



Legislation Text

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City Council Meeting Date: October 10, 2017

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: Tim Behrendt, Streets and Parks Manager
Dave Bennett, Public Works Director
Emerald Ash Borer Policy Discussion

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council discusses the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) policy.

Summary Report:

The City, through collaboration with the Northfield High School and HCI's Youth First Program, hired two student interns to work six weeks during the summer months. The goal of the Youth First program is to increase opportunities for Northfield youth to have authentic involvement and a voice in civil and community institutions. In addition, this opportunity assists youth in future planning, career exploration, and healthy living.

Northfield High School Senior Siri Hoff was hired to work on the Emerald Ash Borer policy. She was able to work on a real issue impacting local government and look for options to deal with it. The internship provided an opportunity to research, interact with city staff, present to a commission and this evening to City Council. Siri did a great job, which highlights the impact of the Youth First program.

Prior to drafting of the policy, an inventory of trees on public property was completed in 2016. The City has 1,909 ash trees on public property. The tree inventory determined tree species, size, location, and the condition of the trees. The Emerald Ash Borer policy was prepared utilizing this data.

There are five goals the EAB policy is trying to achieve:

- Goal 1 - Preserve High Quality Ash Trees
- Goal 2 - Slow the Spread of Infestation
- Goal 3 - Improve Tree Diversity
- Goal 4 - Postpone and Decrease Peak Ash Mortality
- Goal 5 - Minimize Public Costs

The Environmental Quality Commission reviewed five options on how to deal with the Emerald Ash Borer on public property and determine which one best aligns with the goals above. The options are listed below.

1. Remove all ash trees and do not replace them.
2. Remove all ash trees and replace them at a 1:1 ratio

3. 50-50-50 approach
4. Treat all trees 16" in diameter and above and remove all others
5. Treat all ash trees

On July 13, 2017, the Environmental Quality Commission recommended approval of the 50-50-50 approach of the policy to control the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer. This approach is to remove 50% of the ash trees, replace this 50% with a variety of tree species, and treat the remaining 50% with Emamectin Benzoate. This approach aligned best with the goals listed above.

The attached policy provides greater detail as to how it was determined which trees will be removed and which trees will get treatment.

Alternative Options:

Be reactive when the Emerald Ash Borer infests Northfield.

Financial Impacts:

\$125,000 to \$135,000 annually for 10 years.

Tentative Timelines:

This funds requested for the program will be reviewed and vetted during the 2019 Budget process.