

Woodbury City Update

March 2018 • Volume 19, No. 3

Emerald ash borer found in Woodbury

Last summer, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) confirmed the first emerald ash borer (EAB) detection in Woodbury. EAB is an insect that kills ash trees when its larvae tunnel under the bark and feed on the part of the tree that moves nutrients up and down the trunk. The invasive insect has now killed tens of millions of ash trees in 30 states.

EAB was first found in Minnesota in 2009. Since that time, the MDA quarantined 13 counties in the state, including Washington County, to prevent the spread of EAB. A quarantine prohibits the movement of potentially infested items such as ash limbs, branches, and logs out of those counties, reducing the risk of further spreading the tree-killing insect.

“Residents may be tempted to take firewood from within Woodbury and transport it to cabins and camp sites outside the quarantine,” said Bob Klatt, the city’s Parks and Recreation Director. “We want to stress that firewood should not be moved.”

The Woodbury Forestry Division began implementing various EAB management practices since the pest

was first detected in Minnesota. This includes inspecting hundreds of ash trees on public land, removing low priority ash trees in parks and in boulevard areas, and planting replacement trees on public land where appropriate.

The infestation was discovered by a private tree service employee in the parking lot of the Woodbury movie theater. The city notified the MDA of a possible EAB infestation and staff were able to verify the infested trees.

What can residents do?

Residents are encouraged to take steps to mitigate the effects of the expected tree loss across the city as well as be on the lookout for signs and symptoms of EAB infestation. Here are some tips:

- Determine if you have ash trees on your property. Look for signs of EAB damage, which include dieback of leaves in the upper one-third of the tree’s branches, heavy woodpecker activity, bark splitting, S-shaped larvae tunnels under the bark, or a significant amount of water sprouts on the trunk. If you suspect an EAB infestation, first review the links available on the city’s website at woodburymn.gov, and then discuss removal or treatment options with a certified tree care company.
- DO NOT plant new ash trees.
- Consider removal of declining or small ash trees on your property now, especially if they are small enough to do the removal yourself. This may save on the cost of removal in the future. Keep in mind that most trees will require a professional to remove.

To prevent the accelerated spread of adult beetles, the MDA guidelines recommend pruning and removal of ash during the months of October through April when the EAB is dormant. If possible, avoid pruning and removal of ash



One way to detect the presence of emerald ash borer is by looking for S-shaped tunnels under the tree bark. The public is invited to learn more at a community open house Tuesday, March 27, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Woodbury City Hall.

trees during the months of May through September, when the EAB is active.

- Trees can be disposed of at the Woodbury compost site; disposal fees are charged. Call Composting Concepts at (651) 436-1213 for more information. Tree removal companies usually will dispose of the tree for you. In order to prevent the spread of EAB, all ash wood should be properly destroyed within Woodbury.
- Early detection and preventive treatments with approved insecticides can prolong the life of an ash tree. Tree contractors with pesticide applicator licenses should be consulted to discuss treatment options. Before deciding to treat your tree, educate yourself about the pros and cons of these chemicals. The city recommends the trunk injection application method; the soil drench application method has a higher risk for unwanted environmental effects. Keep in mind that there is no

“cure” for EAB infestation and insecticide treatments will be needed every one to three years, depending on the chemical used. Hire a certified arborist with a pesticide applicator’s license to perform these treatments.

- Do not remove or treat ash trees in the public right-of-way near the street (boulevard trees), as these may be managed by a homeowners association or the city in some areas. Woodbury Heights, Park Hills and Royal Oaks are the neighborhoods where boulevard trees are most likely city trees. Call the Public Works Department at (651) 714-3720 if you have questions.

A public meeting about managing EAB is scheduled for Tuesday, March 27, at 6:30 p.m. in the Ash and Birch Rooms at City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road (see adjacent box).

Much more information about EAB is available on the MDA website at mda.state.mn.us/eab.

Emerald ash borer community open house

- Tuesday, March 27, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
- Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road
- Ash and Birch Conference Rooms

The public is invited to a community open house to learn more about emerald ash borer and ash trees from Minnesota Department of Agriculture experts and city staff.

