

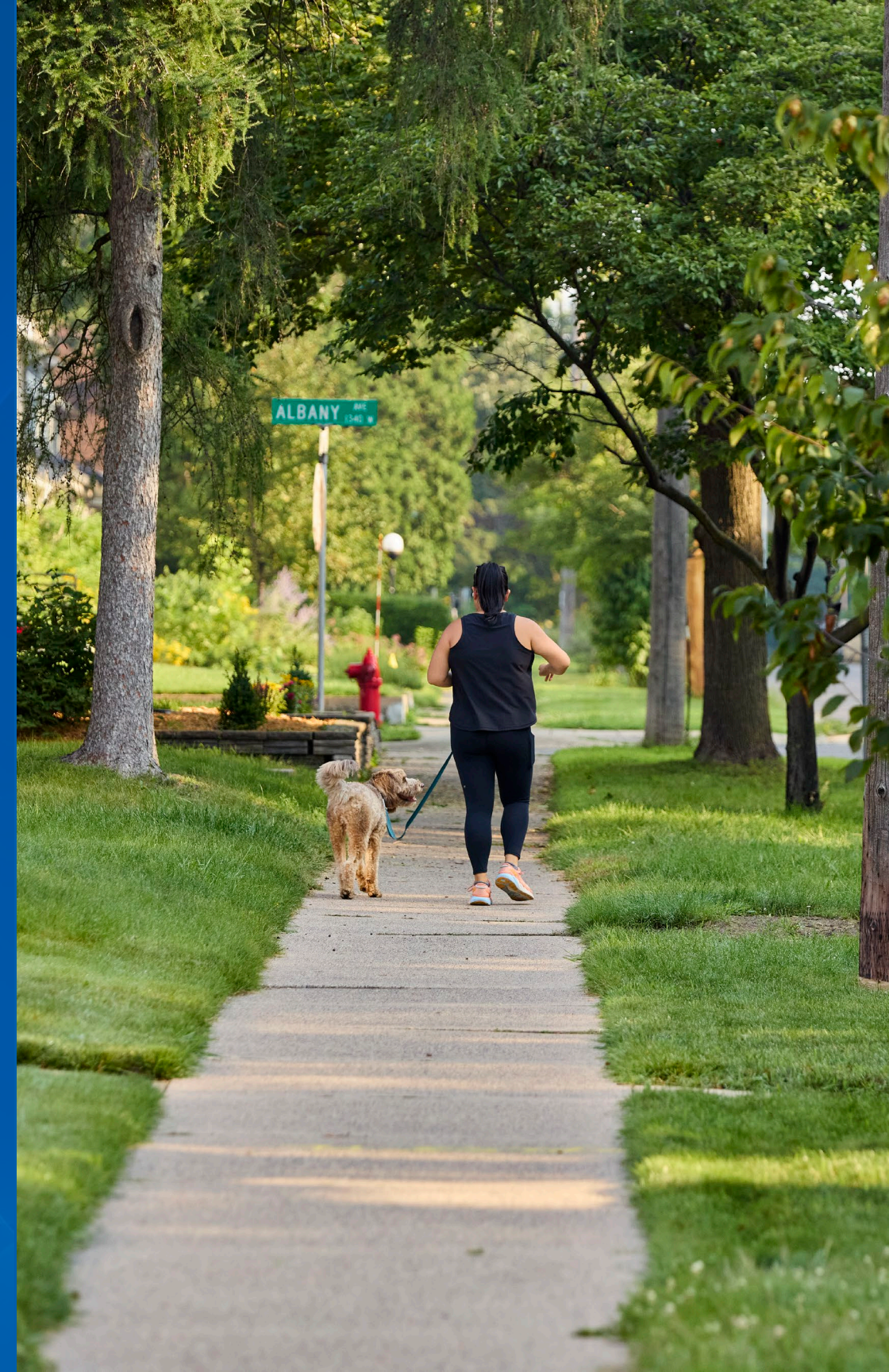


Community Tree Planting Grants: 2026-2027 Program

Community Development Committee

Erin Brueggemann & Gillian Greenberg

June 1, 2026



Program Purpose




As set in MN Statute 473.355:

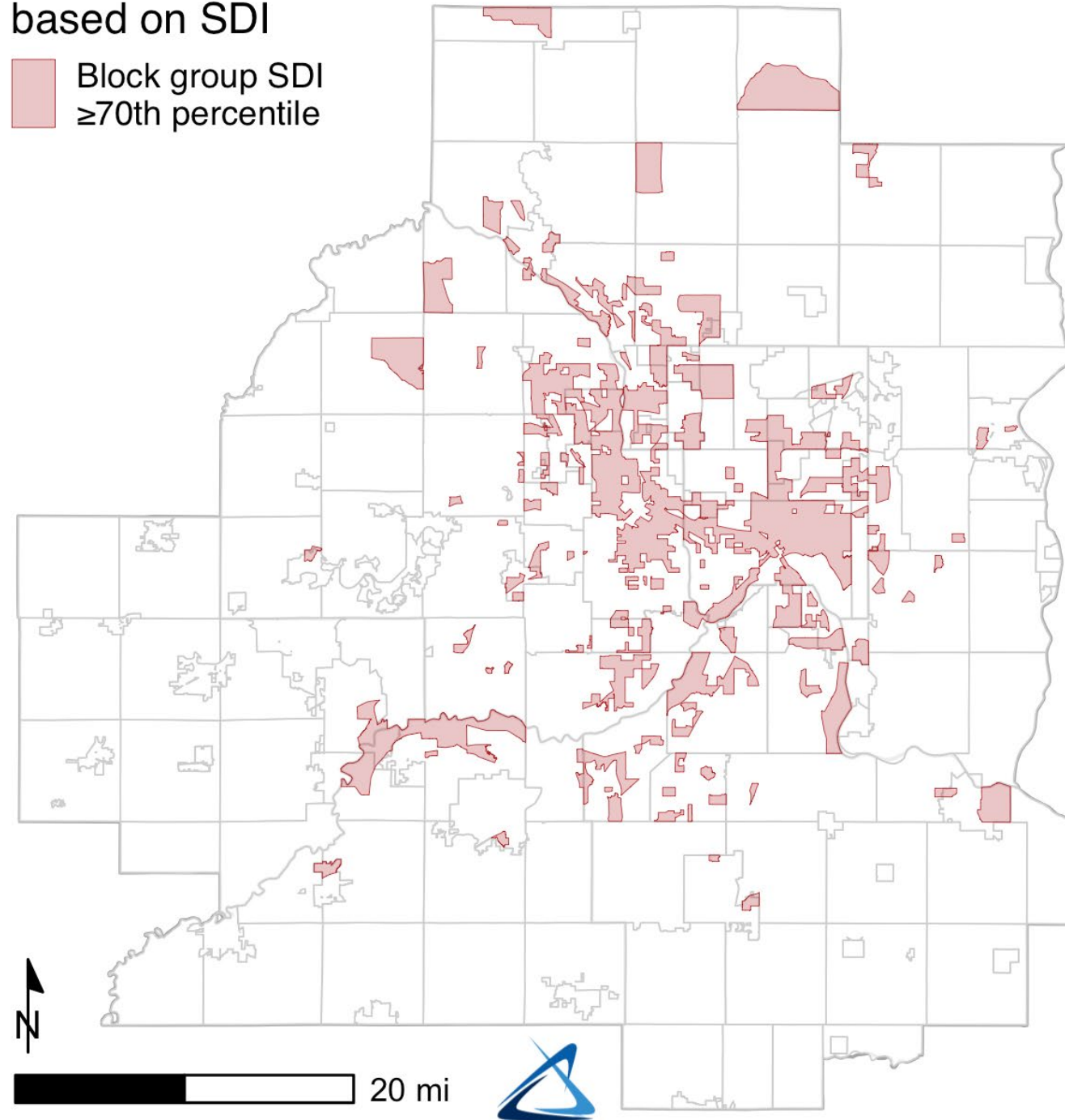
1. Removing and planting shade trees on public land to provide environmental benefits;
2. Replacing trees lost to forest pests, disease, or storms; and
3. Establishing a more diverse community forest better able to withstand disease and forest pests.

