To: Mayor Steve Allender and City Council Members

From: Andy Bernard, Urban Forester
Department of Parks and Recreation

Subject: Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan

Date: April 24, 2018

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an exotic beetle native to Asia. It was found in Michigan in 2002 and has decimated the ash tree populations across much of the eastern United States. EAB is moving westward and can be found in Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Colorado. EAB does not migrate well on its own, but does travel easily in firewood. With the Black Hills being a popular tourist destination we are at an elevated risk to see the beetle here in the next decade. Once EAB has established itself in an area no ash tree is safe, and it is impossible to destroy the population. Once EAB is found here it is here for good.

With this looming threat the Parks Department and the Urban Forestry Board thought it in Rapid City’s best interest to develop a management plan to deal with the impact of EAB. Portions of the plan can be implemented now, such as strengthening the health and increasing species diversity of our urban forest. Other aspects of the plan will assist staff in identifying infested trees and streamlining the processing of biomass once the insect is identified in the City. This management plan is not meant to manage EAB itself but to better manage the City’s urban forest, and identify ways to minimize damage from the insect.

With Rapid City having an estimated ash tree population of 40,000 trees (20% of all trees) the time to implement a plan is now. The plan has been put together by several people from different viewpoints and agencies and uses the most current data available from Federal and State Agencies. We feel the EAB Management Plan is a straight forward way to deal with an issue that will have a major impact when it shows up.

The Rapid City Parks Department, the Urban Forestry Board and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommend that the City Council adopt the EAB Management Plan.