Questions about the open house should be directed to Parks and Recreation at (651) 714-3583 or parcs@woodburymn.gov.

Council Perspective

By Mayor Mary Giuliani Stephens

A new plan for economic development

Money Magazine recently released its list of the best places to live in each state and Woodbury was rated as the best place to live in Minnesota!

To determine the “Best Places to Live,” the magazine placed the greatest weight on economic health, cost of living and public school performance. They also considered Woodbury’s convenience, safety, diversity, higher median household income than the state median, amenities, and housing market costs and growth.

Many factors that make Woodbury a great place to live also make it a great place for business. Our convenient location provides businesses with easy access to - and visibility from - major freeways, and our proximity to the airport and the two downtowns allows businesses in Woodbury to attract customers, clients and employees from across the Twin Cities region. We continue to see strong growth in our housing market, which is also attractive to businesses seeking to grow their customer base.

2017 Community Development Annual Report

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) will be presenting the 2017 Community Development Annual Report at the March 14 City Council meeting. This year’s theme is “Strength in Numbers” and the numbers certainly tell a great story of Woodbury’s continuing success. This past year surpassed many previous years in the number of new housing units, the amount of new commercial development and the value of commercial reinvestment. More than a half million square feet of new commercial space was constructed in 2017 (valued at \$56 million), adding jobs and tax base to the city. With these newest developments, the city now has more than 11 million square feet of commercial space. There are more than 23,000 jobs in Woodbury (roughly 27 percent of the jobs in Washington County), solidifying our status as the economic engine

of the east metro. You can read the complete annual report on the city’s website at woodburymn.gov.

2018 Economic Development Strategic Plan

While the economy has certainly been strong in recent years, the city continues to be proactive when it comes to economic development. The EDC initiated a planning process last summer to update the city’s Economic Development Strategic Plan that sets forth goals and action strategies for economic development over the next three to five years.

The strategic planning process began with a review and analysis of the existing strategic plan, which was adopted in 2014. The EDC also reviewed a labor market analysis, which identified both the strengths and challenges of Woodbury’s labor market. Results from a survey of Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce members were also reviewed by the EDC. In addition, feedback was obtained from the city’s business retention and expansion program. The 2018 Economic Development Strategic Plan will be presented March 14 for consideration and approval by both the Economic Development Authority and the City Council.

The EDC recommended minor modifications to the new strategic plan, continuing to focus on two primary goals: Promote Woodbury as a community of choice, and optimize development and redevelopment opportunities. These two goals recognize that while we continue to attract new development, there will also be

more redevelopment opportunities as the city ages.

Promote Woodbury as a community of choice

While we have done a great job identifying our strengths as a business location, we need to make sure we are taking advantage of new marketing platforms and reaching the right audiences. As Woodbury’s medical and health care business sectors grew, we developed strategies to attract companies that would complement this market. Under the new strategic plan, the city will work to recognize industry trends and identify sectors with growth opportunities so that we can leverage or realign our resources as appropriate to adapt to economic changes.

Optimize redevelopment opportunities

As Woodbury ages, so do our commercial properties. One of the reasons we have been able to maintain our high quality of life is that our businesses continue to reinvest in their properties. There have been several recent examples of commercial redevelopment in Woodbury, with CityPlace at I-94 and Radio Drive the most visible. The new strategic plan emphasizes our need to work with owners of aging commercial sites and prepare for redevelopment opportunities.

Our residents serving on the EDC have worked hard, along with city staff, to chart a future path designed to optimize our development and redevelopment potential. Take some time to review the Economic Development Strategic Plan on the city’s website at woodburymn.gov.

The Woodbury newsletter is published 10 times per year by the City of Woodbury and mailed to all residents and businesses. Send comments to: Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road, Woodbury, MN 55125-3330. Phone: (651) 714-3500. Email: jason.egerstrom@woodburymn.gov.

Mayor: Mary Giuliani Stephens. **Council Members:** Christopher Burns, Andrea Date, Julie Ohs, Amy Scoggins. City Administrator: Clinton Gridley. Communications Supervisor: Jason Egerstrom.

