



Agenda Memorandum

Agenda Item – 10.A.

City Council Meeting
February 13, 2023



Strategic Priority 1: Preparedness and Resilience

Build a system of intentional support for residents, businesses and the environment that mitigates risks and proactively seeks out ways to ensure the community not only endures, but thrives.



Strategic Priority 2: Proactive Public Safety

Enhance public safety to emphasize both prevention and enforcement, engage the community through education and outreach and provide the resources necessary to ensure safety and well-being throughout Westminster.



Strategic Priority 3: Shared Sense of Community

Foster equitable opportunities that help residents feel at home and connected in their community and empowered to live their best lives.



Strategic Priority 4: Quality of Life

Ensure that Westminster offers a diverse range of amenities and activities for residents, businesses and visitors that honor the city's history and support the arts, parks, recreation, open spaces, and libraries.



Strategic Priority 5: Robust Infrastructure

Provide safe and equitable access to core services and amenities by safeguarding, maintaining and improving the city's water, wastewater, stormwater, mobility and roadway systems.

Subject: First Reading of Councillor's Bill No. 3 Re: Trees as Critical Green Infrastructure

Prepared By: Bryan McCoy, City Forester

Recommended City Council Action:

Pass Councillor's Bill No. 3 on first reading adding a new chapter to the Westminster Municipal Code to Title XIII designating trees as critical green infrastructure.

Summary Statement:

Trees enhance the appearance of the City and provide important ecological, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic resources to the City's residents and visitors. The resources provided by trees are increasingly at risk from invasive insects, such as emerald ash borer (EAB), disease outbreaks, and severe weather events. Preserving and increasing the City's urban tree canopy in

response to these threats and designating trees as critical green infrastructure demonstrates the City's recognition of the value and numerous functions of trees in the community.

The City's response to EAB will be enhanced by utilizing grant opportunities to assist in protecting, removing, and replanting trees on private and public property. Recognizing trees as critical green infrastructure through an ordinance will improve opportunities to obtain grants and assist in the distribution of funds after severe weather-related events.

The benefits provided by trees in the City include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Releasing oxygen and capturing air pollutants and carbon dioxide;
- Maintaining slope stability and preventing erosion;
- Filtering stormwater and reducing stormwater runoff;
- Reducing energy demand and urban heat island effects through the shading of buildings and impervious areas;
- Buffering natural and built assets from wind, light and noise;
- Providing visual screening;
- Sustaining habitat for birds and other wildlife;
- Maintaining property values; and
- Contributing to the community health, appeal, beauty, character, and heritage of the City.

Fiscal Impact:

\$0 in expenditures

Source of Funds:

Not applicable

Policy Issue(s):

Should City Council approve Councillor's Bill No. 3 recognizing trees as critical green infrastructure?

Alternative(s):

City Council could choose not to approve Councillor's Bill No. 3 on first reading, which may reduce grant opportunities for the City's response to emerald ash borer and natural disasters affecting trees.

Background Information:

Emerald ash borer (EAB) is actively spreading in the City, threatening approximately 69,000 ash trees. Most of these trees reside on private property. The City's response to EAB will be enhanced by utilizing grant opportunities to assist in protecting, removing, and replanting trees on private and public property.

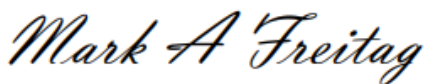
Recognizing trees as critical green infrastructure through a tree ordinance will improve the likelihood of obtaining grants and assist in the distribution of funds after severe weather-related events by:

- Streamlining Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance in the event the City experiences severe ice/snow/wind/fire that causes widespread tree damage.
- The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is set to release \$1.5 billion towards urban forestry in 2023 - classifying trees as critical green infrastructure will likely assist in securing IRA grants.
- Provide access to Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to assist with emerald ash borer killed ash trees on private property in economically disadvantaged communities.

City Council is requested to adopt the attached Councillor's Bill adding a new chapter 4 to Title XIII of the Westminster Municipal Code declaring trees as critical green infrastructure.

Designating trees as critical green infrastructure supports the City's Strategic Plan priorities of Robust Infrastructure, Preparedness and Resilience, Proactive Public Safety, Shared Sense of Community, and Quality of Life by ensuring the value of Westminster's trees is incorporated into municipal code and acknowledges the EAB problem, how it will impact the community, and how to combat the issue in the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark A Freitag". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark A. Freitag
City Manager

Attachments:

Councillors Bill No. 3 Adding A New Chapter 4 to Title XIII of the Westminster Municipal Code Concerning Critical Green Infrastructure