

MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDTABLE

COUNTY/CITY BUILDING

555 SOUTH 10TH STREET

Room 303

Monday, May 11, 2026, 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Notes

- **Welcome and Introductions**

Bethany	College View	Clinton	East Campus	Everett	Hawley
Kyle McLaughlin	Tracy Corr; Pete Smith	Kellie Haszard	Tut Kailech	Kathy Linsenmeyer; Midge Pace	Carol Mathias
Indian Village	Irvingdale	Meadowlane	Near South	Witherbee	Woods Park
Rosina Paolini; Diane Walkowiak	Roy Helm	Kay Wenzel	John Heineman	Fred Freytag	Randy Smith

- Other Attendees: Councilmember Bennie Shobe, Jon Carlson (Mayors Office)

- **Mayor Gaylor Baird Comments**

- [Health Department open house 1-3 pm this Friday May 15th](#): booths to learn about their services, refreshments will be available, see their recent renovations like updated clinic, exam rooms, waiting rooms, additional meeting rooms for larger groups, employee work areas maximized, updated technology, HVAC, plumbing and electrical upgrades using ARPA funds (3131 O Street)
- Earth Day celebrations took place including 52 trees planted by Arbor Day in Highlands in the park and at the elementary school, Tierra Park trees were planted, [celebrated progress in the Climate Action Plan](#), the first in Nebraska. Progress has been tracked to show against baseline conditions in greenhouse gas emissions we have seen a 30% reductions. Some key highlights on progress include the South of Downtown Rental Rehab Program that keeps the units affordable to tenants while reducing their energy costs and emissions; heat pump incentive program, lead by Councilmember Shobe, implemented in partnership by LES and the Urban Development Team; future ready workforce initiative to create pathways to

high demand, high wage careers (HVAC tech, electricians, auto techs) and expect to help 75 individuals

- Recently purchased first LPD electric cruisers that are pursuit rated (1 tested, a second purchased) demonstrating how to enhance public safety and be good stewards of the environment. Added benefit of reduced maintenance downtime and fuel costs

- **NSF Tree Grant Programs and Tree Maintenance (Kendall Weyers and Justin Evertson, Nebraska Forest Service) –**

- See attached PPT for more details
- Neighborhoods can get involved by speaking out for trees with various planning processes, report dangerous trees through UpLNK, plant on private property or in boulevard with city approval
- [City has a Boulevard Tree Program providing financial assistance to replant boulevard trees](#)
- [Trees for Nebraska Towns grant](#) (contact Kendall at kweyers2@unl.edu for more details at June 1-July 31 program is open for applications)
- [Lower Platte South NRD has a Community Forestry Cost-share program and Landscape tree cost-share](#)

- **Announcements**

- The Annual Action Plan is on our city website at www.lincoln.ne.gov/urban and is open for public comment until May 19.
- May 28th Witherbee Neighborhood meeting is also covering trees
- Hawley Hamlet using a new TIF District to rehab the older historic homes this summer in its pilot year of the program
- Meadowlane Garage Sales and Indian Village June 5-6
- Northeast Radial Bike Tour May 31st from 9 am to 12 pm starting at UPCO Park
- Construction Olympics by NWL fundraising event to celebrate trades helping build homes
- Would like to see tree how to videos developed (selecting a tree, planting properly, etc.)

- **Future Agenda Ideas**

- DIY Home Gardening by Tim Rinne

- **Adjourned at 6:36 pm**

**Next Mayor's Neighborhood Roundtable Meeting
June 8, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
City County Building Room 303**

Neighborhood Tree Planting Questionnaire

Please return to: Pete Smith (peterd.smith3@gmail.com; 402-580-8138)

Phone: 402-580-8138

Neighborhood Association: _____

Do you have an association Tree Committee or leader?

Yes

No

Contact Name: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Projects: Please provide any info you have for planting projects conducted within the past five years:


Trees/% Survival: _____

Maintenance: who provides watering and basic care for the first year? After the first year?

