

Memorandum

TO: City Council Workshop
FROM: Krista Billerbeck , Natural resources manager
DATE: July 20, 2026
SUBJECT: Deer management in southern Shoreview
ITEM NUMBER: 1.b
SECTION: GENERAL BUSINESS

REQUESTED MOTION

INTRODUCTION

Based on staff interactions with residents and observations, the deer population in southern Shoreview (south of I-694) has increased over time leading to property damage and negative human-deer interactions. The increase in population prompts the need to discuss the potential for more deer management in this part of the city.

DISCUSSION

The conditions in Shoreview, as with many other metro communities, create favorable habitat for deer. The year-round sources of food and shelter as well as lack of natural predators often lead to an overpopulation. Deer prefer edge habitats, areas between two types of land uses or habitats, which are very common in developed landscapes such as suburban communities.

Elevated deer populations have negative impacts on human and natural systems, such as increased deer/vehicle collisions, damage to gardens and landscaping, and reduction in plant diversity and growth.

The MN DNR sets guidelines for population density based on available habitat, about 15-20 deer per square mile of habitat. The city can be broken up into three sections based on highways which can be natural barriers of movement for deer. John Moriarty, retired natural resources manager at Three Rivers Park District and previously Ramsey County, estimated the amount of suitable deer habitat within the city and how many deer sections the city can support. The majority of deer habitat is found in the northern part of the city, between County Road J on the northern border to Highway 96, due to the large amount of Ramsey County open space. The acreage of open space in the northern part of the city can support about 20 - 30 deer. The central portion of the city, between Highway 96 and Interstate 694, contains less available habitat but can still maintain a smaller herd, about 10 - 15, due to the open space around Snail and Grass Lakes. The southern portion of the city can support the fewest deer, with acreage to support only about three to four deer.

To address the high deer population, Shoreview has participated in deer management in various ways within the city for over 20 years. Deer management activities include partnering with Ramsey County on aerial surveys to monitor the population, banning wildlife feeding by

city ordinance, collaborating with Ramsey County on controlled hunts, and holding a controlled hunt on a private apple orchard from 2010 - 2023.

Ramsey County conducts controlled archery hunts in partnership with Metro Bowhunters Resource Base, MBRB, a non-profit organization that aids in deer management by administering special bowhunts throughout the Twin Cities. In Shoreview, these hunts currently take place in the northern part of the city, in Rice Creek Trail Corridor, Turtle Creek Open Space, and Poplar Lake Open Space, and will continue this winter.

The city conducted a controlled archery hunt with MBRB in coordination with the property owner of a privately owned apple orchard in the central portion of the city from 2010 - 2023. A few deer were typically harvested from this property each year. The hunt was not conducted beginning in 2024 due to the land being sold and developed.

The southern portion of the city, from Interstate 694 to the southern border, has the least amount of area for deer habitat. This is the area where the city receives the most complaints regarding deer, and has not had specific removal efforts. Longtime residents have observed an increase in the number of deer over time and cite the damage to trees and other plants on their property. One resident stated that in 1990 it was uncommon to see more than two or three deer from their property and now they often see a herd of 12 or more deer in their yard. Another resident expressed concern for newly planted trees in their neighborhood after seeing the damage deer cause. This resident also often sees three to four deer bedded down in their neighbor's yard in the morning and share the sentiment that the population has greatly increased. Another resident shared that they used to see occasional deer once or twice a year on their property 20 - 30 years ago and now have three to five deer bedded down in their backyard almost daily. City staff experience damage from deer on trees planted in the right of way and parks in this part of the city. Staff have taken measures to protect the trees but have needed to replace trees that do not survive.

Due to the lack of available space, a controlled hunt is not feasible in this portion of the city. This led staff to look at other options and discuss with neighboring agencies. Another form of deer management is through deer removal as part of an integrated wildlife damage management approach conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services (Wildlife Services). USDA Wildlife Services works with metro municipalities on reducing wildlife damage through this approach. They establish cooperative service agreements and goals for deer management with many agencies in the area. Their wildlife biologists are sharpshooters and remove deer in a safe and effective way. Many metro cities work with them including the neighboring cities of Roseville and North Oaks. Other cities have found Wildlife Services to be safe, professional, and effective.

Staff met with Wildlife Services staff to discuss deer removal in the southern portion of the city and their staff assessed potential locations. There were no good options on city property and Wildlife Services identified a Ramsey County property within Shoreview adjacent to Island Lake and a City of Roseville property bordering Shoreview as good locations due to safety considerations, accessibility, and size. Please see the attached map outlining these locations.

Wildlife Services would develop a work plan and associated fees if the city decides to proceed. City staff would need to communicate with them in the near future so they can ensure they have capacity. Wildlife Services and city staff would also need to coordinate with Ramsey County and Roseville on access to the proposed properties. The quoted fees from Wildlife

Services are approximately \$12,000 which would come out of the Forestry budget. Harvested deer are processed and donated to local food shelves. Staff would monitor removal efforts and evaluate the plan for subsequent years.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the council discuss the information presented and provide direction on how to proceed with deer management efforts in southern Shoreview.

ATTACHMENTS

[Wildlife Services potential locations](#)

[Deer in backyards](#)