

From: Roy Russell
Sent: Saturday, February 23, 2019 6:38 PM
To: Woodbury, Catherine <cwoodbury@cambridgema.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Tree removal ordinance

Catherine,

Vice Mayor Jan Devereux suggested I forward these suggestions to you. Feel free to share them on the record with the consultants and members of the task force.

Best regards,

Roy Russell

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Roy Russell
Date: Sat, Feb 23, 2019 at 4:37 PM
Subject: Tree removal ordinance
To: <council@cambridgema.gov>

Honorable Councillors,

Rather than approving the proposed tree ordinance which adds cost and hassle even when a property owner is within their rights to cut down a tree the city should instead implement policies which encourage property owners to plant more trees and to protect their existing ones. You are thinking far too much in the direction of punishment and enforcement when you should instead be thinking in the direction of help and encouragement.

According to [this study](#) the most opportune area in which to plant trees in the city is on residential property. In fact, there is more residential space which could be planted with trees than all the ROW, commercial, industrial, institutional, and public space put together, if covered completely it is enough space for 100,000 trees, more than 5 times the amount of tree canopy lost between 2009 and 2014. Does this study consider that private off-street parking areas suitable for planting trees? Probably not, so if that area were included there would be even more space suitable for planting trees.

Several things that the city should do include:

Reward property owners with trees by allowing the the area inside the drip line (the critical root zone or root protection zone) of each tree to count more than just green space in the calculation of FAR. You can be sure that developers would be eager to plant more trees and maintain existing ones if they were rewarded in this way. A "tree zone appreciation factor" would need to be determined.

Encourage the conversion of private driveways to green space by implementing parking space maximums rather than the existing parking space minimums. Parking space minimums only encourage more personally owned vehicles and conversion (or maintenance) of asphalt for parking rather than green space. All of these non-permeable parking areas just add to the amount of runoff water which the city must handle.

Encourage property owners to convert blacktop and garages to green space by paying for the removal of the asphalt and removal of curb cuts. I know several property owners without cars who have big off-street paved parking spots which are quite suitable for planting trees. Changes to zoning as suggested above would not cost anything and asphalt removal incentive would incur minimal expense for the city.

Offer free parking in municipal garages for residents if the vehicle owner relinquishes their resident parking permit in perpetuity. This would discourage on-street parking which would free up more ROW for tree planting.

Supply trees at cost to any resident who wants to plant one.

Institute an annual contest for the finest trees in Cambridge. Multiple categories would assure multiple winners. Best maintained, most improved, most beautiful, etc. Make a big celebration out of the annual awards.

Publish which neighborhoods are "greenest." Publish which blocks have had the most trees added in the past year. People love contests.

Make planting trees a "thing" as [this project](#) has done.

etc.

Best regards,

Roy Russell