

## **City of Livingston, Tree Board Agenda**

A regular meeting of the City Tree Board has been scheduled for Thursday, March 17, 2022, 12-1 p.m. This meeting will be held in person in the Community Room in the City County Complex at 414 East Callendar Street. Social distancing and other COVID-19 precautions will be observed.

- **Approval of Minutes**
- **Old Business**
  - Report on progress of April 2021 city tree webpage recommendation.
- **New Business**
  - Discuss/approve/deny: Remaining officer elections.
  - Discuss/approve/deny: Recommendation for City to donate Arbor Day grant funds to Farm to School for Arbor Day planting event.
  - Discuss/approve/deny: Followup actions for 2022 budget recommendation including Park Street tree planning.
  - Discuss/approve/deny: Recommendation for partnership with MSU Extension for structural pruning of recently planted trees in parks.
- **Public Comments**
- **Board Comments**

LIVINGSTON TREE BOARD

REGULAR MEETING February 17, 2022, Zoom

MINUTES

**Attendance:** Marshall Swearingen, Lisa Harreld, Tom Shands, Maureen Lighthiser, Melissa Nootz, Laurel Desnick, Dan Baker

**Approval of Minutes:** Marshall made a motion to approve minutes from January 20, 2022. Laurel seconded. All in favor.

**Old Business:**

- **Arbor Day event planning** – Sarah suggested it would be helpful to have Farm to School be involved in caring for the trees if they were planted at Washington School. She will check with them and see if they would be willing to care for the trees in the summer. It would be a good fit to partner with Farm to School and involve the city for the tree planting event. PCEC would also possibly be willing to help with the event and involve the students at the school.

**New Business:**

- **Discuss/Approve/Deny – Recommendation for change to bylaws** – Current bylaws direct the secretary to make the agenda. The recommendation was made for the Chair to set the agenda. Laurel made a motion to change the bylaws for the Chair to set the agenda. Maureen seconded. All in favor.
- **Discuss/Approve/Deny – Membership renewal application of Lisa Harreld** – Marshall made a motion to recommend approval of Lisa Harreld’s membership application. Laurel seconded. All in favor.
- **Discuss/Approve/Deny – Lisa made a motion to recommend Marshall to be Chair of the committee for another year.** Laurel seconded. All in favor. Marshall made a motion to recommend Laurel as Vice Chair. Maureen seconded. All in favor. Laurel made a motion to table recommendation for Secretary. Marshall seconded. All in favor.
- **Discuss/Approve/Deny – background and goals for Park Street tree planting** – The city is in discussion about plans for Park Street improvement as a whole. Park Street is also in the strategic plans for the Tree Board. The Tree Board would like to be part of the planning. The Trails committee is involved as it is a main thoroughfare, heavily trafficked and a route to school. Trees would add aesthetic and traffic calming benefits to the corridor. The Tree Board would be an important partner, along with Active Transportation, Trails Committee, Zoning Board and other interested parties. The Tree

Board will be another important partner. Marshall will draft a letter to the city requesting a meeting among all the partners to discuss vision for Park Street as our main corridor.

○ **Board comments –**

- **Tom** – Tom reported on the PCEC fundraising and tree planting efforts. So far there are 60 applicants for free trees. The trees will come from Shields Valley Farm and Nursery. Americorp volunteers will be here beginning about May 9 to help with planting, mulching etc.
- **Sarah** – Park Electric will be offering an electrical safety workshop next week.
- **Tom** – the city is removing and replanting trees and he wonders how the decisions are being made and how to get more trees into the areas that don't have trees.
- **Dan Baker** – They have the city broken down into sections for determining where to plant trees.

Meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm. Next meeting March 17, 2022, via zoom or in person

**To:** City Manager  
**CC:** City Commission  
**From:** Tree Board  
**Date:** March 17, 2022



## **Recommendation for Arbor Day grant and event 2022**

The Tree Board is recommending that the City use the roughly \$750 in funds from the 2022 Arbor Day grant from Montana DNRC to supply trees and related supplies to Farm to School of Park County so that they can plant two or more trees at Washington School.

