

HENNEPIN COUNTY  
MINNESOTA



Tree Canopy Improvement Grants  
Funding Recommendation

2018

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# Overview

## Background

In fall 2018, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners made funding available to cities, affordable housing properties, schools, and non-profit organizations to enhance the county's tree canopy (Resolution 18-0383R1).

The goals of the grants are to combat threats to trees from invasive insects and diseases; promote the development of a more diverse, resilient and equitable tree canopy; and support efforts to educate the public on tree care and the importance of trees.

Funding for these grants was allocated from the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund.

## Types of grants made available

To encourage cities to plan for pests such as the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and develop and expand forestry programs, the county offered grants to assist cities with completing tree inventories followed by assistance for tree planting and other activities. Based on staff outreach efforts, only about one-third of Hennepin County municipalities have completed tree inventories, an integral part of a municipal forestry program. Grants of up to \$5,000 (Step 1 grants) were made available to municipalities to complete tree inventories, contingent upon a 25 percent match. Municipalities that have completed a tree inventory and have forestry staff are eligible for grants between \$5,000 and \$50,000 (Step 2 grants) to develop tree management plans, plant and maintain trees, conduct outreach, develop gravel-bed nurseries and perform other efforts to improve the tree canopy. Municipalities were required to provide a one-to-one match for Step 2 grants to demonstrate their investment in the project and leverage additional funds.

The county also provided grants to affordable housing properties to preserve and replace existing trees or increase tree plantings beyond minimal municipal requirements. Many multifamily affordable housing properties are located within the tree planting priority areas (see page 3). In an effort to address this issue, grants between \$1,000 and \$20,000 were made available to owners of existing affordable multifamily housing, developers of new affordable multifamily housing, and affordable housing land trusts to increase the tree canopy in these locations. A 25 percent match was required.

Grants were also made available to nonprofit organizations and schools for small scale planting projects, such as Arbor Day events.

## Outreach efforts

County forestry staff notified city foresters or related staff about the request for proposal via the Canopy newsletter. Additionally, staff followed up with a phone call to a majority of cities to discuss the grant opportunity and answer questions. Forestry staff met in person with staff from five cities to talk about grant project ideas.

Staff worked with Community Works staff to send information about the tree grant to affordable housing providers. To reach schools and non-profits, forestry staff presented at the county's school recycling meeting and emailed information to school staff interested in sustainability. Lastly, Forestry staff held two information sessions for potential applicants to learn more about the grant and answer any questions.

### **Applications and review process**

A committee of seven staff from Environment and Energy and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reviewed 29 applications and made recommendations for funding. Applications were evaluated on project need, capacity to expand future forestry operations, positive impacts to tree prioritization areas, the potential for tree canopy enhancements and eligibility aligned with grant guidelines.

The committee recommends awarding 26 applications totaling \$243,143 (See page 5 for a summary of the recommended projects).

