



## **Council Agenda Item 25-0727R**

**MEETING DATE:** 09/22/2025

**SUBJECT/TITLE:** RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATION TO THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FOR A COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING GRANT OF UP TO \$385,000 TO SUPPORT REPLACEMENT OF TREES LOST TO EMERALD ASH BORER AND ESTABLISH A MORE RESILIENT URBAN FOREST.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Clark Christenson, City Forester

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve.

**BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** N/A

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:**

23-0130R – Resolution authorizing approval and implementation of revisions to the Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan.

Multiple resolutions authorizing application to and acceptance of various Community Forestry grants related to removal and replacement of ash trees from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (21-0497R, 19-0551R, and 17-0773R) and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (22-0649R, 22-0646R, 21-0712R, and 19-0867R).

16-0833R – Resolution adopting an Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Management Plan.

**BACKGROUND:** The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive insect that infests ash trees, damaging the tree's ability to move nutrients, and trees ultimately perish from the damage without intervention. Since adopting the EAB Management Plan in 2016, the City of Duluth has worked diligently to remove and replace the dead and dying ash trees, with much of this work being supported by previous grants from the MN Department of Agriculture and MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

This resolution would authorize application to the DNR for a Community Tree Planting Grant to support the replacement of trees lost to EAB and establish a more resilient urban forest. If awarded, grant funds would allow continued progress to address remaining dead and dying ash trees and replanting efforts that exceed available resources for City staff time or funds to support contractor support. Funding would support additional removals of dying or dead ash trees that present public safety risk, stump grinding of previously removed ash trees, and replacement plantings of a variety of native and climate-adapted species. Combined, these efforts will expedite replacement of trees lost due to invasive emerald ash borer (EAB) infestation and establish a more diverse urban forest that is better able to withstand future disease and pest risk.

The grant program prioritizes awards for projects that are located in census block groups with an increased risk of potential community vulnerability using the supplemental demographic index score in the 70th percentile or higher, where the index value is based on percentages of the community in the following categories: low-income, persons with disabilities, less than high school education, limited English speaking, and/or low life expectancy. Duluth's neighborhoods that are prioritized under this program include: Fond du Lac, portions of Gary-New Duluth, portions of Cody, Lincoln Park, Central Hillside, Central Business District, and East Hillside, as well as portions of Kenwood, Woodland, and Endion.

**BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:** If awarded, this grant will alleviate budgetary pressure associated with response to EAB infestation. This application supports necessary ash tree removal where trees present a public safety risk

and expedites replanting efforts to replace lost trees. Without these grant funds, the work will take longer to complete and require City staff time and funding to support this work.

**OPTIONS:** Authorize application to support continued progress of EAB response, or decline the application to require staff time and funding resources to complete the work as possible over a longer period of time.

**NECESSARY ACTION:** Authorize the grant application.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None.