

City Council Agenda Item Memo

From: Kristin Zimmerman, Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director

Council Meeting: March 10, 2026 / March 24, 2026

Subject: Ordinance 26-010: revise Chapter 62 Division 3. – Dead, Dying, Diseased or Infested Trees

Presenter: Kristin Zimmerman, Parks, Recreation and Forestry

Summary and Recommended Action:

The proposed Tree Ordinance revisions modernize the code by expanding its focus from Dutch Elm Disease and Emerald Ash Borer to a broader urban forest health framework. The updates allow the City to address dead, dying, diseased, or infested trees of any species, providing flexibility to respond to emerging pests and public safety concerns. These changes maintain existing cost recovery procedures while strengthening our ability to proactively protect Brookings' urban forest and public infrastructure.

Item Details:

The proposed revisions modernize the Tree Ordinance by expanding its focus beyond Dutch Elm Disease and Emerald Ash Borer to address dead, dying, diseased, or infested trees of any species that may pose a threat to public safety or the health of the urban forest. The updated language broadens the definition of public nuisance, allowing the City to respond to emerging pests, pathogens, and environmental stressors rather than being limited to specific species. This is particularly timely as the Brookings community is seeing signs of Pine Wilt, reinforcing the need for a more comprehensive and flexible regulatory framework.

Inspection authority is clarified to allow review of any reported or suspected hazardous tree, and notice requirements for private property are streamlined to allow for a reasonable timeframe for compliance based on the severity of the condition. The revisions also update abatement procedures to emphasize preventing the spread of current and future threats, remove outdated references to specific diagnostic processes, and maintain the City's authority to recover costs for work performed when property owners fail to comply. Cost responsibility remains unchanged, with the City covering trees in the public right-of-way and private property owners responsible for nuisances on private property. Overall, these changes provide clearer authority, greater flexibility, and a more proactive framework for protecting Brookings' urban forest, public safety, and infrastructure.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has reviewed the recommended changes and are supportive.

Legal Consideration:

City Attorney has reviewed Ordinance

Strategic Plan Consideration:

- Safe, Inclusive, Connected Community – The City of Brookings will create an environment for inclusive programs, gathering places, and events where the community can safely live, work and come together to participate in opportunities for learning, recreation and enjoyment.
- Sustainability – The City of Brookings will meet environmental, community and economic desires and needs without compromising future generations' quality of life by strategically planning, implementing and maintaining infrastructure and facilities.

Financial Consideration:

No additional financial impacts

Supporting Documentation:

Ordinance - clean

Ordinance - marked