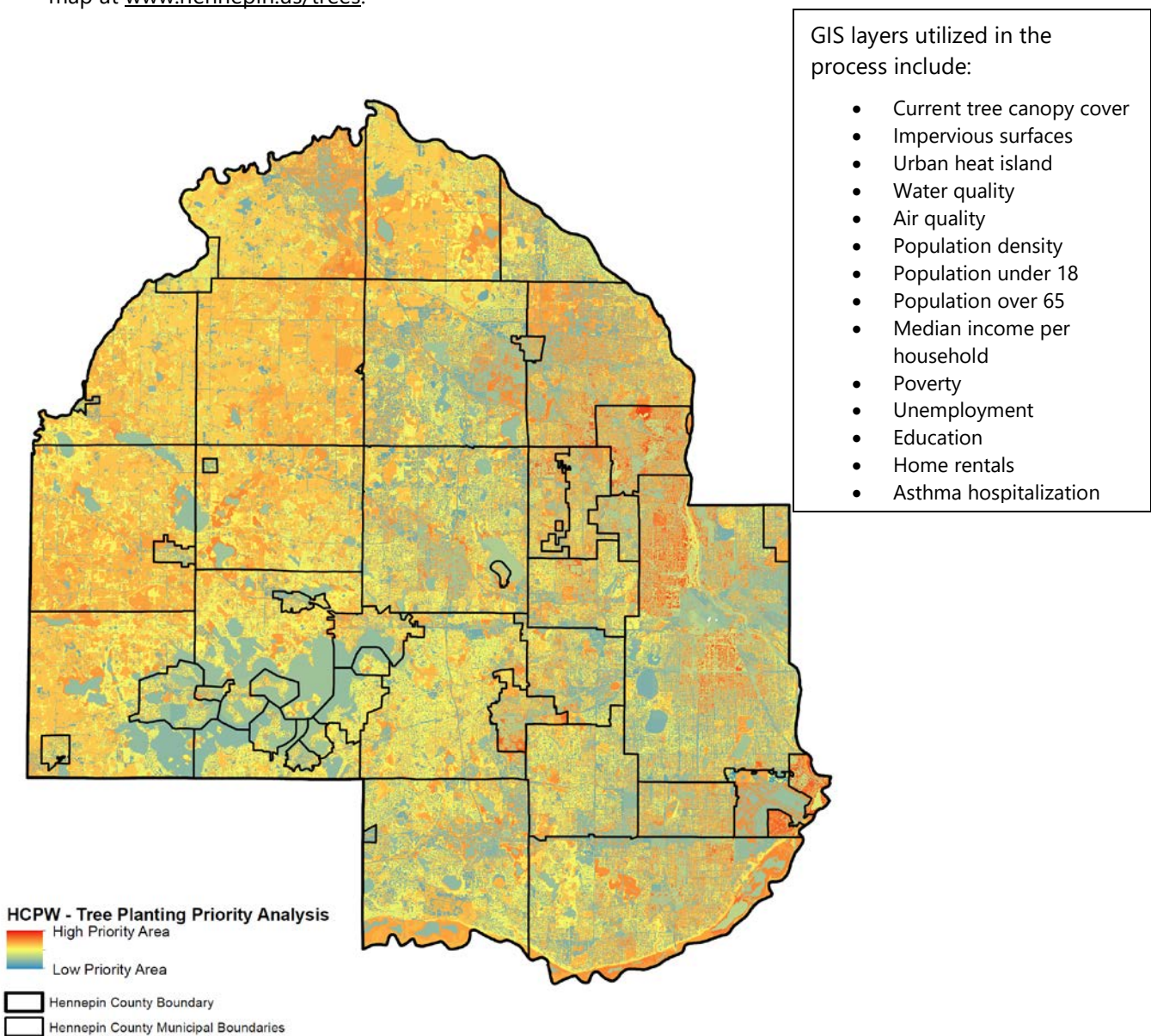
### **Expected outcomes**

The tree canopy improvement grants will promote a more diverse, resilient and equitable tree canopy. The grants will:

- Fund the collection of data through tree inventories that is critical to start responding to EAB.
- Mitigate the effects of tree pests and pathogens by improving municipal forestry capacity.
- Facilitate tree canopy improvements at affordable housing developments and in other areas of need.
- Educate residents on the benefits of trees and engage them in tree planting efforts.
- Plant trees in areas of the county with disparities in health, income, housing and tree cover. This will help make the tree canopy more equitable and help reduce economic, environmental and health disparities.

