

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: AMES FOUNDATION TREE PLANTING PARTNERSHIP**

**BACKGROUND:**

Following the success of the Ames 150 tree planting in the City's parks, the Ames Foundation approached the City about continuing the relationship with the City for additional tree planting. With the initiation of the Emerald Ash Borer work, this partnership could help with the reforestation and diversification of the City's tree canopy.

After discussing the possibilities with Ames Foundation representatives, a proposed agreement was developed. This agreement would have the City provide matching funds for the amount raised by the Ames Foundation. In return, the Ames Foundation would guarantee that the combined funds result in trees being planted by volunteers for the cost of the tree with no additional labor charges. It is anticipated that this collaboration will continue for multiple years.

To allow for planting to begin this spring, it is proposed that the City's matching funds for the first year be reallocated from the Neighborhood Improvement Grant Program in an amount not to exceed \$15,000. Staff projects that that portion of the 2014/15 funding will not be needed for other NIP projects. It is anticipated that the City match for future years can come from EAB funding that is budgeted for replacement of ash trees.

The agreement with the Ames Foundation will clarify that the planting of trees is a City activity, so any volunteer would be covered under the City's insurance. The planting of trees will be in rights-of-way along streets, and there will be no work on private property.

City staff will work on identifying areas for plantings and selecting the types of species that will be allowed. Plantings will be done proactively in established neighborhoods before removals begin, and may not always be directly related to ash tree removals.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

- 1) Authorize staff to enter into an agreement with the Ames Foundation for tree planting, and approve a \$15,000 reallocation of 2014/15 Neighborhood Improvement Grant Project money for the first year's matching funds.
2. Do not proceed with this cooperative project.

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

By approving the agreement with the Ames Foundation, the City will be able to harness volunteer labor to help in the reforestation and diversification of the City's trees. This is especially important with the large impact the Emerald Ash Borer Plan will have on the community. This partnership will also see the public become more invested in new trees planted through volunteerism.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 as described above.