

**AGENDA  
CITY OF MAPLEWOOD  
ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**Monday, June 21, 2021  
7:00 p.m.**

**Held Remotely Via Conference Call  
Dial 1-888-788-0099  
Meeting ID: 954 4256 2233  
Passcode: 633369**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes:
  - a. May 17, 2021
5. New Business
  - a. Tree Program Update
6. Unfinished Business
  - a. Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Outreach
7. Visitor Presentations
8. Commissioner Presentations
9. Staff Presentations (oral reports only)
  - a. Climate Adaptation Plan – May 24, 2021 City Council Approval
  - b. Waterfest – June 19-27, 2021
  - c. Tree Care and Shrub Pruning Basics – June 24
  - d. Fourth of July Fire Works – July 4
  - e. In Person ENR Commission Meetings Resume - July 19, 2021
  - f. 2021 EPEAT Purchaser Award – Virtual Ceremony July 28
  - g. National Night Out – August 3
10. Adjourn

**MINUTES  
CITY OF MAPLEWOOD  
ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION  
MONDAY, MAY 17, 2021  
7:00 P.M.**

**(THIS MEETING WAS HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM AND CONFERENCE CALL)**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

A meeting of the Environmental and Natural Resources Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Dosser.

**2. ROLL CALL**

|                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Rebecca Bryan, Commissioner    | Present       |
| Keith Buttleman, Commissioner  | <b>Absent</b> |
| Kayla Dosser, Vice Chairperson | Present       |
| Mollie Miller, Commissioner    | Present       |
| Ann Palzer, Chairperson        | <b>Absent</b> |
| Ted Redmond, Commissioner      | Present       |

**Staff Present**

Shann Finwall, Environmental Planner

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Redmond moved to approve the agenda.

Seconded by Commissioner Miller.

Ayes – All

The motion passed.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Redmond moved to approve the April 19, 2021, Environmental and Natural Resources Commission meeting minutes as submitted.

Seconded by Commissioner Miller.

Ayes – All

The motion passed.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. New Member Orientation**

Environmental Planner Finwall introduced Rebecca Bryan, the new ENR Commission member, and conducted a new member orientation.

**6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**a. Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area and Slope Ordinances**

Environmental Planner Finwall led a discussion on the MRCCA and Slope Ordinances with the Commission. Commissioners had an opportunity to provide feedback on the

amendments to the Slope Ordinance. The next step in the process is outreach to the residents that live in the MRCCA area. Environmental Planner Finwall will bring the proposed outreach material to the June ENR Commission meeting for review.

**7. VISITOR PRESENTATIONS**

None.

**8. COMMISSIONER PRESENTATIONS**

None.

**9. STAFF PRESENTATIONS**

**a. Climate Adaptation Plan Update**

Environmental Planner Finwall gave an update on the progress of the Climate Adaptation Plan, indicating that the plan will go before the City Council for approval on May 24, 2021.

**b. Waterfest – June 19 to June 27**

Environmental Planner Finwall discussed the Waterfest event. The Commission has hosted an educational booth at the event for many years. This year the Commission should focus on a Climate Adaptation implementation strategy. One suggestion is doing education and outreach on invasive species. Additionally, Waterfest is in need of volunteers to assist with the event. Commissioners Miller and Bryan offered to assist with the educational booth.

**c. In Person ENR Commission Meetings Resume in July 2021**

Environmental Planner Finwall let the Commission know that in-person meetings will begin again in July. The first in-person meeting for the ENR Commission will be July 19, 2021.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Redmond made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Bryan.

Ayes – All

The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned by Vice Chairperson Dosser at 7:54 p.m.

**ENVIRONMENTAL & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

Meeting Date June 21, 2021

**REPORT TO:** Environmental and Natural Resources Commission

**REPORT FROM:** Shann Finwall, AICP, Environmental Planner

**PRESENTER:** Shann Finwall, AICP, Environmental Planner

**AGENDA ITEM:** Tree Program Update

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**Action Requested:** ☐ Motion ☒ Discussion ☐ Public Hearing

**Form of Action:** ☐ Resolution ☐ Ordinance ☐ Contract/Agreement ☐ Proclamation

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**Policy Issue:**

Maplewood maintains its status as a Tree City USA city. To qualify, a city must meet four standards established by The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters including maintaining a community forestry program.

