

Memorandum

TO: City Council Workshop
FROM: Krista Billerbeck , Natural resources manager
DATE: November 17, 2025
SUBJECT: Financing for tree removals on private property
ITEM NUMBER: 1.b
SECTION: GENERAL BUSINESS

REQUESTED MOTION

INTRODUCTION

Staff is requesting the council review and discuss the plan to offer financing for required tree removals via a voluntary assessment.

DISCUSSION

As a follow up to the July 21, 2025 workshop, the city will be requiring the removal of dead and dying ash and other trees from private property that may impact public right of way or public property. There will be an emphasis on removals in the north half of the city in 2026 and the south half of the city in 2027. Tree removal on private property is the responsibility of the property owner and currently the city doesn't have any assistance available for this cost.

After the discussion at the workshop on financial assistance for property owners, staff assessed the budget and identified portions of the forestry budget that could be set aside for financing. Staff are proposing to allocate \$75,000 in each 2026 and 2027 to be used for financing tree removals on private property. This would be available to property owners in the form of a voluntary assessment that would be paid back over a three year period.

Property owners removing one tree will be allowed to assess up to \$1,000 of the cost of tree removal and properties with more than one tree up to \$1,500 of the cost. Any amount above the maximum allowable assessment would need to be paid prior to the assessment to continue to be eligible. The assessment will be certified to Ramsey County and payments collected as part of property taxes over a three year period. The interest rate will be a fixed rate of 3% for the period of the assessment.

Currently, there are approximately 180 properties in the north half of the city that have dead or dying trees that will be required to be removed. Some of these properties already have plans in place to remove the trees which will lead to a slightly lower number that will get a notification in January. Staff will be contacting a select number of tree contractors to provide quotes for the removals and the lowest quotes from one contractor will be provided to the residents. The resident can choose to use the quote provided by the city or work with another city licensed tree contractor.

Funds will be available on a first come first served basis as long as funds are available. Property owners interested in the voluntary assessment will need to use the tree contractor option provided by the city and fill out an application. Obtaining quotes as a batch from tree contractors and the assessment program are intended to reduce the potentially high cost for property owners.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests the council review the proposed financing plan and provide direction.

ATTACHMENTS