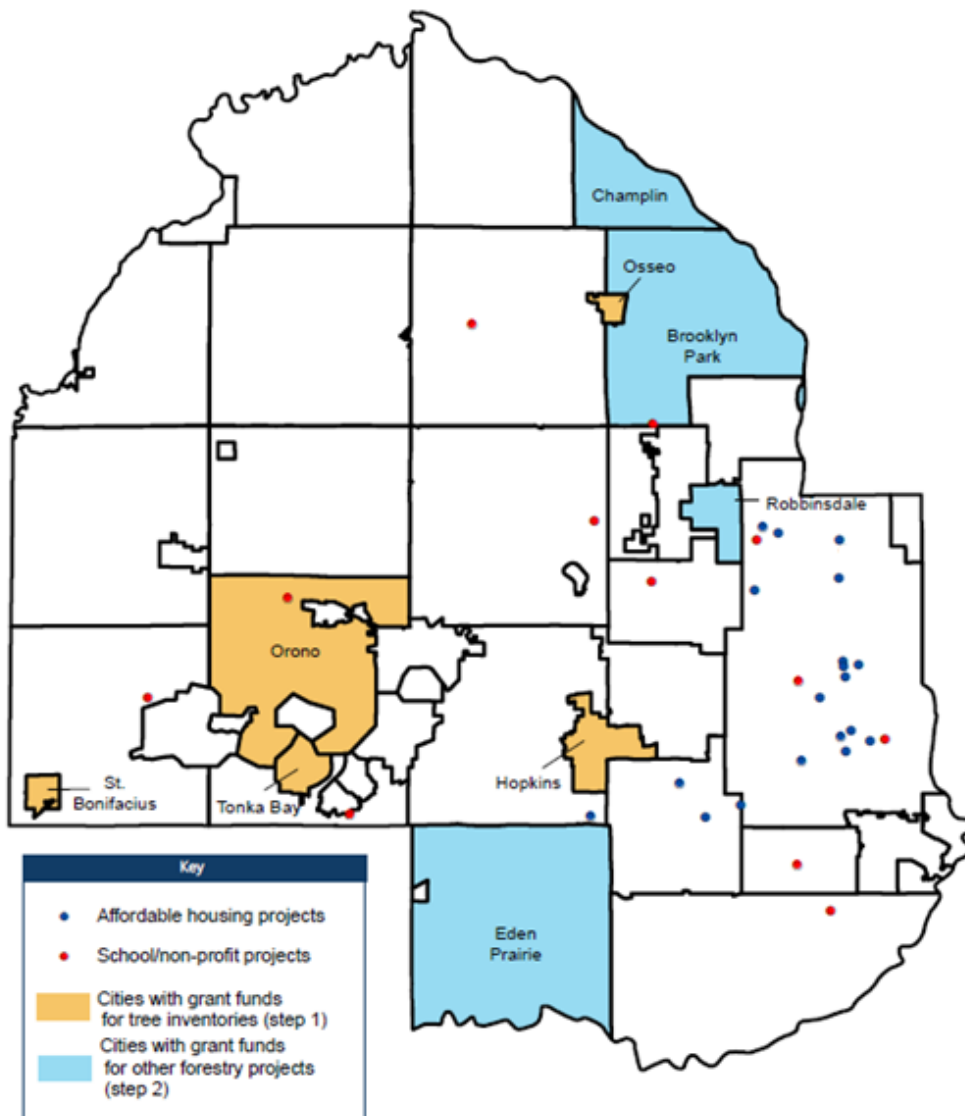
# Tree planting prioritization map

County forestry and Geographic Information Systems staff partnered to create a tree planting prioritization map. The county's tree planting priorities map factors in both environmental and demographic data. The map uses land cover data and disparity data such as income, housing, and health to understand areas that have lower tree canopy and higher needs. The areas in red are higher priority planting locations in Hennepin County. Access the online interactive map or view a pdf of the map at [www.hennepin.us/trees](http://www.hennepin.us/trees).



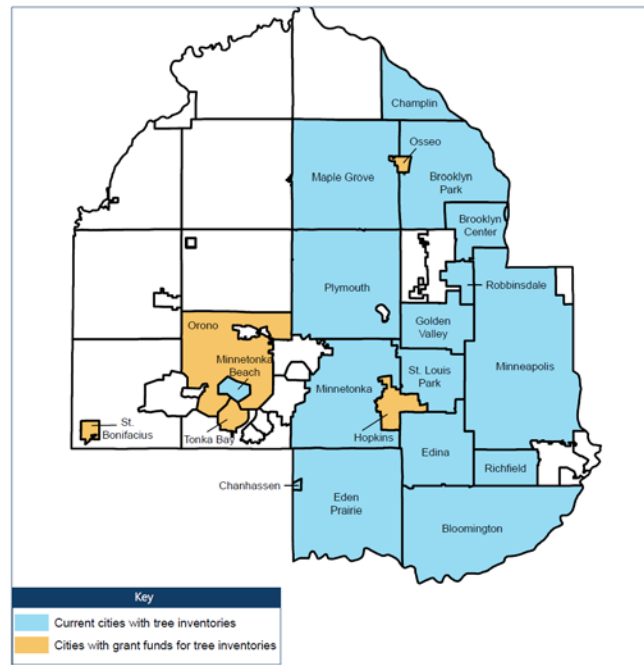
# Project locations

Below is a map of the recommended project locations. Projects are distributed throughout Hennepin County.