**Recommended Action:**

Be prepared to discuss the City's tree program and offer comments and feedback on the draft tree policy.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Is There a Fiscal Impact? ☒ No ☐ Yes, the true or estimated cost is \$0

Financing source(s): ☐ Adopted Budget ☐ Budget Modification ☐ New Revenue Source  
☐ Use of Reserves ☐ Other: n/a

**Strategic Plan Relevance:**

☐ Financial Sustainability ☐ Integrated Communication ☐ Targeted Redevelopment  
☒ Operational Effectiveness ☐ Community Inclusiveness ☒ Infrastructure & Asset Mgmt.

Urban trees are an important part of the City's infrastructure because they serve as effective air filters, removing harmful pollutants in the air, offer shade, and take in water that helps with stormwater management. They also store carbon which helps mitigate the impacts of climate change in and around urban areas.

## **Background:**

### **Tree City USA**

Maplewood maintains its status as a Tree City USA city. To qualify, a city must meet four standards established by The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters including:

1. A tree board or department.
2. A tree care ordinance.
3. A community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita.
4. An Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation.

The Environmental and Natural Resources Commission serves as the tree board for the City.

### **Tree Program**

Maplewood manages trees on public property and regulates tree removal, replacement, and diseased trees on private property. The City's tree program involves several departments and programs. An outline of the Maplewood Tree Program is attached for your review (Attachment 1).

### **Living Streets Policy**

The Living Streets Policy was adopted in 2013. The policy guides future road improvement projects towards improved biking and walking, enhanced safety and security of streets, calm traffic, livable neighborhoods, improved stormwater quality, enhanced urban forest, reduced life cycle costs, and improved neighborhood aesthetics.

### **Tree Ordinance**

The Maplewood tree ordinance was amended in 2016 to align with the City's Living Streets policy. The ordinance establishes minimum standards for tree preservation and mitigation of environmental impacts resulting from tree removal, diseased tree regulations, tree contractor requirements, and outlines a process for adopting tree standards. A link to the City's tree ordinance is found below.

### **Tree Standards**

Tree standards were also developed in 2016 to help achieve the goals of the tree ordinance and Living Streets Policy. The standards highlight requirements for tree preservation, removal, replacement, and shade tree pest management. The standards do not replace or supersede City ordinances. A link to the City's tree standards is found below.

### **Tree Policy**

The final policy relating to trees is a tree policy that will guide tree maintenance, planting, trimming of trees on public property; and maintenance and safety matters involved with healthy and diseased trees on private property. This is also an action item in the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan - Natural Resources Chapter to develop and implement a Maplewood Tree Policy to cover boulevard trees, park trees, woodlots and forests. A tree policy was drafted in 2016 but was never implemented by the City (Attachment 2). The policy is outdated and needs updating, but will serve

as a starting point for review. The Environmental and Natural Resources Commission will continue the review of that policy in 2021.

### **Natural Resources Coordinator**

The City's natural resources coordinator position develops and implements programs and policies that ensure Maplewood's long-term environmental and natural resources health, including the City's urban forest. Carole Gernes is the City's new natural resources coordinator, beginning in that position last fall. Carole was previously a naturalist at the Maplewood Nature Center. Carole will be present during the June 21 ENR Commission meeting to discuss the City's tree program.

### **Attachments:**

1. Maplewood Tree Program
2. Draft Tree Policy

### **Links:**

1. Living Streets Policy: <https://maplewoodmn.gov/1166/Living-Streets-Policy>
2. Tree Ordinance: <https://maplewoodmn.gov/1076/Tree-Ordinances>
3. Tree Standards: <https://maplewoodmn.gov/1076/Tree-Ordinances>

## **MAPLEWOOD URBAN FOREST PROGRAM**

### **Updated Draft 6-15-21**

#### **1. Tree Planting Program**

- a) Plant trees on City boulevards (one to one replacement goal for boulevard ash trees removed).
- b) Plant trees in City public spaces, preserves and parks.
- c) Provide tree purchase support for residents.
- d) Provide technical support for planting with planting lists, planting demonstrations, workshops, and informational links on City website.