Tree Species: what efforts have you made to diversify street tree plantings?

Investment: how much money does your association budget/spend each year on tree planting/care activities? What is your source of funding?

Other Comments: _____



Challenges and solutions
And how you can be involved

Lincoln's Community Forest

Questions we hope to answer:

- Why does the community forest even matter?
- What are the challenges?
- What are realistic goals?
- How can neighborhoods contribute?



Benefits of the Community Forest

- Obvious:
 - Comfort from cooling shade
 - Energy savings from shade
 - Beauty
 - Wildlife habitat
 - Food
- Less obvious (but proven)
 - Cleaner air
 - Cleaner water
 - Noise reduction
 - Rainwater capture
 - Carbon capture
 - Community identity & vitality
 - Safer, calmer streets
 - Increased property values
 - Improved human health, both physical and psychological

Trees = Broad Reach

When discussing other city issues, keep in mind that trees have a positive impact on most of them.

- Climate resilience
- Energy use
- Transportation safety and comfort
- Public health and wellbeing
- Crime and public safety
- Stormwater management
- Pollution control
- Water quality and quantity
- Property values
- Economic health
- Budgets

Community Forest

Return on investment (ROI)

- Consensus from a wide range of sources show trees PAY FOR THEMSELVES, often many times over
- Difficult to put a precise \$ figure on all benefits, do full accounting, various bottom lines
- Estimates range from \$1.35 to \$6.69 return in benefits for every \$1 invested
- Trees are a rare infrastructure element that increases in value over time

Public AND Private

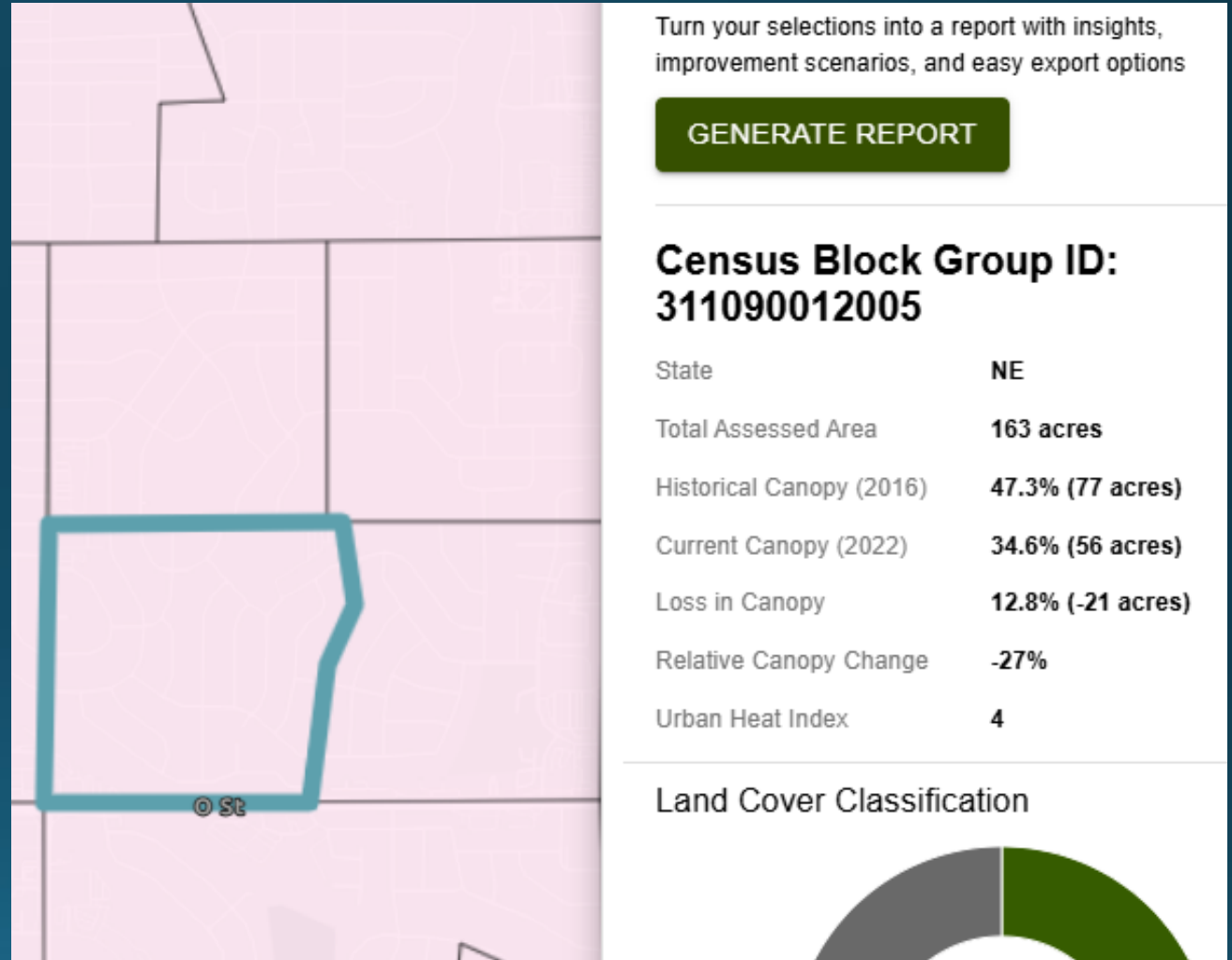
- All trees in the community, both on public property and private property, contribute.
- Current policies and planning, plus inventory data, only address public property trees.
- Rough estimate is that ratio of private to public is 4:1.