The City of Woodbury is subject to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In accordance with the act, the Woodbury newsletter is available in other formats. Call Jason Egerstrom, (651) 714-3500; TDD: (651) 714-3568.

\$850 million settlement provides funding for cleaning up drinking water

In 2010, Minnesota’s attorney general sued 3M Company alleging that the company’s production of chemicals known as PFCs had damaged drinking water and natural resources in the southeast Twin Cities metro area, including Woodbury. On Feb. 20, 2018, the State of Minnesota and 3M reached a settlement agreement, with the state receiving a grant from 3M for \$850 million.

The court-approved agreement specifically outlines providing a clean, sustainable supply of drinking water as a top priority. It also indicates that improvements will be primarily focused on the cities of Woodbury, Afton, Cottage Grove, Lake Elmo, Newport, Oakdale, St. Paul Park and the townships of Grey Cloud Island and West Lakeland. Projects could include treating drinking water from existing wells, providing alternative sources of drinking water for cities or private well owners, or connecting homes served by private wells to municipal drinking water systems.

“We are pleased that both the state and 3M recognize that our water system has been damaged,” said Klayton Eckles, the city’s Director of Public Works and Engineering. “While our water is safe to drink today, we’ve had to make significant operational changes due to the presence of PFCs in the aquifer. We look forward to working with the state agencies and other impacted communities to develop water treatment solutions that will provide safe drinking water for generations to come.”

Details about the settlement and how the funds could be used are available on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency website at pca.state.mn.us. Additional information about PFCs in Woodbury is available on the city’s website at woodburymn.gov/pfes.

Community members who have questions about Woodbury water operations may contact Public Works at publicworks@woodburymn.gov or (651) 714-3720.

Market value notices set to hit mailboxes in March

Property value notices are expected to be mailed to property owners during the last week of March by Washington County. Like in previous years, the valuation notices will be mailed with property tax statements for taxes payable in 2018.

The “2018 Notice of Valuation and Classification for Taxes Payable in 2019” will indicate the market value established this year on Jan. 2. This market value is the approximate amount for which a property could sell and is the basis for your 2019 taxes.

Determining Market Value

Each year, the county assessor’s office reviews the assessed market value of all property to determine whether changes in the local real estate market require a change in assessed values. Real estate sales are verified and studied based on the location, age, and style of home and quality of construction to determine these market adjustments.

If property owners question their 2018 estimated market value or classification listed on their “Notice of Valuation” form, they should:

1. Contact the assessor’s office. Property owners who have questions or concerns regarding the market value set for their property are encouraged to contact the property appraiser assigned to their area by calling (651) 430-6175. The appraiser will review the property data and sales information with you and, if necessary, schedule an interior review of the property. A large majority of concerns can be resolved through this administrative review without the need for a formal appeal.

OR you may attend any of the four regional Open Book meetings scheduled by the county (see 2018 schedule in adjacent box). Your appeal can be made in person, through a letter, or through a representative authorized by you. The Open Book process offers an informal setting for property owners as well as several scheduling options.

2. Appear before the County Board of Appeal and Equalization. Property owners who are not satisfied by speaking with the assessor’s office or with the action taken at the Open Book

meeting may appear before the County Board of Appeal, consisting of elected county commissioners, the county auditor, and/or appointed officials. You must contact the assessor’s office at (651) 430-6175 by Wednesday, May 9, to be placed on the agenda.

3. Appeal to Minnesota State Tax Court. The alternative method of appeal is bypassing the first two steps listed above. It involves making an appeal directly to the Minnesota Tax Court. The deadline to appeal to the Minnesota State Tax Court is April 30 of the year that the taxes are due. That means if a property owner wishes to appeal taxes due in 2018, they must file an appeal with the court by April 30, 2018. For more information, visit the tax court website at taxcourt.state.mn.us, or call (651) 539-3260.

If you have any questions regarding the appraisal process or the 2018 market value, contact the Washington County Assessor’s Office at (651) 430-6175 or visit the Washington County Assessor’s Office website at washington.minnesotaassessors.com.