#### **2. Tree Preservation**

- a) Consult with Streets Department on road construction tree issues as requested.
- b) Implement Tree Preservation Ordinance for development.
- c) Review plans for development following guidelines in Tree Preservation Ordinance.
- d) Monitor development for Tree Preservation Ordinance compliance.
- e) Administer Tree Mitigation Fund for trees removed for development.

#### **3. Education Program**

- a) Provide seminars and workshops for adults on tree topics.
- b) Give training on shade tree disease recognition for preserve monitors and general public.
- c) Write and publish educational material.
- d) Maintain City Tree website.
- e) Develop brochures for the Maplewood Tree Program.

#### **4. Shade Tree Disease Management**

- a) Respond to citizen calls regarding tree issues with phone consultation or site visit and maintain record of calls.
- b) Inform Parks and Streets of hazard and diseased trees to remove.
- c) Contract with a private tree service for trimming, removal or other tree care that Parks and Streets are not able to do.
- d) Inform County or State when they are responsible for hazard or diseased trees.
- e) Follow-through on non-compliance of condemned trees—phone call, letter, contract-out work, etc.
- f) Explore options for financial assistance for tree owners doing root disruption, condemned tree removal, tree planting.
- g) Monitor City Tree Mitigation Fund.
- h) Review list of Tree Services licensed in City. Require no oak work in April-June unless work involves damaged tree.
- i) Review City ordinances for thoroughness: storage of diseased firewood, cutting down trees on private or City land.
- j) Monitor for tree diseases or infestations.
  - 1) Identify and mark diseased trees.
  - 2) Send written notification of nuisance and removal information.
  - 3) Check for compliance on removal.
  - 4) Check for compliance with firewood storage.
  - 5) Keep inventory of diseased trees and track removal.

- 6) Map DED trees.
- 7) Provide educational support to owners.

**5. Buckthorn Management Program**

- a) Respond to citizen calls and Buckthorn Hotline.
- b) Maintain files on requests for help, and groups and individuals available for buckthorn removals.
- c) Manage Neighborhood Curbside Pick-up program.
- d) Coordinate Buckthorn Pull program in selected City Parks, or on City-owned land. Target park and/or neighborhood.
- e) Hire contractor to remove buckthorn at a City park or other public land.
- f) Give buckthorn removal demonstration classes in parks.
- g) Update and distribute Informational material—brochure, flyer, website, City News.
- h) Provide herbicide coupons.
- i) Map and document program activities and write annual report.

**6. Heritage Tree Program**

- a) Maintain file on City heritage trees.
- b) Monitor Great Tree Search trees and add new search for new trees if one of the record trees dies.
- c) Post Heritage Tree list on City website.

**7. Manage Forests and Woodlands**

- a) As part of Comprehensive Plan, GreenStep Cities, and Climate Adaptation process, map Maplewood's woodlands, forests, plantations, grasslands.
- b) Follow-up on Tree Disease on Neighborhood Preserves.
- c) Manage Nature Center forest.
- d) Abate Oak Wilt from public and private oak groves.

**8. Manage Boulevard Trees**

- a) Develop policy and guidelines for boulevard trees – species, location, planting, care.
- b) Distribute guidelines for building near oaks and other trees at risk.

**9. Tree City USA Program Requirements**

- a) Tree board or department (Environmental and Natural Resources Commission)
- b) Tree care ordinance.
- c) Community forestry budget of at least \$2 per capita.
- d) An Arbor Day proclamation and observance.





## **Maplewood Tree Policy**

**Drafted in 2016, Minor Updates June 17, 2021**

### **Introduction**

The City of Maplewood is committed to the value of its urban forest and is in a unique position to serve as steward for trees found on both public and private property. The City has an established Tree Ordinance and Tree Standards to balance the need to preserve and enhance the functioning of the urban forest with the need to protect the safety and welfare of its citizens. To this end the City oversees care of trees on public property and administers actions concerning public safety or public nuisance for trees on private property.