Where are we?

Canopy loss

- Canopy cover is declining in most neighborhoods, some dramatically, and has been for decades.
- Treecanopy.us shows data by census tract of canopy change between 2016 and 2022.
- Example image shows data from a census tract in the Meadowlane neighborhood. It experienced 27% percent canopy loss in just those 6 years.
- 14% loss in established neighborhoods (Cornhusker-Hwy 2, 84th-downtown).



Where are we?

Increasing threats

- Growing threats from new or expanding pests (EAB, pine wilt, etc.)
- Increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather (wind, hail, drought, flooding, temperatures)
- Herbicides
- Lawn-care impacts
- Human neglect and apathy
- More “nomadic” culture
- Other cultural changes



Where are we?

Limited species diversity

- Just a few species make up most of our tree population.
- Far too high a percentage of ash, pin oak, hybrid maple, and callery pear.
- Made worse when single species is used for entire street or neighborhood.






Search Google Maps

← 615 W Broadview Dr

Lincoln, Nebraska

 Google Street View

Jun 2019

[See latest](#)



Search Google Maps



618 W Broadview Dr

Lincoln, Nebraska



Google Street View

Oct 2022

[See latest date](#)



Where are we? Limited age diversity

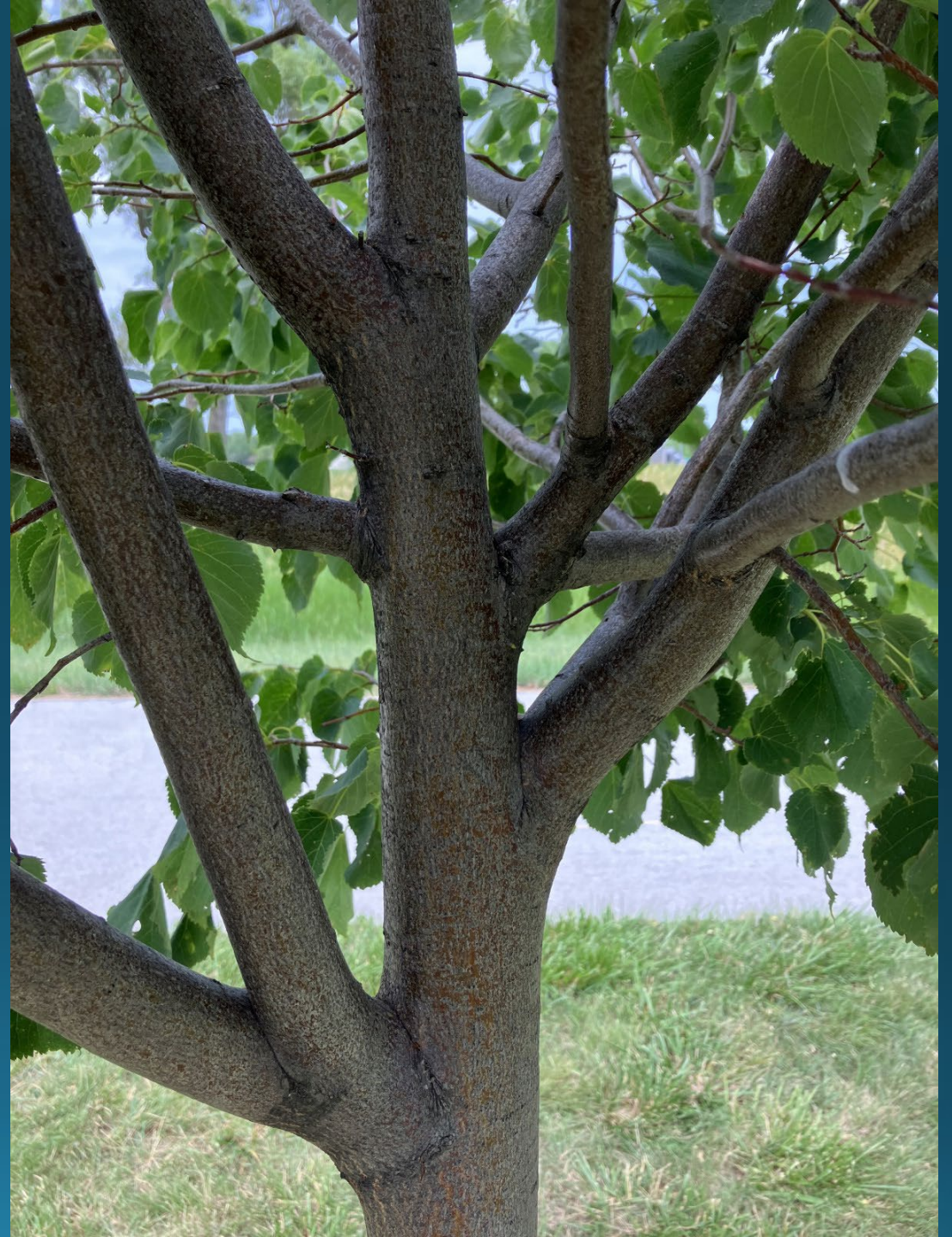
- Out of balance with far too many older trees and not enough younger ones.
- Planting has not kept up with removals, gaps have not been filled.



Where are we?

Deferred maintenance

- Short term savings lead to long term costs...and we are paying now.
- Trees that aren't structurally pruned are more prone to:
 - damage in storms
 - premature failure/removal
 - loss of benefits
 - higher liability
 - damage to public image





Where are we?

Lack of funds, data, unified vision, strategy

- Community forestry has a long history of budget challenges...budget cuts or budgets that don't keep up with growing city, growing challenges
- New, expanding data is typically slow to be acknowledged, factored in
- Many stakeholders, various goals sometimes pulling in different directions



Prioritization challenges





Priority...
turf over trees



University of Minnesota
Faculty and staff
Student cards are temporarily more secure
When reprinted, contact your ID
card provider for more information
© 2013 Dural

Where are we? Policy hurdles

- Ordinances and policies often get in the way of good community forestry (unintended consequences)





Which item blocks the view of an oncoming car?

Policy might not be written to reflect reality.



Various departments may lack a unified vision of valuing and managing trees.



