

March 13, 2026

Mayor Jacque and City Council Members  
City of Dyersville  
Memorial Building  
340 1st Avenue East  
Dyersville, IA 52040

RE: Discussion and Possible Action to Retire the Remaining Ash Trees in City Inventory

Dear Honorable Mayor Jacque and Council Members:

I am writing to recommend that the City Council take steps to retire the twenty-two remaining green ash trees in the city's inventory and to discontinue the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) treatment program. This letter outlines the background, current costs, long-term outlook, and why I believe now is the right time to proceed with a planned removal effort.

The Emerald Ash Borer is a small, invasive beetle from Asia that was first found in the United States in 2002. It was discovered in Iowa in 2010. The beetle's larvae feed beneath the bark of ash trees, cutting off the tree's ability to move water and nutrients. Without treatment, an infested ash tree will die within two to four years. As of late 2024, EAB has been confirmed in all ninety-nine Iowa counties. This is not a problem that is going away. It is a permanent threat to every untreated ash tree in the state.

Several years ago, the City Council approved a phased plan to manage the city's ash tree population. Under this plan, the city began removing ash trees from the inventory while treating a select group of green ash trees to prolong their lifespan. That program has fulfilled its purpose. To date, the city has systematically removed 204 ash trees. Currently, we are down to the last twenty-two green ash trees, all of which are being treated at taxpayer expense on a two-year cycle. I am now asking the Council to take the next step and authorize the removal of these remaining trees instead of continuing the treatment program.

The twenty-two remaining green ash trees are located at various sites across the city, ranging in diameter from about 11 inches to over 30 inches. Their ages range from approximately 17 to 44 years. Each tree requires a trunk injection treatment every two years to prevent EAB infestation, at a cost of approximately \$328 per tree per treatment cycle in 2024 dollars. That means the city is spending approximately \$7,216 every two years—or roughly \$3,608 per year—to keep these

twenty-two trees alive. All twenty-two trees were last treated in 2024, meaning the next treatment cycle would come due in 2026.

As long as these trees are in the inventory, the city commits to paying at least \$7,216 every two years, indefinitely, with no end date. The treatment does not cure the tree; it only delays the inevitable. If treatment stops at any point, the tree will become infested and die. Over the next 10 years, continuing the treatment program would cost the city about \$36,080 in treatment costs alone. In comparison, the average cost to remove an ash tree is roughly \$1,200, based on the city's experience removing the 204 ash trees already taken out of inventory. At that rate, removing all twenty-two remaining trees would cost around \$26,400—a one-time expense. In other words, after about seven years of continued treatment, the city will have spent more to keep these trees alive than it would cost to remove them all and end the program.

Beyond the direct cost of treatment, other factors matter as well. Ash trees that are being treated continue to age, and as they grow larger, removal becomes more expensive when the time comes. Larger trees also pose a greater risk if they fail during a storm. Even treated trees can develop structural issues over time. In other words, the longer we wait, the more it will cost to remove these trees and the greater the danger they pose.

I recommend that the City Council direct staff to discontinue the EAB treatment program and begin a phased retirement of the remaining twenty-two green ash trees. This action would replace the original Council motion authorizing the treatment program with a new direction focused on removal.

I am here to answer any questions you may have, and I appreciate your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mick J. Michel", written over a large, light-colored oval shape.

Mick J. Michel,  
City Administrator