

CITY OF MINNETRISTA



WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM

Subject: Ash tree removal and replacement

Prepared By: Gary Peters, Public Works Director

Meeting Date: September 21, 2026

Issue:

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) disease has been identified in the City of Minnetrista. The emerald ash borer is a wood-boring beetle from Asia that feeds on all native ash trees.

Overview:

Public Works is actively managing the spread of EAB by removing ash trees in City Parks and boulevard right-of-ways (ROW) that have been identified as infested and at high risk. It is estimated that over 800 trees have been removed in the past 4 years. Some areas of removal have included:

- Slow Creek Park in the Sunnybrook neighborhood – over 200 ash trees removed.
- Sunnybrook Ln – 12 ROW boulevard ash trees removed.
- Painters Creek neighborhood – 37 ROW boulevard ash trees were removed.
- Squire Ln – 52 ROW boulevard ash trees were removed.
- Jennings Cove fire lane/sanitary sewer access road – 12 ash trees removed.
- Glacier Rd (between Cottontail & Games) – 10 boulevard ash trees removed.
- Woods of Saga Hill Park – 6 ash trees removed in front area of the park.
- Tuxedo Boat Launch – 1 large, 4 medium and several small ash trees removed.
- Lotus Dr – 70-75 ash trees removed.

Other areas that will have removals next winter will be:

- Hunters Crest neighborhood
 - Covey Ln – 27 boulevard ash trees
 - Covey Tr – 26 boulevard ash trees
 - Lisle Park/Three Rivers Regional Trail border – several dead/dying ash trees to be removed.

Mission Statement:

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- Gene Lehner Park – several dead/dying ash trees along walking trail on north side of park.
- Woods of Saga Hill Park – 10-12 more ash trees to be removed throughout the park.
- North Arm Dr – several dead/dying ash trees throughout the corridor in the ROW

The most asked question that Public Works has received during these removals is what is going to happen now that the ash trees have been removed. Public Works is asking council what they would like to do for the homeowners that have had trees removed from the ROW boulevard. The choices would be as follows:

1. Do nothing – the City did the removal, ground the stump, and installed black dirt and seeded the disturbed areas. Homeowner supplies their own tree and plants it in their yard, not in the ROW.
2. City would work with their tree supplier (Wilson's Nursery) and see if they would be willing to give homeowners a list of available trees at a discounted price. This price would include the tree, planting, and 1-year warranty. Again, the tree would not be planted in the City ROW.
3. Would be the same as number 2 above, but the City would participate in a cost share program with the homeowner. A cost share percentage or set dollar amount would be established by the City Council.

Another question that Public Works has received is from homeowners with diseased trees on private property and whether the City will help out in any way. The Public Works Director did apply for a grant through the DNR that focuses on removing, treating or replacing trees with EAB. This grant application just closed September 15, and grant notifications are slated for November 13. So Public Works staff is asking Council if they would like to help homeowners with diseased/dying ash trees on private property. The options would be:

1. Do nothing – the homeowners would be responsible for the removal and disposal of the dead/dying diseased ash trees.
2. Drop-off site. Council has discussed having its own drop off site in the past and did not want to pursue it. But with the large number of ash trees that will be removed, would the council like to open a new discussion on having and maintaining a drop-off site.
3. Cost share for disposal. The city would work with The Mulch Store and negotiate a set price for ash tree drop off. Once that price is set, council would decide on the cost percentage split.
4. Street pick-up. Some cities have residents place the removed tree on the ROW and have Public Works staff pick them up. Would the city council want to open a discussion on the pros and cons of doing this.

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Fiscal Impact:

Presently, Public Works staff's labor time, stump grinder rental, and restoration costs for ash tree removals have been charged to either the street maintenance and/or park maintenance funds depending on where the trees were located. This is due to the Tree Preservation Fund not having a salary code allowing the labor time to be charged to. Any tree replacements would be paid for out of the Tree Preservation Fund.

Recommended City Council Action:

The City Council has chosen the following action for right-of-way trees from the above mentioned options:

- ☐ #1
- ☐ #2
- ☐ #3 Cost share percentage: _____ Set dollar amount: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

Depending on council's direction, a list of tree availability and costs would be brought back to council for final approval before planting.

The City Council has chosen the following action for trees not on the right-of-way and on private land from the above mentioned options:

- ☐ #1
- ☐ #2
- ☐ #3
- ☐ #4
- ☐ Other: _____

Depending on council's direction, further discussion on a drop-off site, disposal cost share, or street pick-up would take place.

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