



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0738R, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATION TO THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FOR UP TO \$500,000 FROM THE SHADE TREE PROGRAM BONDING GRANT TO SUPPORT REPLACEMENT OF DISEASED ASH TREES AND ESTABLISH A MORE DIVERSE AND RESILIENT TREE POPULATION.

CITY PROPOSAL:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the proper City officials are hereby authorized to apply for up to \$500,000 from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Shade Tree Program Bonding Grant to replace trees lost due to infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer and establish a more diverse and resilient city tree population on Duluth public lands and right of ways.

FURTHER RESOLVED, the City of Duluth has the legal authority to accept the money and the financial, technical, and managerial capacity to ensure proper planning and maintenance of the project. There is no match required.

FURTHER RESOLVED, the Duluth City Council names the fiscal agent for this project as Jen Carlson, City of Duluth Finance Director, 411 West 1st Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55802.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: This resolution authorizes application to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for up to \$500,000 from the Shade Tree Program Bonding Grant to support tree planting over three years on Duluth public lands and right of ways. There is no required local matching contribution.

The City adopted the initial Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan through resolution 16-0833R, and resolution 23-0130R approved revisions to and implementation of the Plan as funding allows. Plan implementation includes management strategies of removal and replanting of infected ash trees to reduce potential harm to the environment, economy, and public health. As ash trees succumb to EAB infestation, they become brittle and are more susceptible to falling or dropping of limbs, and timely removal is critical for public safety. Implementation of the Plan is limited by available funding.

The grant funding would support removal and replacement of infected ash trees on boulevards throughout the City. Additional work will include the underplanting of an approximately 25-acre portion of the Mission Creek watershed where ash is the dominant tree species, and approximately 25 acres of forest in the Amity Creek watershed, where the diversity of tree species is limited and expected to decline due to climate change. By underplanting these forested areas and increasing species diversity, the City will be able to preserve canopy coverage and increase forest resiliency into the future.

The proposed work aligns with and supports four guiding documents for the City of Duluth:

1. Imagine Duluth 2035 Comprehensive Plan by forwarding Open Space Policy 4: Improve the delivery of parks and open space services to the community.
2. Duluth Climate Action Work Plan by forwarding
 - a. Objective 2: Strengthen community resilience.
 - b. Objective 4: Create financial and workforce plans to accelerate climate action.
3. Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan by forwarding
 - a. Goal P: Protect and enhance our open spaces to restore and maintain ecological health, build

resilience to natural disasters, and preserve the area's natural beauty.

- b. Goal Q: Increase climate-resiliency throughout our park and trail system through modern design and best management practices.
4. Duluth's Natural Resources Management Program Plan by forwarding
- a. Goal 1: Provide City Resources for the Natural Resources Management Program.
 - b. Goal 4: Collect and asses natural resources data to evaluate progress and aid in future decision-making.

Since 2016, the City of Duluth has secured previous grant funding totaling \$810,562 to support ash tree removal. Of the initial population of approximately 3,200 boulevard ash trees, the City has removed 1,800 dead and dying trees thus far and estimates that there are 1,400 trees remaining.