## Cities - Step 1 grants

Five cities applied for funding to start or complete a tree inventory of public trees. A tree inventory is the first step in managing trees as a public asset and can help with the planning, planting, removal, and maintenance of community trees. Cities will need to know the number of ash trees within their rights-of-ways and on public property to plan for and manage emerald ash borer. Additionally, many cities have proposed collecting data on additional trees to understand the current condition and future threats to their public trees. This data will help cities prepare for pests and diseases, and manage the community forest more proactively. Based on staff outreach efforts, only about one-third of Hennepin County municipalities have completed tree inventories, an integral part of a municipal forestry program. The map shows cities with current inventories and those that will have a tree inventory with grant funds.



Below is a summary of the applications recommended for award.

**Table 1: Step 1 grants**

City	Description	Recommended award amount
Hopkins	Perform a public tree inventory to include all species in the central Hopkins residential area and ash tree inventory in all other areas of the city.	\$5,000
Orono	Inventory all trees within city parks managed by the city.	\$5,000
Osseo	Collect data on all trees located within the city's right of way and on public property.	\$4,000
St. Bonifacius	Inventory all ash trees within city limits.	\$3,750
Tonka Bay	Gather tree information on all public lands within its jurisdiction.	\$2,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$19,750</b>

## Cities - Step 2 grants

Four cities applied for Step 2 that already have existing tree inventory data and are seeking funding to improve their tree canopies. Cities were able to request funding to update their tree inventory, create tree management plans, plant trees on public property, maintain newly planted trees, develop a tree ordinance, train staff in forestry practices, establish a community gravel-bed nursery, and conduct community outreach and education. All projects help to improve the community forest and provide a more resilient and long-lasting tree canopy cover.

Below is a summary of the applications recommended for approval.

**Table 2: Step 2 grants**

City	Description	Recommended award amount
Brooklyn Park	Update tree inventory to determine locations of ash trees, develop boulevard tree replacement plan, plant 40 trees in Hamilton Park with volunteers, create a new gravel-bed nursery, and provide funding for staff to receive training.	\$33,462
Champlin	Plant trees in medians (roughly 15 trees along Elm Creek Parkway and Goose Lake Parkway intersection, and 32 trees to replace in the Jefferson Highway medians) to replace ash trees that were removed.	\$9,996
Eden Prairie	Purchase tree stock (319 trees) for replacement of ash trees, treat 375 high quality ash trees (used as one time in-kind contribution), and assist in the removal of 279 public ash trees by funding stump removal equipment.	\$30,517
Robbinsdale	Update the existing city-wide public tree inventory. All public trees (streets, landscapes and parks) are part of the inventory, as well as trees along Hennepin County Road 81. In order to more successfully manage a community forest of approximately 5,000 trees, the city will conduct a full city-wide update to this dataset.	\$14,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$87,975</b>



## Affordable housing grants

Seven affordable housing projects applied to plant trees on their property and proactively manage ash trees. Generally, affordable housing project budgets are tight and it is difficult to set aside funding for large tree removals. Additionally, grant funding is being allocated towards new multifamily affordable housing projects to go above and beyond the city requirements for planting trees. This will increase the overall tree canopy cover on the property and contribute to the canopy of the surrounding area that has a less dense tree canopy cover.

Below is a summary of the applications recommended for approval.

