



CITY OF LOWELL  
ARBOR BOARD AGENDA  
MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2024 AT 8:00 A.M.

LOWELL CITY HALL  
301 E. MAIN STREET

1. CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL
2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)
  - March 11, 2024 Minutes
4. REVIEW FINANCIAL REPORTS
5. CITIZEN COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA
6. OLD BUSINESS
  - a. Planting Trees in MDOT Right of Way
  - b. Comprehensive Tree Plan 2024-2025
7. NEW BUSINESS
  - a.
8. ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER/PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT
9. BOARDMEMBER COMMENTS
10. ADJOURNMENT

**ARBOR BOARD OF LOWELL**

**MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2024**

**8:00 A.M.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL**

The Meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. and the roll was called.

Present: Eric Bartkus, Dave Moskowitz and Chair Reagan

Absent: Jim Salzwedel and Perry Beachum

Also Present: Susan Ullery and Rich LaBombard

2. **EXCUSE OF ABSENCES.**

IT WAS MOVED BY REAGAN and seconded by BARTKUS to excuse the absence of Boardmembers Salzwedel and Beachum.

YES: 3 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2 MOTION CARRIED.

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

IT WAS MOVED BY BARTKUS and seconded by MOSKOWITZ to approve the agenda as written.

YES: 3 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2 MOTION CARRIED.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES.**

IT WAS MOVED BY BARTKUS and seconded by MOSKOWITZ to approve the regular minutes of the February 12, 2024 meeting as corrected.

YES: 3 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2 MOTION CARRIED.

5. **REVIEW FINANCIAL REPORTS.**

Rich LaBombard noted the cash flow as well as stating the City Attorney is reviewing an agreement between the City of Lowell and Lowell Light and Power.

IT WAS MOVED BY BARTKUS and seconded by MOSKOWITZ to approve the financial report as written.

YES: 3 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2 MOTION CARRIED.

6. **CITIZEN COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.**

None.

7. **OLD BUSINESS.**

- a. **Arbor Day Discussion.** The board agreed to celebrate Arbor Day on Friday, April 26, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. A red maple is preferred and will be planted at the library in honor of Jim Hodges.

It was noted the plaque at Stoney Lakeside Park honoring Janet Hope is in bad shape and should be replaced. A question was raised on the cost of such plaques and is this something Lowell Granite Company can do.

- b. **Tree Donation.** It was noted a tree is going to be planted at the library in honor of Jim Hodges.
- c. **Tree Trimming on Main Street.** Rich LaBombard stated because the quote came in so much lower than anticipated, does the board still want to only trim 4 trees or trim as many that can be done, not exceeding \$2,000.

Bartkus wanted the board to think through the removal process and work towards shaping trees. Reagan agreed noting trees provide shade and act as a buffer along Main Street.

Reagan questioned the trees on the south side of Main Street that have not done very well. LaBombard noted these have been replaced and they are doing good.

IT WAS MOVED BY BARTKUS and seconded by MOSKOWITZ to shape 18 – 20 trees not exceeding \$2,000.

YES: 3. NO: 0. ABSENT: 2. MOTION CARRIED.

8. **NEW BUSINESS.**

- a. **Tree City USA Discussion.** Rich LaBombard explained a couple things were not completed last year to maintain this status and the City would not be applying again until next year.
- b. **Comprehensive Tree Plan.** The board reviewed the plan and made a few updates. The board discussed trees being planted in the ROW. LaBombard will check with MDOT.

9. **BOARDMEMBER COMMENTS.**

None

10. **ADJOURNMENT.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

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James E. Reagan, Chair

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Susan Ullery, Recording Secretary

## Arbor Board - Tree Fund

Updated 4-4-24

		Beginning Balance	Cash In	Cash Out	Ending Balance
1/1/2023	Beginning Balance	\$5,877.75			
3/29/2023	Transfer from the general fund		\$2,250.00		
4/30/2023	Light and Power transfer to arbor		\$2,750.00		
4/30/2023	Light and Power Bowes Road tree removal		\$1,000.00		
10/31/2023	Transfer from the general fund		\$500.00		
12/1/2023	Caledonia Rent-all - stump grinding			-\$1,030.00	
2/12/2024	Tree trimming in downtown - <b>proposed</b>			-\$2,000.00	
	Ending Balance		\$12,377.75	-\$3,030.00	<b>\$9,347.75</b>



## Arbor Board

**DATE:** April 8, 2024  
**TO:** Arbor Board  
**FROM:** Rich LaBombard  
Assistant City Manager / DPW Director  
**RE:** Planting Trees in MDOT Right of Way

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At the March Arbor Board meeting, members inquired about the ability to plant trees within the Michigan Department (MDOT) right-of-way. I reached out to a contact at MDOT and he provided information about the process.