Maplewood's Tree Policy is executed and supervised by the City of Maplewood as a general guide to tree maintenance, planting, trimming of trees on public property; and maintenance and safety concerns involved with healthy and diseased trees on private property. Consideration of factors such as location, safety, and budget will determine the level of maintenance performed on City trees. Tree preservation, removal, and replacement in response to new development, wooded lots or land use alterations are covered by the City's tree preservation ordinance and standards.

### **Trees on Public Property**

#### **Maintenance**

The City relies on property owners to do basic general maintenance of trees within the public right-of-way, commonly referred to as the boulevard. This maintenance may include watering, raking tree debris/leaves and collecting small branches. When a tree is removed from the right-of-way adjacent to a City road, the City will have the stump removed and place dirt in the cavity. Property owners are responsible for seeding or sodding the disturbed area along with any watering necessary to establish the grass. Replanting of a tree within the boulevard by the City will take place if the location and budget allow.

#### **Planting of Boulevard Trees**

Maplewood's tree ordinance and Living Streets Policy permits the planting of trees within the public right-of-way of City streets to enhance the urban forest.

Trees within the public right-of way of county roads or state highways are maintained by Ramsey County or the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT).

### **City Tree Trimming or Removal**

Tree trimming or removal on public property (including City-owned land, boulevards, and public right-of-way) will be assessed by the City and will use the following indicators as a guideline.

- ▽ Whether the tree presents a public hazard or is condemned.
- ▽ If the tree is dead or diseased.
- ▽ If the tree is infected with an invasive shade tree disease and declared a nuisance.
- ▽ If the tree inhibits normal maintenance operations.

Overhanging branches that obstruct visibility or disrupt accessibility along City streets will be trimmed on an as-needed basis. Broken branches or storm-damaged trees along streets or in City parks will be trimmed as time and resources allow. Branches that fall from boulevard trees into the City street will be removed by the City.

The City will maintain a list of trees in need of non-critical trimming, performing that work in the winter or early spring as time and resources allow. The need for cutting or trimming trees within the City's neighborhood preserves will be determined by the City as required for natural resource management.

### **Trees and Utility Lines**

The City of Maplewood will not perform any tree work near utility lines on either public or private property. Any calls regarding trees on or near power lines will be directed to Xcel Energy or the appropriate utility. Xcel Energy and other utility companies have specially trained crews that follow specific safety codes and standards to trim branches and trees away from power lines.

### **Utility Lines**

Homeowners, businesses, and organizations should not attempt to trim trees from overhead utility lines without first contacting the appropriate utility (power, phone or cable) company. When planning to prune near utility lines arrange for the utility to temporarily take down the line until the required trim work is completed and then restore the service afterward. Property owners should notify Gopher State One Call (811) before any digging project to safely locate any underground utilities.

### **Trees on Private Property**

#### **Maintenance**

All maintenance for trees on private property is the responsibility of the property owner. Private property includes public easement areas, however; the City, public utilities, or their designee have the right to work

within a designated easement area. Existing trees within the easement area may be removed by the City, public utility, or their designee if it is necessary to perform required maintenance or construction.

Removal and disposal of tree debris from private property is the responsibility of the property owner. Ramsey County's yard waste sites accept tree debris. Sweeping or blowing tree leaves into public streets is in violation of City code.

Property owners choosing to hire a tree contractor should ask if their contractor is City licensed. The City license ensures that tree contractors have current insurance and have a trained tree specialist on staff.

### **Property Lines**

The City does not conduct surveys to determine property lines between private properties. It is the property owner's responsibility to know the location of their property boundaries. Disputes between neighbors about tree issues are considered a civil issue; the City does not have legal authority to settle a dispute between property owners. The City would encourage neighbors to amicably communicate and resolve tree concerns before conflicts arise, especially in cases of borderline trees. Falling leaves, seeds, acorns or debris that do not cause serious damage are expected to be cleared up by each property owner regardless of where it originated.

