

Memorandum

Department of Public Works



TO: Michael O. Geisel, P.E.
City Administrator

FROM: James A. Eckrich, P.E. *JAE*
Public Works Dir. / City Engineer

DATE: October 23, 2018

RE: Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan
2019 Funding Authorization

Please forward to PPW
for review and approval.

MO Geisel 2018-10-24

As you know, on November 16, 2015 the City Council approved a Preparedness Plan and Action Strategy (EAB Plan) for the removal of Ash Trees within public rights of way due to the impacts of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). That EAB Plan included an optional reforestation component, which was subsequently funded by City Council.

As detailed in the EAB Plan, the annual tree removal and reforestation was to be funded through General Fund – Fund Reserves (above the 40% Policy). Annual costs were anticipated to be as follows:

- **\$300,000 annually for the contractual replacement of sidewalk.** As detailed in the EAB Plan, the Ash tree removals are being completed by a street maintenance crew designated for this purpose only (except snow removal). That crew previously performed a large amount of sidewalk replacement. The allocation of \$300,000 has successfully supplemented the prior funding of \$200,000, and allowed the City to continue to maintain its 252 miles of sidewalk while concentrating efforts on Ash tree removal.
- **\$75,000 annually for contractual stump grinding.** The City's Public Works maintenance personnel will be removing approximately 960 Ash trees each year. These removals necessitate the grinding of 960 stumps, which is managed contractually.
- **\$140,000 for reforestation.** The Plan estimated that residents will request a replacement tree for 700 of the 960 Ash trees removed. The City's cost for a replacement tree is approximately \$300 per tree, of which the residents fund \$100 through an application fee. The resultant cost to the City of Chesterfield is an estimated \$140,000 per year.
- **\$68,000 annually for personnel.** City Staff's initial recommendation to City Council was for the City to discontinue management of the reforestation program during the EAB crisis. Instead, residents desiring reforestation would receive a \$200 stipend to

use toward tree replacement, which would be managed by the residents. City Council did not accept this recommendation, and felt it was important that the City Staff continue to manage tree reforestation. Accordingly, City Council authorized an additional annual allocation of \$68,000. This allocation was intended to fund interns and / or a temporary, full time employee necessary to help manage the Ash tree removal and reforestation program. These positions are to be terminated once the Ash trees are removed, or sooner if the EAB Plan is not funded by City Council.

As you can see, the anticipated annual allocation from General Fund – Fund Reserves (above the 40% Policy) was \$583,000 per year, per the EAB Plan approved by City Council.

During the first three years of Ash tree Removals (January 1, 2016 – present) the Public Works Department has removed 2,922 Ash trees. This is slightly above the anticipated 960 trees per year (2,880). As there is often a lag between tree removals and a request for a replacement tree, we cannot definitively determine the number of replacement trees which will be requested in 2019. However, we do know that there were 420 requests for replacement trees in 2016, 497 in 2017, and 484 in 2018. It appears that the initial estimate for tree replacement (700) may have been high, and that the number of requests for 2019 is unlikely to exceed 500. Due to the underruns in previous years, it is anticipated that these tree plantings can be funded via the 2018 Purchase Order. Accordingly, I have eliminated funding for replacement trees in 2019 only. If tree requests increase substantially, and supplemental funding becomes necessary, I will request such from City Council at that time.

As of October 23, 2018, approximately 3,787 Ash Trees remain. In accordance with the EAB Plan, the requested 2019 financial allocation is as follows:

- **\$300,000 for contractual sidewalk replacement.** This will allow the City to continue to maintain its 252 miles of sidewalk while one street maintenance crew is completely allocated toward Ash Tree removal
- **\$75,000 for contractual stump removal.** Will cover the costs to grind approximately 960 stumps from the trees removed by the Public Works maintenance crew.
- **\$0 for reforestation.** As described above, City Staff anticipates that no additional funding for replacement trees will be necessary in 2019. The existing 2018 Purchase Order should be sufficient to fund replacement trees in 2019. Additional funding will be necessary in 2020.
- **\$44,000 for personnel.** This figure represents the actual cost for the temporary full time employee helping to manage the implementation of the EAB plan and the reforestation program.

The total allocation requested for the continuation of the EAB Plan in 2019 is \$419,000. As detailed above, that funding must come from General Fund – Fund Reserves (above the 40% Policy). The Finance Director’s most recent projections indicate a General Fund – Fund Reserve (above the 40% Policy) of \$3,300,000 on December 31, 2018.

Action Recommended

This matter should be forwarded to Planning and Public Works Committee for consideration. Should PPW concur with Staff's recommendation, it should vote to recommend an allocation from the General Fund – Fund Reserves in the amount of \$419,000 for costs associated with the Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan and Action Strategy. The matter should then be forwarded to the full City Council for approval. If approved, a transfer from the General Fund – Fund Reserves will be initiated after January 1.