Farm to School has expressed interest in replacing a dead apple tree and filling a space in a row of ornamental flowering trees along 8th Street. We are recommending that City staff work with Farm to School to select the tree varieties -- for instance, a blight-resistant apple tree variety should be selected because the previous tree succumbed to blight. Ideally, Farm to School could procure the trees from their preferred nursery and have the nursery invoice the City.

The \$750 should be able to cover these two trees as well as related materials (stakes, wire, tree guards to protect base of trees from weed-eating, mulch, compost), and we recommend that any extra money be used for an additional tree for Farm to School.

The grant is intended by DNRC to be used in connection with an Arbor Day event, which Farm to School has volunteered to coordinate with Washington School. (Arbor Day this year is April 29.) We understand the event may include a class of kids helping Farm to School personnel with planting the trees.

We recommend the City donate City staff time for the following:

- Coordinate with Farm to School as necessary to ensure a nursery's delivery of the trees in time for the planned Arbor Day event.
- Coordinate with Farm to School as necessary to ensure they have stakes, wire, compost, mulch and any other materials to support the tree-planting.

The Farm to School contact for this is:

Megan Randall, garden manager  
megan@f2spc.org  
406-219-8586 office  
413-847-1041 cell

Thank you for the opportunity to serve Livingston,

Sarah Boyle  
Laurel Desnick - Vice Chair  
Lisa Harreld - Secretary  
Maureen Lighthiser  
Thomas Shands  
Marshall Swearingen - Chair

---

## Arbor Day

---

**Michael Kardoes** <mkardoes@livingstonmontana.org>  
To: Marshall Swearingen <marshall.swearingen@gmail.com>  
Cc: Melissa Nootz <mnootz@livingstonmontana.org>, Shannon Holmes <sholmes@livingstonmontana.org>

Thu, Mar 10, 2022 at 11:17 AM

Marshall,

Attached are my recommended changes. Having F2SPC select the trees and accessories and invoice the City is acceptable – they just need to make sure to stick to the \$750 budget.

Mike

Michael Kardoes

City Manager

Livingston, MT 59047

P: 823-6000

[citymanager@livingstonmontana.org](mailto:citymanager@livingstonmontana.org)

-



[Quoted text hidden]

---

### 2 attachments



2022\_03\_17\_Arbor\_Day\_letter.docx  
3K



2022\_03\_17\_Arbor\_Day\_letter.docx  
138K



**To:** City Commission  
**CC:** City Manager  
**From:** Tree Board  
**Date:** December 16, 2021

## **Tree Board Priorities and FY 2022 Budget Recommendation**

Dear Commissioners,

As the City of Livingston begins formulating its FY 2022 budget, we would like to express our board's priorities for supporting Livingston's public trees, which provide numerous benefits to our community. For context, we are also including the strategic plan our board adopted in October to guide our discussions and recommendations.

### **Priority #1: Support new tree establishment in boulevards.**

Public boulevard trees in many parts of Livingston are dominated by an aging population of ash trees that are susceptible to emerald ash borer and early mortality due to lack of maintenance. According to the tree inventory conducted in 2014, there are more than 700 vacant planting sites in boulevards. While the City is putting considerable grant-funded effort into replacing ash trees, we believe it would be beneficial to support property owners in planting and caring for new boulevard trees. Many cities in Montana, including small towns like Dillon, offer cost-share programs and outreach materials that incentivize tree planting and help ensure that young trees survive. Currently the City provides no such advertised support for property owners.

This directly relates to Growth Policy Strategy 4.1.2.4: Consider setting goals and establishing programs to increase tree cover as a way to reduce the heat island effect and mitigate high temperatures exacerbated by climate change.

For the coming budget cycle, we recommend piloting a boulevard planting program and setting an annual goal of planting, say, 20 new trees. We are aware of multiple community partners who are interested in supporting new tree planting with donations and/or volunteer labor, which could keep costs low. This could also be funded by a Program Development grant from Montana DNRC.

With past boulevard tree replacement efforts we have observed a significant level of mortality among new trees, likely due to lack of watering by property owners. With any major new public tree planting we recommend funding a part-time seasonal watering position and/or educational materials for property owners to protect the significant investment in new trees.

