq. ft. of open area 1 ornamental tree per 1,500 sq. ft. of open area 1 evergreen tree per 3,000 sq. ft. of open area 1 deciduous or evergreen shrub per 100 sq. ft. of open area	3% of the parking area must contain landscaped islands with a minimum width of 5 ft. and underground irrigation. 2 over-story trees per parking lot island.	3 ft. sodded berm or 3 ft. high solid hedge between parking areas and street right-of-way and adjacent residential uses. Screening for outdoor activities reasonably annoying or endangering the value of surrounding properties. ²

PORT RRO	Along Coon Rapids Blvd.: 1 over-story tree per 25 ft. of street frontage along Coon Rapids Blvd. The 200 square feet of ground area around the base of a monument sign shall be landscaped with shrubs and perennials. Along other streets: 1 over-story tree per 40 ft. of frontage 1 deciduous and evergreen shrub per 5 ft. of frontage	For single family, including single-family detached common-interest communities: 1 over-story tree located per housing unit per public and private street frontage 1 deciduous or evergreen shrub in the foundation area per 1 foot of building foundation facing Coon Rapids Blvd. For other development: 1 over-story tree per 3,000 sq. ft. of open area 1 ornamental tree per 1,500 sq. ft. of open area 1 evergreen tree per 3,000 sq. ft. of open area 1 deciduous or evergreen shrub per 250 sq. ft. of open area 1 deciduous or evergreen shrub in the foundation area per 1 foot of building foundation facing Coon Rapids Blvd.	3% of the parking area must contain landscaped islands with a minimum width of 5 ft. and underground irrigation. 2 over-story trees per parking lot island.	Parking, drive-throughs, pump islands, and loading and service areas must be screened by a 3 to 5 ft. high 50% opaque masonry wall, fence, berm, hedge or combination thereof (walls and fences should reflect Port Elements Plan) and a sufficient number of plants to achieve required opaqueness. Screening for outdoor activities reasonably annoying or endangering the value of surrounding properties.²
-------------	--	---	--	--

¹Quantities and types may be reduced or substituted for the preservation of desirable existing trees or unusual site characteristics. Reductions or substitutions may be made with the approval of the Community Development Director.

²Adequate screening includes one of the following: 6 foot tall, 80% opaque screening wall or fence constructed of wood, masonry or other durable material and compatible with the development and surrounding uses, 6 foot tall evergreen trees planted every 10 feet, 6 foot tall sodded berm with side slopes of less than 1.5 to 1, existing topography and/or vegetation or buildings providing equivalent screening as approved by the Planning Commission

Required Bufferyards

<i>Proposed Use</i>	<i>Bufferyard Width (May Include Building Setback Area)</i>	<i>Minimum Number of Landscape Units per 100 ft. of Adjacent Use Property Line*</i>
Moderate Density Residential	25 ft. adjacent to LDR-1 or LDR-2 use	40
High Density Residential	30 ft. adjacent to LDR-1 or LDR-2 use	80
Day care facility serving more than 17 persons	20 ft. adjacent to MDR or HDR use	80
Office	20 ft. adjacent to LDR-1, LDR-2, MDR, or HDR use	80
Commercial	30 ft. adjacent to LDR-1, LDR-2, MDR, or HDR use	120
Industrial	50 ft. adjacent to LDR-1, LDR-2, MDR, or HDR use	160

*overstory tree = 10 landscape units; evergreen (spruce only) or ornamental tree = 8 landscape units; shrub = 1 landscape unit; no single plant type may exceed 1/3 of the required landscape units

Typical Plant Materials

	<i>Common Name</i>
Evergreen trees	Pine - Austrian, Norway and Ponderosa Spruce - Black Hills and Norway
Ornamental trees	Amur Maple Hawthorn Flowering crabapple Flowering plum Japanese tree lilac Newport plum Shadblow Serviceberry
Over story trees	Bur Oak Hackberry Honeylocust Linden Maple
Shrubs - deciduous	
-low	Sumac, low growth fragrant Azalea Barberry Forsythia Honeysuckle, dwarf bush Potentilla Spirea Viburnum, dwarf
-medium	Dogwood Hydrangea Regents Serviceberry Glossy Black Chokeberry Spirea
-tall	Dogwood Burning Bush Honeysuckle Lilac Ninebark Sumac Viburnum
Shrubs - evergreen	
-spreading	Juniper
-medium	Juniper Yew
-upright	Arborvitae Juniper

Coon Rapids Landscape Standards

A report of the Coon Rapids Sustainability Commission

TO: Coon Rapids City Council; Coon Rapids Community Development Department

Coon Rapids' Current Standards

Coon Rapids' Landscape Standards document was last updated in 2006. The current document includes the following sections:

- Terms
- Landscape Plan
- Landscaping Objectives
- Plant Material Sizes
- Location and Minimum Quantity of Plant Materials
- Required Bufferyards
- Typical Plant Materials

Other Cities' Standards

The Sustainability Commission conducted a survey of other cities' landscape standards. They surveyed the following cities:

- Anoka
- Blaine
- Brooklyn Park
- Brooklyn Center
- Fridley
- Maple Grove

Recommendation 1: Update Coon Rapids' Landscape Standards Document

The Commission suggests updating the "Landscaping Objectives" section to emphasize resiliency through the installation of native, drought-tolerant, and pollinator-friendly plants.

