Memorandum

To: Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk

From: Advisory Committee on Trees
Charles Jackman, Jennifer Sager, and Bob Trumbule

Date: December 26, 2001

Subject: **Recommendations for Management of Bradford Pear Trees**

The Advisory Committee on Trees was asked to recommend a management plan to the City Council for the Bradford Pear trees within Greenbelt. We have inspected the Bradford Pear trees in the various areas of Greenbelt and have discussed their maintenance at several meetings this year. Bradford Pear trees are in practically all neighborhoods of the City of Greenbelt and we have grouped the trees in 16 different areas of the City. Each area is then grouped in one of the three following categories:

1) Those that require no extra maintenance;

2) Those that require some bolting and bracing to be retained;

3) Those that should be replaced when failure rates become unacceptable.

We provide more detailed information below about each area within each category. We would be happy to discuss this plan in more detail with the City Council should they so desire.

Bradford Pear Tree Categories and Recommendations

1) Those that require no extra maintenance - The Bradford Pear trees should be retained in the following five areas as they require no extra work:

Mandan Road/ Glen Oaks side/ West side of the road

On the west side of the street, all trees were planted in the past fifteen years and proper pruning and selection of limbs should prevent them from becoming a problem.

Ora Glen Drive from Morrison Drive to Hanover Parkway

The trees in this area are young and were properly trained. They should not present problems in the future.

Megan and Kara Court

These trees were properly trained when young and normal pruning every five or six years should prevent any problems.

Frankfort Drive

The Pear trees here are interspersed with Pin Oak and Scarlet Oak. They were properly pruned and trained when young and should not present problems.

Lakecrest Drive

These are the largest Bradford Pear trees in town and they were beginning to fail at a rapid pace before extensive bolting six or seven years ago. Since then they have not had problems. These trees should be maintained and monitored as it will give a good indication of the long-term effectiveness of bolting.

2) Those that require some bolting and bracing to be retained - The Bradford Pear trees should be retained in the following five areas, however, bolting and bracing is needed. The areas listed below are in order by degree of need:

Ora Glen Drive from Mandan Road to Morrison Drive

Older trees on this street have been pruned but no bolting has been done. The section with older Pear trees has Willow Oaks interspersed with them. Only two trees have been lost. This area should be a high priority for bolting.

Morrison Drive

These trees have the worst branch structure of any trees in the City. They have not yet begun to fail, because they are not of a mature size. The problems cannot be corrected with pruning but could be reduced with bolting. They are interspersed with Willow Oaks. This area should be a high priority for bolting.

Mandan Road/ Glen Oaks side/ East side of the road

A few of the worst trees have been bolted on the east side of the street. The Pear trees are

not being lost right now, but more should be bolted in time. Shade trees were planted by the City in the median to serve as long term shade for the roadway.

Hanover Parkway/Greenbriar side

No trees have been lost here since pruning and bolting of the worst trees occurred. Around ten trees failed in storms before bolting and bracing work that took place in the past five to ten years. We recommend bolting all trees that have bad angles. Shade trees were planted by the City in the median to serve as long term shade for the roadway.

Mandan Road/ Windsor Green side

No trees have been lost here since pruning and bolting of the worst trees occurred. We recommend bolting all trees that have bad angles. Willow Oaks are interspersed with the Pear trees and should crowd them in time. Shade trees were planted by the Department of Public Works in the median to serve as long term shade for the roadway.

3) Those that should be replaced when failure rates become unacceptable - The Bradford Pear trees in the following six areas should be replaced when failure rates become unacceptable. The areas are listed below in likely order of replacement:

Crescent Road near apartments

These trees have been failing at a rapid pace because of poor branch structure and are being replaced with 'Winter King' Hawthorne when they are lost. We recommend continuing this practice.

Greenway Center Drive

Pear trees here are interspersed with Ash trees. There are only a few Pear trees here, but they are beginning to fail. We recommend replacement with Sophora japonica 'Regent', a large summer flowering tree, when a Pear tree fails.

Scattered trees in Boxwood, Lakewood and Lakeside

There is a scattering of older Pear trees, some of which have been bolted, in these neighborhoods. When a Pear tree is determined to have bad branch angles, the homeowner in that neighborhood would be notified and given the option of replacing the Pear tree at his/her expense. There would then be two possibilities in this area:

A) The homeowner would need to provide a written request to the Advisory Committee on Trees (ACT). The ACT would then review and approve the request (possibly with recommendations). Recommended replacement trees are the Amur Maple where power lines are overhead and the `Red Sunset' Red Maple where there is adequate room overhead.
B) If there is no response from the homeowner in a reasonable period of time, the Pear tree branches would be bolted.

Ivy Lane

The large Pear trees here are failing at a rate that is not acceptable. The adjacent property

owner has been replacing them with an alternate variety of Pear tree that is less prone to breakage. This may be a reasonable solution, but it might be worth exploring their feelings about replacement with a larger shade tree. `Alle' Elm would provide more shade for the road surface and be an excellent replacement variety.

Parkway by apartments

These Pear trees are not failing as rapidly as those on Crescent Road, but we recommend replacement with Hawthorne when they do break.

Southway

The Pear trees here have been pruned several times, but the original branch selection was poor. They will fail in time. In addition Bradford Pear has a very aggressive root system and roots in landscape beds are a constant problem. It requires additional labor every year to dig beds out with a small back-hoe and remove the roots. Finally they are probably not correct for the entrance to the historic part of the City. They are more typical of areas built in the 1960's and 70's.

We recommend that when trees begin to fail, they be replaced in sections. Between 11 Court Southway and the intersection of Ridge and Southway, we should replace trees in medians with the Crape Myrtle variety `Fantasy'. It is the tallest of the Crape Myrtles with trees reaching thirty-five to fifty feet tall. It is very hardy, has white flowers for an extended period in the summer, has attractive fall color and attractive bark in the winter. They are fast growing and drought and heat tolerant. In addition, Crape Myrtles were used in the City's original planting plan.

Between 11 Southway and Greenbelt Road we recommend replacement with the 'Princeton' variety of American Elm. This tree has excellent resistance to Dutch Elm Disease and the classic vase shape of American Elm. It would provide excellent shade for the roadway and it is very accurate historically for the entrance to the City.