Gaps
between
goals,
limited
awareness,
limited
enforcement



Where would we like to be?

Realistic goals

- Increased planting with age and species diversity, more than 1:1
- Better pruning strategy and commitment, especially for young trees
- A dynamic community forest master plan developed from broad stakeholder input (everyone on the same page)
- Updated policies that make sense, are applicable, and free of unintended consequences
- Broad public awareness, appreciation, and participation
- Support and celebration of grass roots efforts

How do we get there?

Neighborhoods and individuals are needed on the team and can contribute in a wide range of ways.

- Add your voice. Be the Lorax and speak for the trees.
- In this Roundtable, the Comp Plan, the Climate Action Plan, the Community Forest Master Plan, Community Forestry Advisory Board, street projects, etc.



No experience required!

- Mark Wilson, 15 year volunteer, here leading a St. Paul's demonstration planting event in Everett neighborhood.
- Has assisted on numerous plantings and helped coordinate multiple projects in his Near South neighborhood.
- Currently nearing the end of his second term on Community Forestry Advisory Board



Report, monitor risk



Plant on your own property or in your ROW

Remember that private property trees exceed public property trees (in number and impact), so what you do—what all of us do—matters.



City of Lincoln Street Tree Voucher Program

- For planting in city right-of-way by adjacent property owner
- Up to \$300 toward cost of tree and planting
- Location and species must be approved by Forestry staff
- For details, contact Forestry at 402-441-7847



Encourage others, raise awareness

- Neighbors
- Friends
- Family
- Your place of worship
- Neighborhood school
- Neighborhood business



Take good care of existing trees

- Older trees generate more benefits than younger trees.
- Healthier trees generate more benefits than unhealthy ones.
- So, it's a big help to keep trees healthy and extend their lives, maximizing their benefits and our return on investment.



Organize or get involved in a neighborhood planting or tree care event

A team effort can be very rewarding and have big impact.

Plus, working together is a great way to build community.



Trees for Nebraska Towns (TNT)

- Trees to be planted on public space and/or provide clear public benefit
- Neighborhood groups are eligible
- Focus on smaller projects, 10 or fewer trees, but more can be requested with more detailed application
- Trees provided and delivered, emphasis on diversity and underused species
- Guidance and resources provided: planting guides, press template, etc.
- Project must have outreach/education component (planting demonstration, school project, social/traditional media, signage, etc.)
- Details and application available <https://plantnebraska.org/what-we-do/project-funding/trees-for-nebraska-towns.html>

Typical TNT Project

St. Paul's project in Everett Neighborhood

- Applied for and received 10 trees
- Raised funds for an additional 30+ trees
- Coordinated/partnered with Everett NA, City of Lincoln, and Great Plains Nursery
- Recruited volunteers for planting AND long-term watering
- Held a planting day event with planting demonstration, activities, refreshments
- Received pruning training and assistance from NFS



Lower Platte South NRD

- Community Forestry Cost-share
 - Neighborhoods are eligible
 - Cost-share 75% on public, 50% on private
 - Trees and planting costs
- Landscape Tree Cost-share
 - 1 tree per applicant, per location, per fiscal year
 - 75% reimbursement for the cost of a nursery tree, up to \$200

Details at lpsnrd.org/programs/trees/community-forestry-program
Contact Aaron Clare at aaron.clare@unl.edu

Don't do the following, or speak up if you see someone else doing them...