### **Priority #2: Develop updated tree management plan in support of tree district(s).**

The inventory of Livingston's public trees hasn't been updated since it was conducted by a consultant in 2014. The inventory supported the consultant's 2015 tree management plan, which specifically stated that it was providing guidance for a 5-year period that has now expired. We believe the tree inventory and management plan should be updated. With the recent revision of the tree ordinance clarifying that property owners are responsible for maintaining boulevard trees, a

new management plan could outline specific cost scenarios for municipal tree management that could be funded with one or more tree maintenance districts. This would give property owners the option of paying for the City to assume responsibility for boulevard trees. For many or most homeowners this could mean paying a smaller amount annually for "tree insurance" rather than an occasional much larger expense for hazardous tree pruning or removal.

This supports Growth Policy Objective 4.3.5: Support and improve the health and diversity of trees and other flora throughout Livingston; and more specifically Strategy 4.3.5.1: Ensure trees on City lands are well maintained and healthy.

We would like to see a new tree management plan consider and integrate our board's recommendation earlier this year to create a plan for emerald ash borer. This could be funded in part by a Program Development grant or similar funding from Montana DNRC.

### **Priority #3: Plantings along Park Street/Highway 89.**

The City of Livingston is bisected by Park Street, which runs concurrently with Montana Highway 89. The property along this route is owned and managed by a variety of stakeholders, including Montana Department of Transportation, Montana Rail Link, multiple business owners, and the City of Livingston.

As our main thoroughfare, Park Street is heavily travelled by commercial and private vehicle traffic. It is also used for bike and pedestrian travel, although these uses are inhibited by a lack of infrastructure. The increased traffic is due to overall growth in our local population, sprawl, increased reliance on vehicles for transportation, and increased tourism.

Park Street is a street that is often congested, noisy, and windblown. A lack of sidewalks, curbs or plantings makes it hard to identify the edge of the roadway. Areas that could be landscaped are neglected, especially the railroad side of the highway.

A comprehensive landscape plan for this route could identify potential pockets for landscaping and hardscaping to improve safety, slow traffic, reduce noise and dust, and improve routes for pedestrians and bicycles, including routes for schools. This could also beautify and improve access into the downtown area for community members and visitors. We recognize this project is more complex to implement and may be difficult to incorporate as a budget item. Because this project is broader in scope, and will require collaboration, organization and commitment of funds in order to become a reality, we raise it now so initial planning can begin.

This relates to Growth Policy Objective 2.1.1: Establish community gateways to indicate entrances into Livingston and celebrate its character; also Strategy 4.3.5.3: Consider adding requirements for trees into Gateway overlay zoning.

As always, we welcome your questions, suggestions or other feedback so that we can best support your efforts. Thank you for the opportunity to serve Livingston.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Boyle  
Laurel Desnick  
Lisa Harreld  
Maureen Lighthiser  
Thomas Shands  
Marshall Swearingen - Chair

# Livingston Tree Board

## Strategic Plan for 2021-2026

*Revised and approved by board 10/21/2021.*

### **Mission**

The purpose of the Livingston Tree Board is to advise the City Commission on matters related to trees within the city. We advocate on behalf of the public for policies, funding, outreach and partnerships that promote, protect and enhance trees for public benefit.

### **Vision**

We envision a biologically diverse, healthy tree landscape that provides beauty, reduces the urban heat island effect, promotes walkability, reduces pollution and energy costs, slows traffic and improves water quality.

### **Priorities (2-year goals)**

Priority #1: Recommend programs, outreach and funding for establishing new trees in the 700+ vacant boulevard planting sites identified in the 2014 tree inventory.

Priority #2: Develop recommendation for tree planting at city entrances and along Park Street.

Priority #3: Recommend tree district(s) to support maintenance and planting of trees in parks and boulevards, including for emerald ash borer mitigation.

### **Long-Term Goals and Strategies**

Goal #1: Advocate for establishing new trees, prioritizing where they are needed most, including to offset likely effects of emerald ash borer and maintain tree cover..