Program Priorities

1. Projects removing and replacing ash trees that pose significant public safety concerns; and
2. Projects located in a census block group with a supplemental demographic index score in the 70th percentile or higher within the state of Minnesota.*

Prioritization based on SDI

 Block group SDI ≥70th percentile



Summary of 2025 Applications

Applications Received

- 31 applications received
 - 27 cities
 - 3 counties
 - 1 township
- \$5,537,897.94 in funds requested
 - Requests ranged from \$14,000 to \$500,000



2025 Funded Projects

Applicant	Project Name	Award Amount
City of Anoka	Sunny Acres Area Urban forest Restoration and Enhancement Project	\$83,100
City of Blaine	Remove and replace 39 ash trees in priority neighborhoods within the City of Blaine	\$94,880
City of Brooklyn Center	Brooklyn Center Right-of-Way and Heritage Center Canopy Improvements	\$142,350
City of Coon Rapids	Grow Urban Coon Rapids	\$94,500
City of Maple Grove	Rice Lake Neighborhood Ash Tree Project	\$82,825
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Minneapolis target area ash tree removal completion and replanting project	\$454,407
City of Minnetonka	Minnetonka Tree Planting Program	\$277,215
City of Oakdale	Diseased ash tree removal and replacement tree planting in public spaces and rights of way	\$174,543
City of Ramsey	Majesty of the Commons – Ash Replacement and Community Collaboration	\$84,255
Ramsey County	Pierce Butler Route Tree Canopy Improvement Project	\$171,050
City of Roseville	City of Roseville EAB Mitigation	\$251,796
City of Saint Louis Park	Park Canopy Restoration Project	\$72,383
City of Vadnais Heights	Vadnais Heights Urban Canopy Program	\$220,196
City of West Saint Paul	West St. Paul Tree Canopy Improvement Project	\$296,500
*City of South Saint Paul	Community Tree Planting Project (legislatively directed appropriation)	\$688,000
	Total Awarded Amount	\$3,188,000

2025 Grantees Expected Outcomes

Outcome Metric	2025 Competitive Grantee Totals
Total number of trees to be planted	5,128
Total number of trees to be planted in census block groups with an SDI score in the 70 th percentile or higher	2,115
Total damaged or diseased trees and stumps to be removed	2,219
Total damaged or diseased ash trees and stumps to be removed	1,563

Reflections on the new program



Lots of interest and learnings

- Applications included high quality projects from across the region and across community types.
- Coordination with DNR aimed to align application materials and processes where possible to reduce confusion.
- Most applicants strove to reflect program priorities in projects.
- Scoring criteria could further emphasize the program priorities to reach communities most affected by emerald ash borer (EAB) and social vulnerability.

2026-2027 Proposed Program Plans

Key Details

- Program's statutory purpose and priorities remain the same
- Met Council received \$1 million from G.O. Bonds and \$900K from General Fund in the 2025 special session, and \$5 million from G. O. Bonds in the 2026 special session
- Bonding Funds affect eligible expenses and increase administrative tasks for grantees and Council

Proposed 2026-2027 Program Changes

- Offer in a 2-year fund distribution plan
 - \$3.4 million for 2026 and \$3.5 for 2027
- Changes to Project Tiering Criteria
- Changes to Evaluation Criteria

Proposed Project Tiering Update

Priority Points:	0	1	2	3
Ash Removals / Replacements	0 trees	1-15 trees	15-29 trees	30+ trees
Trees Planted in Priority Areas out of Total Trees Planted	0 – 24%	25 - 49%	50 - 74%	75 – 100%

Priority Points	Review Tier
5 – 6	Tier 1
3 – 4	Tier 2
0 – 2	Tier 3

Proposed Evaluation Criteria Update

Criteria	Potential Points
Project Management	25
Tree Canopy Health and Resilience*	25
Project Serves Vulnerable Communities*	25
Project Addresses Climate Change Impacts	25

* Criteria related to the legislative priorities (Ash tree removal and communities with higher levels of vulnerability) represent 50% of the possible points.

2026 Program Timeline

June – July 2026

- CDC and Council Approve Notice of Funding Availability

Sept. – Oct. 2026

- Application period

Nov. 2026

- Internal application review for eligibility and completeness
- Panel review for criteria scoring and recommendations

Late 2026 – Early
2027

- Council reviews and approves award recommendations

Q1 2027

- Grant agreements executed

Discuss Program Approach



Questions

- What do you think of the 2026-2027 Program approach to:
 - program priorities?
 - evaluation criteria?
 - funding structure?
- Do you have other feedback on the program as we finalize the Notice of Funding Availability?



Thank you

Erin Brueggemann

Senior Grants Administrator, Community Development
Erin.Brueggemann@metc.state.mn.us

Gillian Greenberg

Senior Climate Planner, Community Development
Gillian.Greenberg@metc.state.mn.us