**Table 3: Affordable housing grants**

Affordable Housing Provider	Description	Recommended award amount
City of Edina	The city will partner with three land trust homeowners to assist in removing five large ash trees on West Hennepin Affordable Land Trust-owned lots. The request is to remove the ash trees and replant five trees in similar locations.	\$12,400
City of Lakes Community Land Trust (CLCLT)	The CLCLT wants to increase tree species diversity through its current and future single-family home rehab and new construction projects (12 projects in progress currently) in Minneapolis. This funding would assist the CLCLT in planting trees with greater species diversity and deeper community engagement through tree planting events.	\$19,200
Newport Midwest - The Mariner	This is a new mixed-income housing development adjacent to SWLRT Opus Station Stop in Minnetonka. The request is to plant 23 trees around the new building to provide more green space, going above and beyond the city requirements.	\$20,000
RLBC Franklin Station, LLC on behalf of Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians	This is a new 109-unit 100 percent affordable housing development in South Minneapolis. The request is to plant 27 trees to add aesthetic and environmental benefits to the existing site, as well as provide a buffer between the Hiawatha LRT line and the development.	\$20,000
Twin Cities Housing Development Corporation	Seven Spruce and Phillips Place are two older affordable housing developments in South Minneapolis. Large ash trees are on both sites, and some have shown indications of EAB damage. The funding request is to remove and replace the ash trees with other species that will thrive in the urban environment.	\$20,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$91,600</b>

## Schools and non-profits grants

Eleven schools applied to engage students in planting trees on their school properties. Many schools intend to integrate tree-related learning into their curricula and engage students in planting trees around their schools. Most schools are planning to celebrate Arbor Day with their students and bring them outside to learn more about trees and get a hands-on outdoor environmental education opportunity. Some schools have proposed to plant trees to replace ash trees that have already been removed or will be removed in the near future.

Two non-profit organizations applied for funding to work with youth at a summer camp and school to improve the tree canopy cover and plant a fruit tree orchard.

All of these projects help improve the community forest and provide a more resilient and long-lasting tree canopy cover.

Below is a summary of the applications recommended for approval.

**Table 4: School grants**

School	City	School type	Free and reduced lunch	Description	Recommended award amount	Number of trees
Success Academy	Bloomington	Charter	>90%	Tree planting, tree-related curriculum, Arbor Day celebration.	\$4,952	36
Prairie Seeds Academy	Brooklyn Park	Charter	80%	Kindergarten through fifth grade will help plan and plant a fruit tree orchard. Students will be involved in care and maintenance.	\$2,105	17
St. John the Baptist Catholic Montessori school	Excelsior	Private	11%	Students will be responsible for helping plan, plant, and tend the orchard.	\$1,880	12
School of Engineering and Arts	Golden Valley (Robbinsdale School District)	Public	37%	Fruit tree orchard planted by students; incorporate forestry into the curriculum.	\$4,510	26
Weaver Lake Elementary	Maple Grove (Osseo School District)	Public	34%	Fifth grade students will help plant trees; incorporate forestry into the curriculum.	\$2,599	14

Lucy Craft Laney School	Minneapolis	Public	97%	Plant trees to replace ash removals, provide shade near playground, and replace trees lost from sidewalk improvements.	\$4,994	28
Whittier International Elementary	Minneapolis	Public	72%	Arbor Day celebration - include student planning, planting, watering.	\$3,900	22
Orono High School	Orono	Public	7%	High school biology class apple orchard planting on Earth Day.	\$2,500	10
Tree Trust/FAIR Pilgrim Lane School	Plymouth	Public	46%	All-school planting day	\$5,000	25
Richfield Public School District	Richfield - 7 buildings	Public	64%	Plant trees at seven buildings, environmental club will assist with tree planting, celebrate Arbor Day.	\$4,766	27
<b>Total</b>					<b>\$37,206</b>	<b>217</b>

**Table 5: Non-profit grants**

Non-profit	City	Description	Recommended award amount	Number of trees
SPARK-Y	Minneapolis	Plant an apple orchard at Roosevelt High School with the Roosevelt Urban Farming group. Students will be involved in the planting day and have a schoolwide Arbor Day celebration.	\$1,612	12
YMCA Camp Christmas Tree	Minnetrista	100 volunteers will remove invasive plants and plant trees. Campers will be engaged to take care to the trees and learn more through environmental education during the summer camp session.	\$5,000	31
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$6,612</b>	<b>43</b>

## Contact information

Jen Kullgren, Forester

Hennepin County Environment and Energy

[jen.kullgren@hennepin.us](mailto:jen.kullgren@hennepin.us)

701 4th Avenue South, Suite 700, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415

612-596-1175

[www.hennepin.us/trees](http://www.hennepin.us/trees)

