



REQUEST FOR ACTION

Wood Debris Management Operations Update

MEETING DATE:

August 17, 2026

ORIGINATING DEPT:

Community Development

AGENDA SECTION:

Reports and Recommendations

PRESENTER:

**Mike Nigbur, Taryn Edens,
and Aaron Luckstein**

Action Requested:

Adopting a Resolution:

1. Authorizing preliminary approval for relocation of commercial operations to the northeast portion of the KR3 reservoir site subject to final construction and permit approvals; and
2. Authorizing preliminary support for a funding request of up to \$350,000 in contingency funds for project costs associated with relocating commercial processing of woody debris for continued wood waste management.

Clerk's Note: This item was vetoed by Mayor Norton. The veto automatically places the item back on the next agenda for reconsideration. To override a veto, the item must pass with a supermajority of the body voting Aye (5 regardless of quorum). The item may only be considered as it was passed. No amendments may be made.

Report Narrative:

Relocation of wood waste operations at Hathway Tree Service is recommended due to proximity to the newly planned Prairie Ridge subdivision. The City and Olmsted County previously explored a partnership to locate wood waste and future organics operations on County-owned property near the Kalmar landfill. In February 2026, Olmsted County decided not to move forward with a partnership site. Since then, City staff have evaluated alternative options for both short- and long-term operations.

Staff recommends relocating commercial wood waste receiving and processing operations to the northeast portion of the KR3 reservoir site. Residential brush drop-off would remain at the existing Hathway location, with Hathway transporting residential material to KR3 for processing one to two times per week or as needed. Because KR3 is located in Kalmar Township, staff will begin the required permitting process with the Township.

The target budget for this relocation work is \$700,000 however final project costs will not be known until the final permits and construction bids are received. The preliminary funding plan is for 50% to come from internal budgets between impacted departments and divisions. Council is being requested to preliminarily support use of up to \$350,000 in contingency funds for the remaining 50% cost of this work. The proposed project will be brought back to council for authorization to advertise bids and subsequently for awarding the bid. Engineering design is being completed in house with City Engineering team members.

This approach will:

- Maintain reliable and affordable wood waste services for residents, contractors, and City

operations.

- Eliminate the nuisance conditions caused by commercial-scale deliveries and the processing of wood waste near growing residential development.
- Provide a practical and cost-effective long-term solution.

The City has partnered with Hathaway Tree Service for many years to provide wood waste management services that support City operations, discourage illegal dumping, and help protect public infrastructure and waterways. Approximately 50% of the material received at the current site originates from City operations. The material is currently primarily being reused for energy production with a portion of mulch available for residential use.

With commercial processing moving to KR3, Hathaway's current lease of approximately three acres of City-owned flood control property will no longer be needed. The City intends to terminate the lease and the associated Conditional Use Permit. Residential brush drop-off services would continue under a Temporary Use Permit, which allows annual review of operating conditions such as hours, site layout, and buffering. A new lease would be drafted for the commercial operations at the KR3 site.

Staff developed this strategy in coordination with Hathaway Tree Service and have remained in communication with the Prairie Ridge development team.

Priorities & Foundational Principles:

Responsible Environmental Stewardship
Quality Services

Policy Considerations & DEI Impact:

The proposed relocation and continued operation of wood waste management aligns with City, County, and State policies. It supports the City of Rochester's Sustainability & Resiliency Community Work Plan by advancing solid waste diversion, organics processing, and environmentally responsible municipal operations. It is consistent with the P2S 2040 Comprehensive Plan, which emphasizes sustainable land use, environmental stewardship, and minimizing nuisance impacts near residential areas.

At the County level, the strategy aligns with Olmsted County's 2022–2032 Solid Waste Management Plan, which prioritizes resource recovery, organics programs, and a comprehensive waste system. It also conforms to Minnesota's waste management hierarchy and regulatory framework, which prioritize reduction, recycling, and composting—including yard and wood waste.

Finally, the recommendation supports state and local environmental justice commitments by reducing impacts on growing residential neighborhoods and ensuring equitable, environmentally sound service delivery.

Prior Legislative Actions & Community Engagement:

No prior legislative or community engagement actions.

Fiscal & Resource Impact:

The target project budget for this work is \$700,000. The recommendation is for 50% of the funding source to come from internal sources within existing budgets from departments and divisions that regularly utilize the wood waste management site. The remaining 50%, up to \$350,000, is being requested in contingency funding pending a future final council approval. The contingency fund balance is currently \$1,000,000.

Alternative Action(s):

No alternative actions recommended at this time.

Prepared By:

Aaron Luckstein

Attachments:

[Presentation - Wood Debris Management Update](#)

[Resolution - Wood Debris Management](#)