



Legislation Text

File #: RES PH 17-135, **Version:** 2

Approving funding to stump and reforest the City in identified areas due to the accelerated removal of EAB infested trees that are causing a potential public safety risk to the residents and visitors of the City.

WHEREAS, Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was first discovered in the City of Saint Paul in May 2009; and

WHEREAS, Saint Paul was the first city in the State of Minnesota to have a confirmed EAB infestation, so Saint Paul took immediate action, and the Parks and Recreation Department developed a comprehensive EAB Management Program in consultation with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA); and

WHEREAS, utilizing best practices and lessons learned from other communities, the City's EAB management program included both the immediate removal of infested ash trees and the proactive removal of vulnerable boulevard ash trees throughout the city; and

WHEREAS, a key component of the City's Management Program included reforestation efforts, including stumping and replanting at a 1:1 ratio within the same calendar year, to replace removed trees with a diverse set of species other than ash; and

WHEREAS, 9,149 ROW ash trees have been removed to date with an additional 17,909 remaining to be removed as part of the EAB Management Program.

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Department highlighted annually as part of the City's budget process its updated service needs and plan for EAB, understanding that EAB infestations historically advance most rapidly around year 10 of a confirmed infestation; and

WHEREAS, The City of Saint Paul has now had the infestation for almost 8 years, with recent surveys showing over 95% of neighborhoods across the city now being directly impacted by EAB, with more than a 400% increase in infested trees confirmed compared to 2015; and

WHEREAS, In the 2017 City budgeting process, an additional \$892,424 was allocated to supplement existing EAB funding to keep pace with the growing infestation and ensure that EAB removals also included funding for reforestation, but the funding was ultimately placed into contingency as part of the Right-of-Way financial solution; and

WHEREAS, Due to the growing number of confirmed infested trees throughout the city and potential devastating impact that leaving dead and infested ash trees throughout the city would pose for the safety and well-being of residents, the available budget for EAB management was prioritized focused on removing infested and hazardous trees and that stumping and reforestation delayed until additional resources could be identified; and

WHEREAS, The Office of Financial Services has identified \$400,000 in the 2016 and 2017 Capital Contingency budget and \$50,000 in the 2018 Saint Paul Streets Program capital program for a total of \$450,000; and

WHEREAS, Parks and Recreation wishes to set up an additional financing and spending plan for the amount of \$450,000 in its Citywide Tree Planting capital program; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor pursuant to Section 10.07.04 of the Charter of the City of Saint Paul does certify that there are funds available for reallocation for the above stated purpose; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Saint Paul, upon recommendation of the Mayor, and the advice of the Long Range Capital Improvement Budget Committee, authorizes this transfer of the stated budget authority, as shown in the attached financial analysis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City may finance portions of the Management Program with bond proceeds and reserves the right to make expenditures and reimburse such capital expenditures from the proceeds of any future obligations issued to finance portions of the Management Program. This resolution is intended to constitute a declaration of the City's official intent, for purposes of Section 1.150-2 of the Treasury Regulations, with respect to certain original expenditures made from any sources other than the proceeds of the obligations, in conjunction with the capital projects financed thereby for the capital project identified.

The Saint Paul Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget Committee received this request on May 8, 2017 and recommended approval.