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Government Center A2400

300 South 6th Street

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Re: Dangerous Sidewalks

Commissioner Greene:

I am a constituent in your district as is Michael Sacks Founder of Minneapolis Sidewalk Repair Hunters and we have some concerns. I understand that Hennepin County, Minneapolis, or even the State of Minnesota are not the only place where this is a great concern but it effects the entire county.

The Great Concern that not only myself but many others here in Minneapolis and Hennepin County Minnesota have is the treacherous, dangerous sidewalks that line every street. In doing my research it has come to my attention that homeowners and businesses owners are responsible for the sidewalks adjacent to their property line.

I find that to be preposterous. I could understand that if I or another property or business owner had damaged the sidewalks that we would be responsible; however it is neither myself nor my fellow constituents that have caused the damages to the sidewalks but the City of Minneapolis, The Department of Parks and even the Forestry Department when they plant these trees and then neglect to care for them.

The heaves on sidewalks are caused by the roots of these trees that the aforementioned departments did not do their due diligence in researching the types of trees that can and should be planted along the boulevards. I have don’t my research and find that there are in fact certain trees and root systems that would be more appropriate, such as Tap Root Systems.

Trees with tap root systems include **oaks, walnuts, hickories, and pines**. These trees typically have a single, thick root that grows straight down, providing stability and nutrient uptake. While they initially develop tap roots, some species may develop lateral root systems as they mature. (Please See diagrams below) Some being the key word meaning not ALL SPECIES.

  

However, the trees that are most likely causing the damages to the sidewalks, heaves which causes great tripping hazards not to mention violations of the American Disability Act for accessible sidewalks.

The problem is that the aforementioned departments are planting Lateral Root System Trees

A lateral root system is a type of root system where roots branch out horizontally from the main root, forming a network of roots spreading outwards. These lateral roots, also called secondary or tertiary roots, are crucial for absorbing water and nutrients from the soil and for anchoring the plant. They can also contribute to the plant's overall stability.

Many tree species have lateral root systems, where roots grow horizontally rather than vertically. Common examples **include ash, birch, cottonwood, hackberry, and maple** trees. About 80% of tree species, including **most urban trees**, have this type of root system.

So why they have decided to plant the Lateral Root System Trees instead of the Tap Root trees is a question that I have asked and I have yet to receive an answer.

In addition to this preposterous notion that the Home and Business Owners should be held responsible for the sidewalks to be repaired due to the trees roots heaving and damaging sidewalks, let me remind you that most of us have inherited these sidewalks for decades from previous owners and they have even inherited from their previous owners. Not once have I been notified by the City, County or State that I was responsible for the sidewalks. We are notified about the waste disposal and the Utility Bills and even the Property Taxes but they have never notified myself nor anyone else that I am aware of that we are responsible for the **public sidewalks.**

**I have sent inquiries to your office in the past about this issue but have only received “cookie cutter” replies. To get a better understanding, we would encourage you to visit our websites** [**Minneapolis Sidewalks**](http://www.minneapolissidewalks.com/blog) **(**[**www.minneapolissidewalks.com/Blog**](http://www.minneapolissidewalks.com/Blog)**),** [**Minneapolis Sidewalk Repair Hunters**](https://www.mplssrh.org/) **(**[**https://www.mplssrh.org/**](https://www.mplssrh.org/)**).**

In conducting further research I have learned that the City of Minneapolis Plants the following: The City of Minneapolis uses a variety of trees along its boulevards, including popular choices like silver maple, American Linden, and Hackberry, [according to the Tree Trust](https://treetrust.org/talking-trees/) and [Gertens Garden Center](https://www.gertens.com/learn/top-ten-boulevard-plants). However, the specific mix can vary by neighborhood. The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board is responsible for managing city-owned trees, including those on boulevards.

**Silver maple trees** have a shallow, fibrous root system that spreads horizontally rather than going deeply into the soil. This root system can be quite extensive, often extending 2-3 times the width of the tree's canopy. This characteristic, while beneficial for absorbing nutrients from the upper soil layers, **can also lead to issues with sidewalks, foundations, and underground utilities**.

**American Linden trees,** also known as basswood, primarily have a lateral root system. While they can develop a taproot, especially when young, they are more characterized by widespread, shallow roots. **This means their roots are concentrated in the top layer of soil and spread out horizontally rather than digging deeply.**

**Hackberry trees** have a deep, wide-spreading root system, often characterized by a central taproot and extensive fibrous roots. This system typically reaches depths of 3 to 10 feet and can spread 2 to 3 times the width of the canopy. The deep root system allows hackberries to thrive in various soil conditions and provides stability, especially in windy conditions.

Two out of Three Types of trees that the City of Minneapolis Plants are known to have roots that are **concentrated** in the **TOP** layer of soil. Why would the City plant trees that are known to cause damage to Sidewalks unless they intend to place a hardship on Property and Business owners. Unless they realized that is was a Mistake but now it was too late to remove the trees so they decided to place that hardship on residents and business owners to clean up there mess, and why after knowing this would they continue to plant Two out of Three Types of trees that the City of Minneapolis Plants are known to have roots that are **concentrated** in the **TOP** layer of soil. Maybe they don’t care what happens in 10-20-30 years when the trees have matured and are now causing damages and safety hazard, because they will be gone by then and it will now be someone else’s problem.

What ever the reason it should not be the burden on residents and Business Owners to clean up their mess. It should be the responsibility of the City to Repair the Broken Sidewalks and Remove the Damaging Roots.

I move upon the City Commissioners to look into this matter and take the appropriate measures to remedy the problem of the Sidewalks caused by The City of Minneapolis and not the Property/Business Owners.

This five-minutes of research that I have just shown you will be placed on my website as well so that everyone will be able to see what is going on with the Sidewalks and Why, and why the City/County Commissioners refuse to do anything about it.

I thank you for your time and look forward to hearing from you.

Shawn A. Evans, Sr.

Michael Sacks

[electronic signature]

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