



July 8, 2014

Mr. Gary Lamppa
4837 Greenhaven Drive
Vadnais Heights, MN 55127

RE: LCCMR Project #127-F, Empowered Citizens Improve 5 Urban Forests: Statewide Model

Dear Mr. Lamppa:

As Mayors, we hope you'll agree that now is the time for action to improve urban and community forests across Minnesota. Our community forests are not only declining but also facing increasing risks, as you and other environmental experts are already keenly aware. Like other cities and towns, we're faced with the realities of limited resources to maintain core infrastructure – including our tree canopies. But we're optimistic that a well-structured and collaborative initiative such as this will be key to an effective, affordable long-term solution.

From our City Hall perspective, this proposal is promising because it will yield a suite of documentable results. Yes, we are eager to see our cities' tree canopies benefit through reforestation and maintenance. But the proposed project offers much more: it will build local capacity in terms of a well-trained and organized volunteer base and provide a tailored plan to achieve work that needs to be done.

The benefits of this proposed initiative extend far beyond the borders of our five cities. Improving community forests means better health for Minnesotans and improved air and water quality, along with economic benefits from energy conservation and neighborhood vitality. Through this proposal, we can invest in another infrastructure of sorts – citizen volunteerism – to provide the fuel to make possible community forest improvements for hundreds of cities and towns that plug into this program in coming years.

We recognize that this approach, championed by state agencies and their nonprofit and academic partners, will not only provide us with volunteers to meet the needs of neighborhood trees, but an enduring pathway to ensure that all of Minnesota's urban and community forests are sustained for generations to come. Thank you for your serious consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Don Ness
Mayor, Duluth

Eric Anderson
Mayor, Mankato

Ardell Brede
Mayor, Rochester

Dave Kleis
Mayor, St. Cloud

Chris Coleman
Mayor, Saint Paul