### **Planning – Tree Preservation**

The City's tree preservation ordinance outlines requirements for removal and replacement of significant trees in response to removal of trees on a wooded lot, land alteration, or development. Alterations to a wooded lot requires review by the City to ensure tree preservation and/or replacement. The City requires a tree plan for the removal of trees on a wooded lot, land alteration, or development to ensure plans comply with the City's Tree Standards and Tree Ordinance.

### **Safety Concerns**

The City will determine the level of maintenance or services needed when trees create a public safety concern or hazard on private property. Tree issues most likely to elicit a City response are listed below.

- ▽ When they obstruct street signs or overgrowth blocks the normal flow of vehicle or pedestrian traffic.
- ▽ When they obstruct sight triangles on a corner in a case where two City streets intersect (see attached diagrams).
- ▽ When normal City operations are inhibited.
- ▽ When a tree is deemed a public hazard or a public nuisance in accordance with the Tree Ordinance and becomes a threat to other trees or public safety.
- ▽ When development neglects or fails to follow a required tree preservation plan or does not notify the City when altering a woodlot.

On Private property, tree maintenance is the responsibility of the property owner. However, the City may take action regarding a tree on private property if it threatens public safety or has been deemed a nuisance. City services may be utilized in cases where privately owned trees become a public nuisance (epidemic shade tree pests for example) or are deemed a public hazard and condemned. For transgressions of public safety on private property, property owners will be sent written notification describing the violation, the required mitigation steps to be completed by the property owner, the timetable for the property owner to complete these steps, and a schedule for abatement, per City code, if mitigation steps are not completed. Non-compliant owners of condemned trees will set in motion the process for abatement and the City may assess the property for cost of the removal.

City Tree Ordinance allows for the City Tree Inspector or his/her designee to enter private property at any reasonable time to check on the condition of a tree and to inspect for epidemic shade tree diseases that may have potential to become a public nuisance in trees, stumps and wood piles.

### **Sight Lines and Intersections**

Maplewood's City Code regulates the planting or placement of visual obstructions at a property's corner formed by intersecting streets. A clear line of sight is required across the corner of a property where two streets intersect (see sight triangle diagram). Owners with property on a street intersection are responsible for keeping this sight triangle free of visual obstructions.

Trees that obstruct sight lines for cars or pedestrians and raise a public safety concern will be inspected by City staff. Property owners whose property is determined to have a sight line or safety hazard issue will be notified in writing per requirements of the City code with directions on how to mitigate the obstruction. In emergency cases, the trimming is done immediately.

### **Shade Tree Disease Program**

The current shade tree diseases or pests that have been declared a public nuisance because of their threat to the environment and public safety are Oak Wilt and Emerald Ash Borer. The City's certified tree inspector identifies trees that are affected. By authority granted in Minnesota Statute, the City tree inspector has the right to enter private property to check a tree. Property owners will be notified in writing regarding abatement procedures for public hazard and condemned or nuisance trees found on private property.

### **Diseased Firewood**

Infected or infested firewood can spread tree disease to other wooded areas. Therefore, the Maplewood City ordinance prohibits storage of diseased firewood. Ramsey County has quarantined the removal of firewood outside the County without a permit issued by the Department of Natural Resources. There are several yard disposal sites located throughout the County that will accept diseased wood from City residents.

## **Tree Contractors**

Contractors providing tree services in Maplewood must be City licensed per City ordinance before performing any tree work. The City will confirm that the contractor is insured and that they have either a certified arborist on staff or an employee holding a post-secondary degree in urban forestry, arboriculture, or equivalent area of study on their permit application.

## **Other City Tree Programs**

### **Living Streets Program**

The general nature of the Living Streets Program is to employ design standards that have proved successful in creating livable neighborhoods when rebuilding City streets. Designs for new City street projects will include planting of new boulevard trees. These trees will help to infuse a sustainable “green” approach to our neighborhoods and to increase the aesthetic character of our streets. Any new boulevard trees planted with the living streets designs will fall into the same maintenance plan as trees on other City boulevards.

### **Tree Sale Program**

Hundreds of trees in Maplewood die each year due to development, pests and diseases, environmental conditions, age, and other factors. Many of these trees are on private property. To help ensure the long-term health and sustainability of our urban forest, the City subsidizes the cost of trees through an annual tree sale. Each spring Maplewood partners with a local non-profit, so City residents can purchase trees for a discount.

