



November 9, 2008

Dear Mayor Verner,

In concert with your proclamation, "2008 Spokane's Year of the Urban Forest", Spokane Preservation Advocates (SPA) also increased their emphasis for preservation, maintenance, and replacement in-kind of large canopy street trees in Spokane's historical neighborhoods.

To ensure that our advocacy efforts were based in facts, not just emotion, SPA contracted for a small survey with Robinson Research Group to factually find out what Spokane residents thought about their large street trees. As SPA is a historical preservation organization, we focused our survey on all the historical neighborhoods in Spokane – which is actually most of Spokane since most of the City was platted before the 1950's. The 400-sample survey was conducted between August 12 and August 21, 2008.

The results from the survey show what we thought all along – Spokanites really like their large street trees! In brief summary:

- Three-in-four respondents (74%) preferred that the city replace canopy-forming trees with trees of the same variety.
- Four-in-five (79%) felt that the City should make an exception to the parking strip width rule, which currently usually forbids the planting of large canopy street trees in certain narrow-sized parking strips.
- Three-in-four (74%) thought that the City should plant canopy-forming trees when the City of Spokane plants street trees.

AND

- Survey respondents registered a preference of 4.39, that Spokane should continue to preserve and replant its streets that are lined with large canopy trees. (On a five-point scale with five meaning strongly agree and one meaning strongly disagree.)

We realize that there are perceived negatives associated with large street trees - but SPA thinks most of these issues can be minimized with greater cooperation between City departments and Spokane residents, public education and with an increased revenue stream for municipal tree preventative maintenance for the Urban Forestry Department. The importance of large canopy street trees is cited again and again in the Comprehensive Plan, which also says, "*The potential problems caused by street trees should not be used to override their fundamental importance and value.*" SPA will continue to work this important advocacy issue to support our mission of "preserving Spokane's historic buildings, neighborhoods, landscapes and character."

We would very much like to sit down with you and discuss this survey and SPA's future tree advocacy plans. SPA is very committed to, in a positive way, further the cause of large canopy street trees in Spokane. I can be reached at (509) 456-3237 or garylauerman@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,


Gary Lauerman
President, Spokane Preservation Advocates

Linking
Spokane's
Past
and
Future