The Commission suggests offering design flexibility to applicants if they go above and beyond landscape requirements through the installation of native planting areas.

The Commission suggests eliminating the requirement for irrigation if the site is planted with drought tolerant or native plants.

The Sustainability Commission consulted with the City Forester and drafted the following lists of recommended trees and shrubs.

Recommended Trees

- Swamp White Oak
- Bur Oak
- Elm, Accolade, triumph, and other disease resistant varieties

- Kentucky Coffeetree*
- Honeylocust
- Linden*
- Red Maple*
- Hackberry
- River Birch
- Ginkgo
- Ironwood*
- Aspen

*Pollinator friendly

Recommended Shrubs

- Black chokeberry
- Cranberry bush
- Hydrangea
- Potentilla
- Serviceberry
- Roses
- Dogwood
- Nannyberry
- Spireas
- Lilacs

Recommendation 2: Consider a Tree Preservation Ordinance

The Sustainability Commission found that many metro area cities have tree preservation ordinances, including Edina, Wayzata, Minnetonka, Maplewood, Shakopee, Lakeville, Golden Valley, Lake Elmo, and Greenwood. Tree preservation ordinances allow cities to protect and maintain the community trees and woodlands during development and construction, while also focusing on sustainability and resilience.

The Sustainability Commission asks Coon Rapids to adopt a tree preservation ordinance that establishes minimum standards for management of the urban tree canopy.

An acceptable tree preservation should, at minimum, include the following elements:

- A list of desirable trees for planting, in various size classes
- Guidelines for spacing of trees
- Best practices for siting in relation to utilities and distance from curb and sidewalk
- Guidelines and standards for how to retain or replant trees or wooded areas in development projects

Recommendation 3: Increase Communication on Landscape Best Practices

The Sustainability Commission asks that the city proactively communicate with developers on landscape best practices that involve planting drought-tolerant, native, and pollinator-friendly plants. They suggest creating a handout that can be used in talks with developers that outlines the city's preferred landscaping approach, and that points developers to additional resources that can help with species selection and sustainable maintenance.

Appendix A: Coon Rapids' Current Landscape Standards



Sustainability Commission - Regular

3.

Meeting Date: 02/15/2024

Subject: Earth Month - Next Steps

From: Olivia Dorow Hovland, Sustainability Planner

INTRODUCTION

Initiative #2 in the Sustainability Commission's 2024 work plan is Earth Month. The work plan includes the following deliverables:

1. Create awards for residents, businesses, and institutions undertaking sustainable actions
2. Work with City Council to do an Earth Month proclamation
3. Outline weekly communications topics
4. Organize a planting or clean-up event

DISCUSSION

An outline of the current status of each deliverable is below:

1. Create awards for residents, businesses, and institutions undertaking sustainable actions
 1. A call for awards was published in the winter Coon Rapids Connection
 2. A call for awards was published in the February Sustainability e-newsletter
 3. At their January meeting, the Sustainability Commission proposed giving awards in the following categories:
 1. Institutional
 2. Residential
 3. Business
 4. NEXT:
 1. Determine awardees in each category
 2. Communicate with awardees and invite them to the February 2 City Council meeting
 3. Create awards/certificates to hand out at the City Council meeting
 4. Determine other communications channels in which to publicize awardees
2. Work with City Council to do an Earth Month proclamation
3. Outline weekly communications topics
 1. Commissioners brainstormed the following list of communications topics:
 1. Birds/migration, cat education, cleaning bird feeders
 2. Water conservation, smart irrigation, watering restriction education
 3. Landscaping, native plant sale, tree sale
 2. NEXT:
 1. Determine fourth communication topic
 2. Determine specific messaging/action items to call out each week
4. Organize a planting or clean-up event
 1. The Commission chose April 27 as the day for the clean-up event
 2. The Parks Department is willing to support the event
 3. The Parks Department suggests Lions Coon Creek Park

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission work on the next action items for awards and weekly messaging.



Sustainability Commission - Regular

4.

Meeting Date: 02/15/2024

Subject: Staff Updates

From: Olivia Dorow Hovland, Sustainability Planner

INTRODUCTION

Staff will provide an update on sustainability-related work going on at the city.

DISCUSSION

NA

RECOMMENDATION

Receive the update.



Sustainability Commission - Regular

5.

Meeting Date: 02/15/2024

Subject: Chair and Commissioner Comments

From: Olivia Dorow Hovland, Sustainability Planner

INTRODUCTION

Commissioners are invited to share any new or relevant sustainability-related information with the group.

DISCUSSION

NA

RECOMMENDATION

Receive the comments.