- Collaborate with Livingston Parks and Trails Committee and city staff to recommend trees at existing and new parks and trails.
- Recommend programs for establishing new trees in the 700+ vacant boulevard planting sites identified in the 2014 tree inventory.
- Identify priorities for trees at city entrances, collaborate with stakeholders and identify potential funding sources.
- Explore partnerships with school district to promote tree planting on school grounds.
- Promote tree planting during new development and re-development through recommendations regarding zoning, building standards and other policies.
- Consider equity of tree benefits throughout Livingston in all recommendations.
- Explore community plantings and partnerships such as community orchard, demonstration grove showcasing recommended species, etc.

Goal #2: Advocate for municipal tree management that enhances tree benefits and addresses tree hazard risk.

- Recommend city budget and staffing for carrying out municipal tree management and achieve Tree Board recommendations.
- Recommend new municipal tree management plan as advised by 2015 consultant report.



- Review city tree ordinance and recommend changes, including according to updated tree management plan and tree maintenance districts.
- Monitor advance of emerald ash borer and recommend management strategies according to best science, public input, long-term preservation of tree benefits, and city resources.

Goal #3: Expand the city's tree management capacity and efficacy through grants, city funding mechanisms, partnerships, philanthropy, and public outreach.

- Recommend grants from Montana DNRC, Montana Urban and Community Forestry Association and others.
- Recommend partnerships and volunteer programs for increasing city's capacity with tree growing, planting, watering and basic maintenance.
- Recommend options for tree maintenance district(s).
- Explore interest from philanthropic and nonprofit organizations for funding tree goals.
- Develop and recommend outreach (including social media, city website, signs in parks, etc) to inform the public of tree benefits, best practices for tree planting and maintenance, emerald ash borer, and other public tree issues.

**Accomplished in 2021:**

- Recommended creation of emerald ash borer plan. Provided extensive background information on EAB problem, cost scenarios for city, and treatment/replacement options.
- Recommended partnership with MSU Extension Master Gardener Class for structural pruning of young trees in parks.
- Revised list of suitable trees for boulevard planting.
- Developed brochure with information about suitable species and best practices for boulevard planting.
- Recommended new content for city tree webpage, coinciding with city's switch to new website. (Recommended with revised species list and planting guide.)
- Recommended increased city tree budget for 2021-2022 to leverage grant opportunities.

**To:** City Manager  
**CC:** City Commission  
**From:** Tree Board  
**Date:** March 17, 2022



## **Recommendation for partnership with MSU Extension**

The Tree Board is recommending that the City partner with MSU Extension's Master Gardener program to facilitate volunteer pruning of small trees in parks. We have observed that recently planted trees in several parks are in need of structural pruning, which helps establish a healthy tree structure that can reduce more costly pruning and hazard mitigation in the future.

Josh Bilboa, local MSU Extension horticulture specialist, teaches a Master Gardener class that typically wraps up in early March. Participants in the class learn about structural pruning of young trees, among other things, and then complete 20 hours of volunteer service to receive a Master Gardener certificate. Josh indicated he may be able to do a workshop in a park in which he would guide participants in practicing pruning of young trees. After that, volunteers could potentially be assigned to different parks for pruning.

We recommend G Street splash park and Mars Park as places to consider starting with this partnership.

This is in line with Livingston's 2015 Tree Management Plan, which states:

It is recommended that the City make contact with and re-establish a partnership with the University's Extension Service Agents. This renewed partnership could be beneficial in terms of a once popular but abandoned volunteer group called the 'Green Thumb Program.' In the past this group of volunteers who had practical experience in the care of new trees would perform duties such as trimming/ pruning/ mulching/ weeding trees. As mentioned previously, these services are greatly needed to improve the health and condition of numerous small trees.

We believe this could develop into a beneficial partnership with potential for reducing long-term tree maintenance costs for the City.

Contact:  
joshua.bilboa@montana.edu  
(406) 222-4156

Thank you for the opportunity to serve Livingston,

Sarah Boyle  
Laurel Desnick  
Lisa Harreld  
Maureen Lighthiser  
Thomas Shands  
Marshall Swearingen