“The city can apply for a permit to plant trees in highway right of way. There are tree species that are preferred and those that are prohibited. We no longer provide a list of these trees rather, we request that a plan be provided for the planting. Lansing provides an agreement for the City to execute defining the responsibilities of the permit.”

**Information Only**

## MEMORANDUM



**DATE:** April 8, 2024  
**TO:** Arbor Board  
**FROM:** Rich LaBombard  
Assistant City Manager / DPW Director  
**RE:** Comprehensive Tree Plan 2024-2025

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Annually, the Arbor Board updates the Comprehensive Tree Plan in preparation for presenting it to the Lowell City Council for the upcoming fiscal year. The current 2023-2024 plan was approved by the Arbor Board in May 2023. The Arbor Board and Department of Public Works personnel have provided input on the attached draft plan for 2024-2025.

Please review the plan and recommend changes. In particular, please review the Vision Statement and Goals are correct as well as the plan by zone. When the Arbor Board has approved the Comprehensive Tree Plan for 2024-2025, the Chair will present it to City Council for adoption.

**Sample Motion: I recommend the amended Comprehensive Tree Plan for 2024-2025 be presented to the Lowell City Council during the annual Arbor Board report.**



## City of Lowell Arbor Board Comprehensive Tree Plan 2024-2025

### Introduction

An urban forest is a valuable asset to any city. Trees improve the quality of our air and water, reduce our energy costs by providing shade, they reduce noise pollution, increase our property values, and make a neighborhood a more attractive and desirable place to live, work, and shop.

Trees have other benefits, too. Especially in an urban environment, tree canopies filter and absorb toxic gases including carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide. Trees have also been shown to be very effective at trapping fine dusts and toxic particles, the trapped dust being washed to the ground by rain.

If you look out your window and see a tree, do you know what kind of a tree it is? Do you know how healthy it is? Do you know how old it is? Does it matter?

Benefits of Community Trees: As architectural elements, trees create interest with their ever changing colors and textures. They act as unifiers, pulling together disparate elements in the urban landscape. They serve to soften and smooth (or de-emphasize) harsh angles and lines of individual buildings.

As articulators, trees help to clarify, delineate, and emphasize areas. Because of their natural beauty, trees help to humanize harsh city landscapes by encouraging people to stop, reflect, and relax. Trees modify the urban climate by slowing wind movement, reducing irritating noise levels, controlling glare and reflection from buildings, cooling city streets in summer, and purifying air as they filter out pollutants and add oxygen to the immediate environment.

Properly placed trees can reduce residential heating and cooling costs by an estimated 20 to 50 percent. Trees also have real estate value. According to the U.S. Forest Service, trees increase property values by 10 to 15 percent.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The general powers granted to the City of Lowell through its charter define the role of the City Council, the Arbor Board and the City Manager (and staff). Generally, the charter states the following under Section 3.1:

Providing for the control over all trees, shrubs and plants in the public streets, highways, parks, or other public places in the City, all dead and diseased trees on private property and trees on private property overhanging the street, sidewalk, or public places, including the removal thereof and assessing the cost thereof against the abutting property as a special assessment.

City Council: The City Council has overall responsibility for setting policy and vision and ensuring that activities of the Arbor Board and the City Manager relating to trees support the overall vision and mission. Specifically, the City Council:

- Consents to appointments to the Arbor Board as directed by the Mayor.
- Approves an annual plan submitted to the Council by the Arbor Board.
- Approves a budget that appropriates resources to implement the annual plan and for other tree-related activities.
- Sets fees and special assessment districts for removal and replacement of trees.

City Arbor Board: The Arbor Board was organized in 2007 in response to citizen concerns that action needed to be taken to offset the impact of trees being removed through infrastructure growth and improvements. At the time, the city was lacking an overall policy pertaining to the removal and replacement of trees within the community. With the creation of the Arbor Board there is greater interaction between citizens and city staff that results in the creation and implementation of a long-term plan.

The duties and responsibilities of the Lowell Arbor Board are defined in Chapter 23 of the Code of Ordinances for the City of Lowell. Specifically, the Arbor Board:

- Shall study, investigate, counsel, and develop, annually update and administer a written plan for the care preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal or disposition of trees



and shrubs in public parks, along public streets and roads, within public right-of-ways and within other public areas.

- At the request of the City Council, consider, investigate, make findings, and report and make recommendations on any matter or question within the scope of its work.
- Work with the City Manager and staff to administer the Comprehensive Tree Plan.