### **Member of Tree City USA**

Maplewood is a participant in Tree City USA, a nationwide movement working with the Arbor Day Foundation to help communities manage and expand their urban trees.

### **Big Tree Registry**

Maplewood developed a registry of the largest native trees in the City. That registry is shared on the City’s website.

## ENVIRONMENTAL & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date June 21, 2021

**REPORT TO:** Environmental and Natural Resources Commission

**REPORT FROM:** Shann Finwall, AICP, Environmental Planner

**PRESENTER:** Shann Finwall, AICP, Environmental Planner

**AGENDA ITEM:** Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Outreach

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**Action Requested:** ☐ Motion ☒ Discussion ☐ Public Hearing

**Form of Action:** ☐ Resolution ☐ Ordinance ☐ Contract/Agreement ☐ Proclamation

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### **Policy Issue:**

Communities in the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) are required to adopt new zoning standards consistent with the 2017 MRCCA Rules and local comprehensive plans.

### **Recommended Action:**

Review the MRCCA outreach materials and offer comments and feedback.

### **Fiscal Impact:**

Is There a Fiscal Impact? ☒ No ☐ Yes, the true or estimated cost is \$0

Financing source(s): ☐ Adopted Budget ☐ Budget Modification ☐ New Revenue Source  
☐ Use of Reserves ☐ Other: n/a

### **Strategic Plan Relevance:**

☐ Financial Sustainability ☐ Integrated Communication ☐ Targeted Redevelopment  
☒ Operational Effectiveness ☐ Community Inclusiveness ☐ Infrastructure & Asset Mgmt.

Updating the City's MRCCA and Slope ordinances will ensure compliance with state rules and consistency with the City's comprehensive plan.

### **Background:**

#### **Maplewood MRCCA**

Maplewood's MRCCA is located on the southwest corner of the City, south of Carver Avenue and west of Interstate 494. It consists of 145 acres, of which more than 75 percent is guided as open space (Ramsey County Open Space and Maplewood Fish Creek Neighborhood Preserve) and the remaining is made up of rural/low-density housing (35 single-family homes located along Carver Avenue and Dorland Road). Refer to the MRCCA Natural Features map attached.

## **Zoning Standards**

The State adopted new MRCCA Rules on January 4, 2017. The Rules require local governments to update their MRCCA plans and ordinances for consistency within one year after notification by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The City has until October 1, 2021, to update its ordinance. During the MRCCA ordinance amendments, the City should also review the Slope ordinance to ensure consistency in regulating developments next to steep slopes throughout Maplewood.

## **Maplewood MRCCA Ordinance Review Timeline**

To ensure the City meets the October 2021 deadline for amending its ordinances, staff is proposing the following timeline:

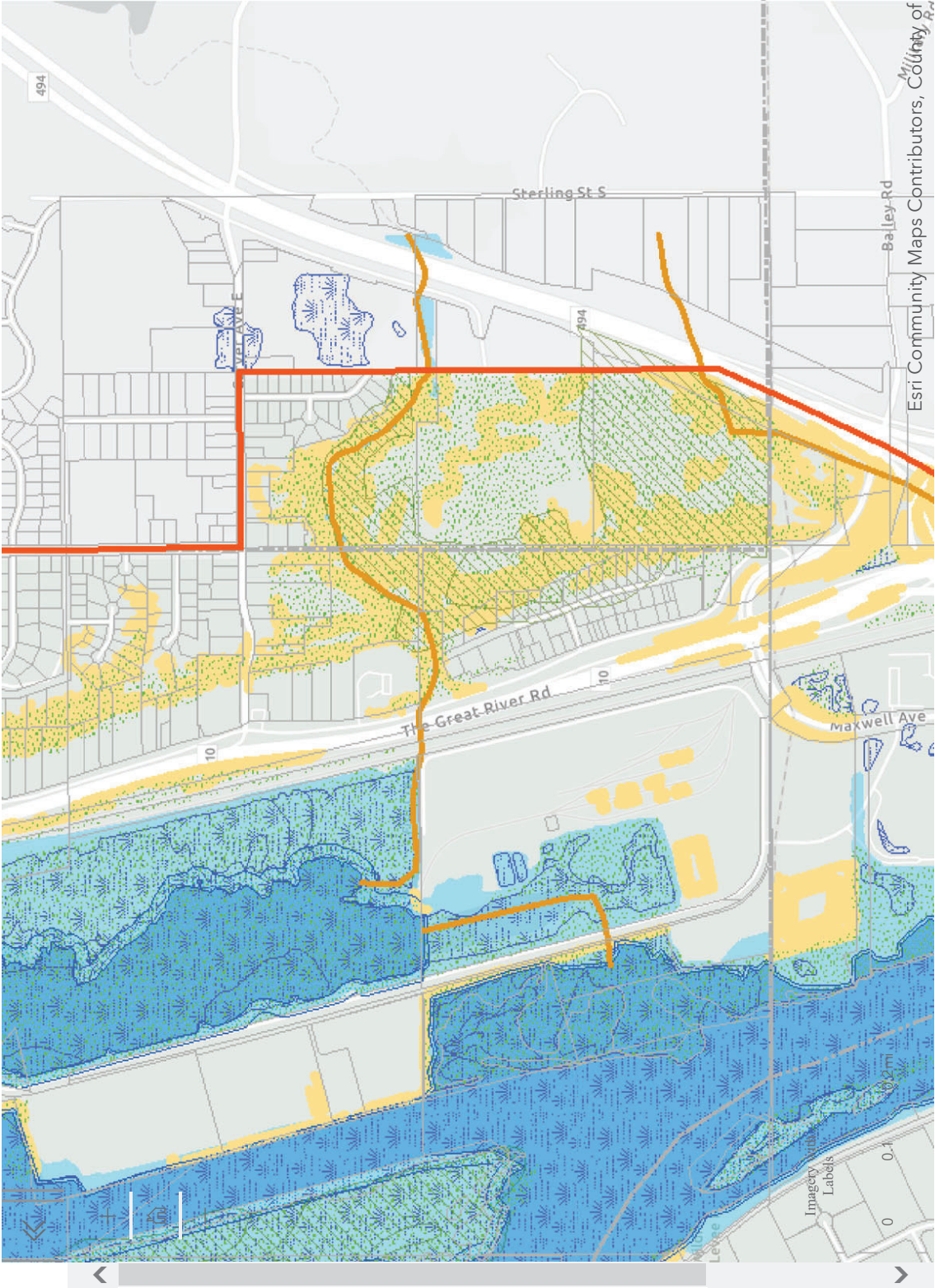
- October 2020 - DNR Notification. The City has one year to update its MRCCA ordinance.
- October to December 2020 - Draft MRCCA ordinance. The Environmental and Natural Resources (ENR) Commission amended the MRCCA ordinance based on the new Rules.
- January to May 2021 - Draft Slope ordinance. The ENR Commission will review and amend the Slope ordinance to ensure consistency with the new Rules.
- June 2021 – Staff and DNR review of ordinances.
- July to August 2021 - Education and Outreach. The City will notify the residents living in the MRCCA District and the public of the rule change and requirement to update the MRCCA and Slope ordinances. The City will take in comments and feedback on the amendments.
- August 2021 –
  - ENR Commission review of public comment and feedback and finalize draft MRCCA and Slope ordinances.
  - Planning Commission review of ordinance.
  - City Council review of ordinance via workshop or FYI.
  - DNR review of ordinance
- September 2021 –
  - ENR Commission final review and recommendation.
  - Planning Commission public hearing.
  - City Council review of amended ordinances.
- October 2021 – MRCCA and Slope ordinances submitted to DNR for final approval.

## **MRCCA and Slope Ordinance Outreach**

In May, the ENR Commission finalized its review of the MRCCA and Slope ordinances and proposed amendments to be consistent with the new rules. In order to ensure public review and comment of the proposed amendments, the City will publish an MRCCA article in the July edition of Maplewood Living and send a direct mailing with additional information to the 35 homes within the MRCCA. The draft article and direct mailing are attached for review by the Commission.