Open Book meetings set for market value appeals

Woodbury property owners can attend any of the following Open Book meetings to appeal their market value or property classification.

- Thursday, April 5, from 5 to 7 p.m., Cottage Grove City Hall, 12800 Ravine Parkway South
- Wednesday, April 11, from 5 to 7 p.m., Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue North
- Thursday, April 19, from 5 to 7 p.m., Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road
- Wednesday, April 25, from 2 to 7 p.m., Washington County Government Center in Stillwater, 14949 62nd Street North

Property owners who have questions or concerns are strongly encouraged to contact the property appraiser responsible for their area as a first step. The number to call is (651) 430-6175.

Pedestrian safety is the responsibility of motorists and pedestrians

As the snow begins to melt, city sidewalks and trails will be buzzing with pedestrian activity. Here are some safety reminders for drivers and pedestrians from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety:

- Drivers must stop for crossing pedestrians at marked crosswalks AND at all intersections without crosswalks or stop lights.
- Pedestrians must obey traffic signs and signals at all intersections that have them.
- Vehicles stopped for pedestrians can proceed once the pedestrian has completely crossed the lane in front of the stopped vehicle.
- Pedestrians must not enter a crosswalk if a vehicle is approaching

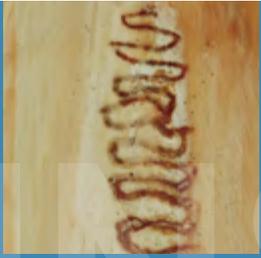
and it is impossible for the driver to stop. There is no defined distance that a pedestrian must abide by before entering the crosswalk; use common sense.

- When a vehicle is stopped at an intersection to allow pedestrians to cross the roadway, drivers of other vehicles approaching from the rear must not pass the stopped vehicle.

Safety tips for drivers

- Scan the road and sidewalks ahead for pedestrians. Drive attentively and at safe speeds. Remember, pedestrians can be difficult to see, especially in bad weather or at night.
- Anticipate pedestrians especially around schools.

- Before making a turn, look in all directions for pedestrians.
- Look carefully behind your vehicle before backing up, especially for small children.
- Watch for people in wheelchairs and motorized carts, who may be below eye level.
- Stop for crossing pedestrians at every intersection, even those without crosswalks or stoplights. Stop far enough back so drivers in other lanes can also see the pedestrian in time to stop.
- Do not block crosswalks while stopped, and don’t pass other vehicles stopped for pedestrians.



**Emerald ash borer
in Woodbury**

Page 1



**Settlement helps
fund water cleanup**

Page 2



**Home market
valuations**

Page 3

Postal Customer
Woodbury, MN

Registration for summer recreation programs begins March 21

Looking for fun summer adventures? Once again, Woodbury Parks and Recreation is offering a number of cool summer recreation programs and special events for all ages.

Details will be available in city's summer recreation programs brochure to be mailed the week of March 12.

Online registration for summer recreation programs begins March 21.

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Woodbury City Update

Visit the city's booth at Community EXPO April 7

Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 7, and plan to attend the ninth annual Woodbury Community EXPO. The event, sponsored by the Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce, will be held at East Ridge High School from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The expo is free and family-friendly.

More than 130 local businesses and non-profit groups will participate, promoting their companies and organizations. There also will be entertainment and demonstrations throughout the day.

Be sure to stop by the city's booth to:

- Learn about city facilities, services, seasonal employment, recreation programs, development projects, the city's comprehensive plan update, water efficiency opportunities and car seat safety;

- Provide feedback about how the city should use sponsorship revenue generated at HealthEast Sports Center (and be entered in a drawing to win a free smart irrigation controller for providing feedback - a \$200 value);
- Pick up a free parks and trails map and other trinkets; and
- Enjoy a fun, interactive activity for kids.

Outside, the whole family can check out some of the city's big trucks (weather permitting).

For more information about the expo, call the Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce at (651) 578-0722 or visit woodburychamber.org.