City Manager and Staff: The City Manager has specific duties outlined in the City Charter relating to trees and carries out these duties with the assistance of qualified staff. Specifically, the City Manager must:

- Provide technical assistance to the Arbor Board and ensure that the Comprehensive Tree Plan is implemented.
- Accept application from any person desiring to plant shade or ornamental trees in any public right-of-way and make a determination providing whether or not such trees may be planted.
- Authorize trimming of trees standing in or that may overhang any highways, streets, avenues, or which in any manner obstruct the public lighting of the city.
- Authorize the removal of an existing tree, shrub or other woody plant located in the street right-of-way, a city park, or other city-owned property.
- Authorize the planting and spacing of new trees in accordance with prescribed planting practices. See attached guidelines.
- Ensure that provisions of the City Code of Ordinances relating to noxious shrubs, weeds and grass are enforced.

## Comprehensive Tree Plan for the City of Lowell

Vision Statement: It is the intent of the Arbor Board to seek input from the community as to the direction and accomplishments to be pursued by the Arbor Board. This can be done through community meetings or on-line surveys utilizing the city website. One significant goal should be for the planting and the continuing maintenance of trees along West Main Street. The preferred plan is to locate trees within the highway right-of-way, placement on private property would be an acceptable alternative. Although the economy has been slow to recover Lowell is fortunate to have the financial support of our local foundations for our continued support.

Plan Area: For the purposes of defining the plan area the City of Lowell is divided into several geographical areas. The Flat River will define the East and West boundaries of the city and Main Street will define the northern and southern boundaries. Additionally, we can further define

Lowell by designating generic "Downtown Shopping Areas" and "West Main Shopping Areas." If any additional areas are to be defined, they will be outlined by utilizing common street names.

Goals: To maintain, at a minimum, and to improve on the Urban Forest Canopy within the city proper. To date, we have not been restrictive in our areas of involvement, placing trees where we found areas of need. This includes residential neighborhoods, city park properties and commercial districts. Recently, significant amounts of trees throughout the community have been devastated by insect infestation, thereby causing the loss of tree cover and inventory. A significant cost will be incurred in the coming year(s) and may curtail some of the planting progress. Fortunately, this is being offset by progress in the past few years.

To date, the Arbor Board has authorized the installation of 701 trees of various varieties throughout the community. Tree selections and tree planting has been accomplished through the use of selected contractors, under the direct supervision of the Department of Public Works.

This has been done with the financial participation from the City of Lowell and Lowell Light and Power, the LCTV Fund, and the Look Fund and the very generous support of the Lowell Area Community Fund. It will be our intent to continue to utilize funds from these various community sources on an annual basis.

## Comprehensive Tree Plan Areas by Zone – 2024-2025

### Zone 1 — North / East Side Lowell

1. Replacement of Cemetery trees that have died/fallen/been removed (5) - \$500 each
2. Removal of selected dead/dying trees from street parkways. - \$500-\$1000 each depending on size
3. Maintain and trim trees and remove along ROW and offer replacement trees to be planted on residential properties as budget permits.
4. Washington Street Reconstruction Project tree replacement (5) - \$500 each

### Zone 2 — South / East Side Lowell

1. Continued trimming of trees at Rogers Field/Moose Property. – City forces
2. Removal of selected dead/dying trees from street parkways. - \$500-\$1000 each depending on size
3. Maintain and trim trees and remove along ROW and offer replacement trees to be planted on residential properties as budget permits.

### Zone 3 — Downtown District and Riverwalk Park

1. Review existing trees in downtown area, develop plan for replacement when needed.
2. Trim trees in the downtown district - \$2000 lump sum to shape trees
3. Tree planting on property north of Library. - \$500 each
4. Trim trees around Library mechanical equipment – City forces
5. New. Municipal Driveway Trim/Removal?

### Zone 4 — West Main Shopping Area

1. Enter into agreement with Michigan Department of Transportation to plant trees in right-of-way along M-21.
2. LARA — Discuss tree planting plan to replace trees removed for trail extension.
3. "Small" cherry trees ?

### Zone 5 — North / West Side of Lowell.

1. Review trees in Creekside Park, develop plan for replacement when needed. - \$500 each
2. Maintain and trim trees and remove along right-of-way and offer replacement trees to be planted on residential properties as budget permits.

### Zone 6 — South / West Side of Lowell —

1. Review trees in Recreation Park and develop tree replacement plan that fits with future proposed improvements to Recreation Park.
2. Maintain and trim trees and remove along right-of-way and offer replacement trees to be planted on residential properties as budget permits.