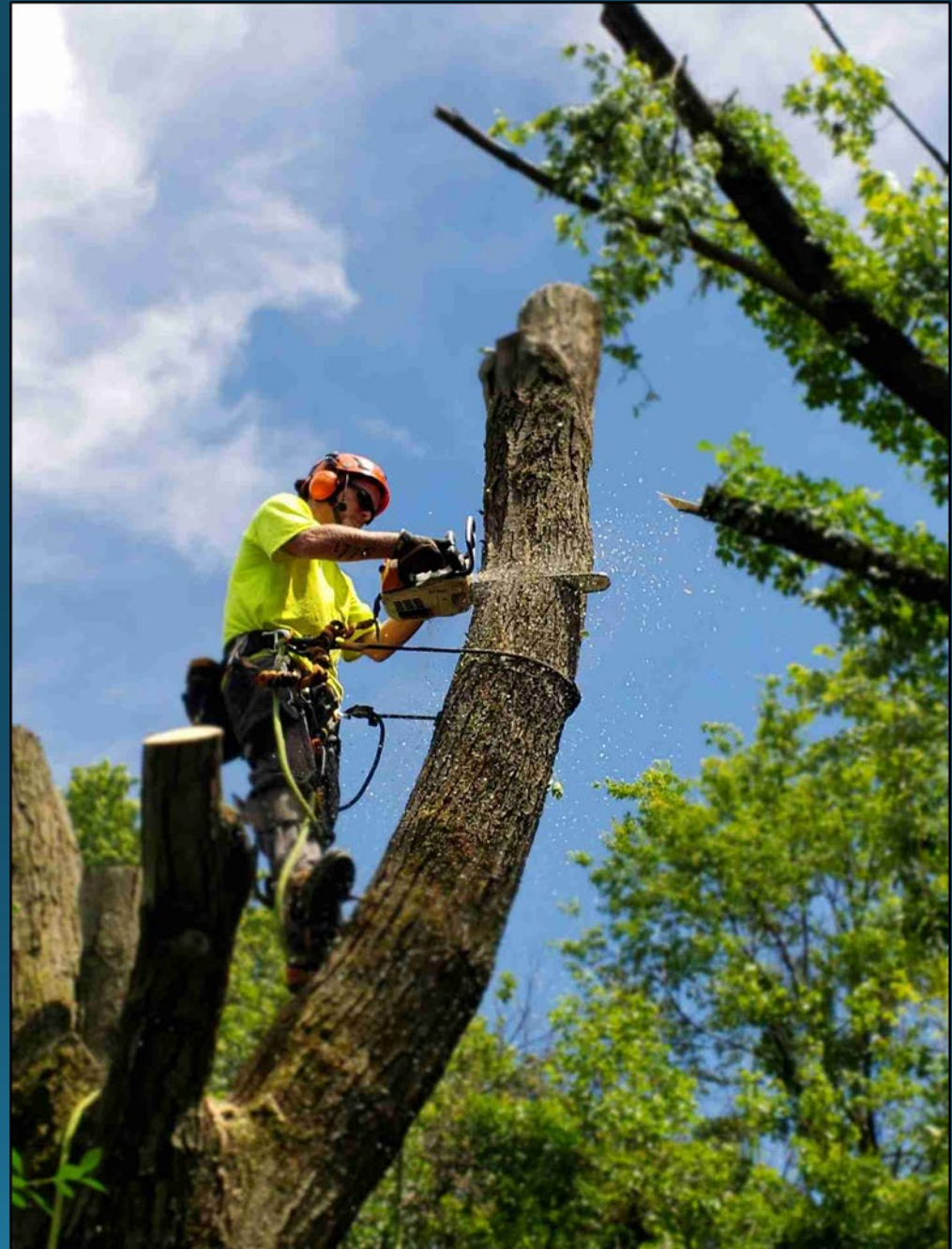


Unsafe, illegal pruning or removal



Overreact

- Too often, valuable trees are prematurely removed without justification.
- Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. If a tree loses a branch, definitely evaluate. But make a wise choice based on the facts, not one based on unwarranted fear or poor information.



Plant poorly or in wrong conditions



Summary

- The community forest is essential infrastructure, a wise investment that pays for itself
- Lincoln's community forest is currently facing several obvious challenges
- Reasonable solutions exist to address all those challenges
- All of us can contribute to reaching those solutions



*"The care
of the earth is
our most ancient
and most worthy,
and after all,
our most pleasing
responsibility."*

Wendell Berry



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