

Sustainable Boulevard Plan

In May 2006, DPW-Operations Division released a *2006 Boulevard Plan* for the City of Milwaukee that set forth the findings and recommendations of a working group. A Sustainable Boulevard Plan capital project was included in the 2007 Proposed Budget that represented an effort to implement some, but not all, of the recommendations contained in the *2006 Boulevard Plan*. The Common Council deleted the plan in its review of the 2007 Budget.

A Sustainable Boulevard Plan capital project was again included in the 2008 Proposed Budget after the department held a series of public meetings to solicit public reaction to the plan. While a small minority objected to the plan, the majority were in favor in order to make the boulevards financially and environmentally more sustainable. The Plan was adopted as part of the 2008 Budget.

The Plan's key elements include:

1. Boulevards types are classified as "landmark," "gateway" and "connecting" depending on their location, historical significance, visibility and traffic volumes.
2. Flower beds are to be removed from "connecting" boulevards and shade and ornamental trees planted on these "connecting" street segments as a means of reducing maintenance costs while growing the City's tree canopy to improve air-quality and reduce storm water runoff. However, many recently renovated flowerbeds are to remain on connecting boulevards.
3. Enhancing planting beds at key street intersections ("landmark" and "gateway" locations) through the use of a mix of annuals, perennials, shrubs, native plants, decorative edging and automated irrigation systems.
4. Introducing rain garden elements into boulevard segments.

The Sustainable Boulevard Plan is being implemented over a 3-year period. Because the Sustainable Boulevard Plan will eliminate manual activation of boulevard irrigation systems and reduce the number of flower beds in the boulevard system, the number of seasonal laborers needed to maintain the boulevards will decrease significantly following implementation of the Plan. The Forestry Section anticipates the elimination of 20 Urban Forestry Laborer (Seasonal) positions once the Plan is fully implemented. This will translate into a \$180,000-\$200,000 annual savings in seasonal staff costs. Thus, DPW projects that the \$1.65 million investment in the Sustainable Boulevard Plan will be fully recovered in 9 to 10 years.

The Sustainable Boulevard Plan has been implemented on a citywide basis, rather than in geographical phases. In other words, in each of the 3 years of Plan

implementation, each of Forestry's 3 districts (North, Central and South) are re-ordering and converting about one-third of its boulevard segments. In 2009, 860 of the new boulevard trees will be planted in addition to the changes in flower beds.

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