

PROJECT #8: BLVD TREE PLANTING



Northeast Brainerd was the city's first suburb. It was built around the streetcar line, which ran along 3rd Avenue from Washington Street to H Street. The development pattern along 3rd Avenue still retains much of the historic character from this time period. Most of the homes orient towards the street. The street retains most of its sidewalks. A boulevard between the curb and the sidewalk still has many of the towering shade trees that were planted generations prior.

For these reasons and more, this is the premiere street in Northeast Brainerd. Reversing the general stagnation and decline of the neighborhood can most easily begin along this street.

Trees are an essential component of a successful urban street. They not only provide shade, they frame the public realm and thus add to the sense of place, a powerful design tool once used extensively throughout the neighborhood. Filling in the gaps in the boulevard is a low cost way to build value along this street.

Immediate Objectives - None.

Long Term Objectives

1. Provide shade to the sidewalks.
2. Frame the public realm to improve property values.

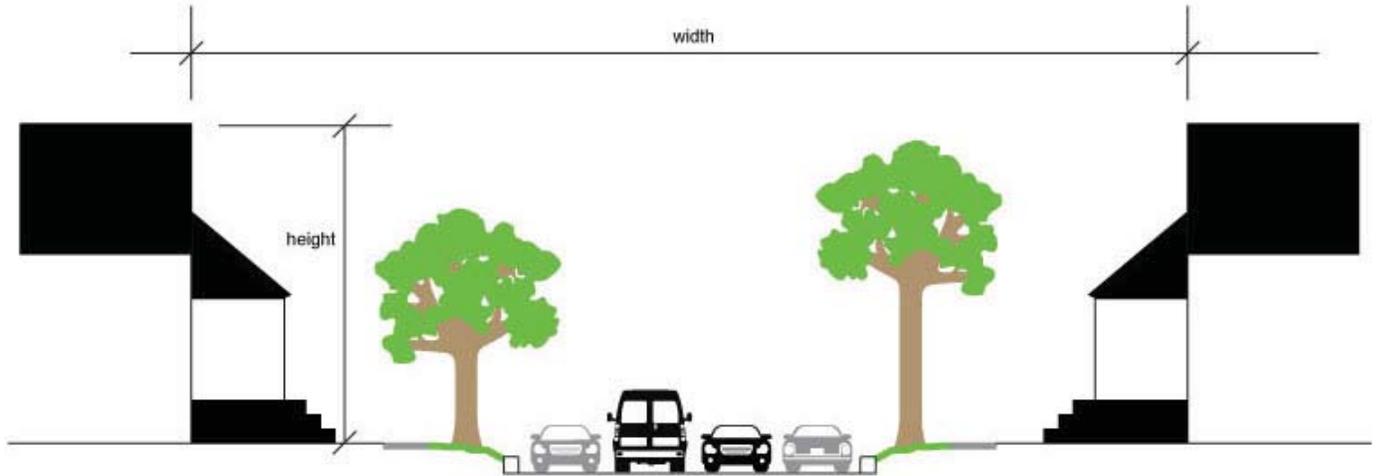
Project

1. Plant trees along 3rd Avenue.

Project Cost
\$2,750

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The ratio of $\frac{\text{width}}{\text{height}}$ should not be less than ③ nor greater than ⑥ to maintain a strong sense of place within the public realm.



Northeast Brainerd was originally designed and constructed using the traditional development pattern featuring a grid system. The grid approach has many advantages, including:

- The flexibility to accommodate many different uses on the same pattern.
- The ability to naturally accommodate different price points and densities on a single block.
- The ability to grow incrementally over time.
- Ease of mobility, particularly for walkers and bikers.
- The capacity to easily accommodate transit options.
- A design that inherently improves safety and security.
- Very high financial productivity for the city. High tax base with low cost of service.
- Built in resistance to financial decline.

A key to creating value – real taxable wealth that provides the high financial productivity that comes with this pattern – is to enhance the sense-of-place that accompanies the traditional development pattern.

Sense-of-place is an abstract concept but is actually simple to understand. A room is a “place” because it has walls. When buildings along the street line up to form walls, they create a sense of place within the public realm. If the “walls” (buildings) are too close, the space feels too constrained (like a tight alley). If the walls are too far apart, the sense-of-place is lost (which is why the space between Baxter’s Target and Best Buy does not have a sense-of-place even though the buildings line up and face each other).

Sense-of-place is enhanced when the buildings are oriented towards the street (have their door, a porch and windows facing the street) and when trees accentuate the framing.

To play to the strengths of the neighborhood, ultimately a new set of land use regulations are needed that address these simple components of sense-of-place (and, in turn, repeal the many, many counterproductive regulations that inhibit the neighborhood’s growth while also degrading the sense-of-place). In addition, street trees with straight trunks and bushy tops need to be planted in a linear fashion to provide framing to all neighborhood streets.