## **Attachments:**

1. Maplewood MRCCA Natural Features Map
2. Maplewood Review Article
3. Direct Mailing



Legend

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area

- MRCCA Boundary
- City and Township Boundaries
- Parcels
- MRCCA Primary Conservation Areas
- Natural Drainage Routes
- Shore Impact Zones
- Native Plant Communities
- Significant Existing Vegetative Stands
- Bluff Impact Zone
- Wetlands



## **New Rules in the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area**

The Mississippi River is one of the most famous rivers in the world. It is the defining feature for the many communities along its banks. The Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) is located along a 72-mile stretch of the river. Though the river corridor has been extensively developed, many intact and remnant cultural, natural and scenic areas remain, including bluffs, islands, floodplains, wetlands, creeks, historic resources, and native plants and animals.

While Maplewood is not located on the banks of the river, there are 145 acres of land located within the MRCCA on the southwest corner of the City, south of Carver Avenue and west of Interstate 494. More than 75 percent of the land is open space and includes the Maplewood Fish Creek Neighborhood Preserve, with the remaining land made up of rural/low-density housing (35 single-family homes located along Carver Avenue, Dorland Road, and Overlook Circle). The state rules and local MRCCA plans and zoning regulations have been in place since 1973 to protect the natural resources in the corridor.

The Department of Natural Resources adopted new MRCCA rules in 2017. The rules require local governments to update their MRCCA plans and ordinances for consistency with the rules. Maplewood updated its MRCCA plan in 2019 with the adoption of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The next step is an update to the City's MRCCA ordinance. The Environmental and Natural Resources Commission has been reviewing the ordinance and proposing amendments that will be consistent with the new rules. If you are interested in learning more about the City's MRCCA, visit [www.maplewoodmn.gov/MRCCA](http://www.maplewoodmn.gov/MRCCA) or contact Shann Finwall, Environmental Planner, at (651) 249-2304 or [shann.finwall@maplewoodmn.gov](mailto:shann.finwall@maplewoodmn.gov).

# Maplewood



Date

Resident Address

Re: Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Amendments

Dear Resident,

Did you know that your home is located within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA)? The MRCCA is located along a 72-mile stretch of the river and is important because it contains many significant natural and cultural resources, including scenic views, water, navigational capabilities, geology and soils, vegetation, minerals, flora and fauna, cultural and historic resources and land and water-based recreational resources. The state rules and local MRCCA plans and zoning regulations have been in place since 1973 to protect the natural resources in the corridor.

While Maplewood is not located on the banks of the river, there are 145 acres of land located within the MRCCA on the southwest corner of the City, south of Carver Avenue and west of Interstate 494. More than 75 percent of the land is open space and includes the Maplewood Fish Creek Neighborhood Preserve. The remaining land is made up of rural/low-density housing where 35 single-family homes are located, including yours, along Carver Avenue, Dorland Road, and Overlook Circle.

The Department of Natural Resources adopted new MRCCA rules in 2017. The rules require local governments to update their MRCCA plans and ordinances for consistency with the rules. Maplewood updated its MRCCA plan in 2019 with the adoption of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The next step is an update to the City's MRCCA ordinance. The Environmental and Natural Resources Commission has been reviewing the ordinance and proposing amendments that will be consistent with the new rules.

The City would like to hear from you on the proposed amendments. Find enclosed a summary of the ordinance changes that may affect your property, as well as the draft amended ordinance. Please review and submit your comments by August 6, 2021. The Environmental and Natural Resources Commission will be reviewing those comments during their August 16 meeting. The final ordinance amendments are scheduled to go to the Planning Commission and City Council in September. Questions and comments should be directed to Shann Finwall, Environmental Planner, at (651) 249-2304 or [shann.finwall@maplewoodmn.gov](mailto:shann.finwall@maplewoodmn.gov). To learn more about the City's MRCCA, visit [www.maplewoodmn.gov/MRCCA](http://www.maplewoodmn.gov/MRCCA).

Sincerely,

Shann Finwall  
Environmental Planner

Enclosures:

1. MRCCA Draft Ordinance Amendment Summary
2. MRCCA Draft Ordinance Amendment