Projected Budget/Implementation: It is anticipated that a budget of \$6,000.00 be committed for fiscal year 2024-2025 for removal and planting new trees with routine maintenance and trimming expenses coming from City departments.

Submitted by the Lowell Arbor Board

Jim Reagan, Chair

Eric Bartkus

Perry Beachum

David Moskowitz

Jim Salzwedel (Council Representative)

## Design Tips & Guidelines:

### Spacing:

Many neglect to space their trees properly which leads to overgrown, crowded conditions. This is detrimental to a trees nutrient intake and overall health.

1. For trees which mature greater than 60 feet, plant a minimum 20 feet from a building and 40 feet apart.
2. For tree which mature between 30 and 60 feet, plant a minimum 15 feet from a building and 35 feet apart.
3. For trees which mature less than 30 feet, plant a minimum 10 feet from a building and 15 feet apart.
4. Plant trees no less than 15 feet from a driveway, 10 feet from a utility pole, and 30 feet from an intersection.
5. Do not plant trees that grow over 20 feet tall under power lines.

### Location:

The municipality will be mindful of the necessity to provide utility services to residents through overhead and underground services. As such, trees planted within the public right-of-way shall be selected based on those conditions. Refer to right tree, right place tree planting standards for utilities.

### New Tree Maintenance:

It is recommended that new trees installed within the public right-of-way shall be given the best opportunity to thrive. As such, when weather conditions require, water bags shall be installed and routine watering will be provided to ensure new installations are thoroughly watered on a consistent basis. Mechanical devices such as water bags may be used for up to two years to provide the best opportunity for the new installation to properly establish.

### Selection:

To the best of its ability, the municipality shall select tree species that conform to right tree, right place standards AND when planted adjacent to roadways shall have the properties of being salt tolerant. Furthermore, non-fruit bearing trees are preferred to prevent unnecessary production of fruits that create slip hazards on public sidewalks and limit organic material (i.e. fruit, seed pods) from entering the municipal storm drain systems. See Michigan State University Extension salt tolerant trees hardy in Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

## Selection of salt tolerant trees

Bert Cregg<cregg@msu.edu>, [Michigan State University Extension](#), Horticulture and Forestry - May 19, 2006

One of the voids left by the loss of ashes, particularly green ash, to the emerald ash borer is the need for trees to plant along roadways subject to road salt deposition.

Editor's note: This article is from the archives of the [MSU \(Michigan State University\) Crop Advisory Team Alerts](#). Check the label of any pesticide referenced to ensure your use is included.

One of the voids left by the loss of ashes, particularly green ash, to the emerald ash borer is the need for trees to plant along roadways subject to road salt deposition. Sodium chloride in road salt can damage plants in a number of ways including direct foliar injury from salt spray, osmotic stress to roots and toxicity due to uptake of sodium and chloride. In dealing with road salt issues in the landscape, there are two principle approaches: protection and selection. Trees and shrubs can be protected from salt exposure during the winter by using physical barriers such as covering snowfence with burlap or landscape fabric. The other approach is to select trees that tolerate sodium chloride exposure.

A number of lists of salt tolerant trees and shrubs are available on the Internet and elsewhere. I have linked two of the more complete and well-researched lists at the end of this article. In reviewing lists of salt tolerant plants, remember that salt tolerance ranking can be developed from studies following aerial exposure or soil salt exposure, while others are based on observations from salt-exposed highways. Therefore, there can be inconsistencies from list to list. The table below includes some of the most common salt tolerant trees that are hardy in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

# Salt tolerant trees hardy in Michigan's Lower Peninsula

## Deciduous trees

Hedge maple  
Horsechestnut  
Catalpa  
Hackberry  
Ginkgo  
Honeylocust  
Kentucky coffeetree  
White oak  
Japanese tree lilac  
Japanese pagodatree  
Black walnut  
Black gum  
Sweetgum  
River birch  
Hickory

## Conifers

Colorado blue spruce  
Arborvitae  
Austrian pine  
Mugo pine  
Baldcypress  
Falsecypress  
Junipers  
Yews  
Larch  
0  
0  
0  
0  
0  
0

*Salt tolerant trees and shrubs* - Morton Arboretum

[www.mortonarb.org](http://www.mortonarb.org)

*Trees and shrubs that tolerate saline soils and salt spray drift* - Virginia Tech. **Note:** This guide includes some plants hardy only to zone 6 or 7 but most listed hardy to zone 5 or below.

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/trees/430-031/430-031.pdf#search='salt%20tolerant%20trees>

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