



# Washington County Wood Recovery and Utilization Program

Washington County requests **\$4 million in state funds and policy support** to enable the effective implementation of mandated wood waste management strategies.

## Issue At-A-Glance

- Minnesota’s Metro Solid Waste Policy Plan requires counties to respond to rapidly increasing amounts of wood waste from diseased trees and severe weather. However, regional wood product markets are underdeveloped, landfilling of wood waste is not allowed, and spontaneous combustion of stagnant wood chip piles has become a serious risk for local tree care companies.
- Tree service costs have been steadily increasing and are expected to continue to rise. Those in search of affordable solutions may choose unsafe tree work or disposal by dumping or burning, which threatens both public health and the environment.
- Processing tree material into usable products helps protect residents from volatile tree care fees and smoky air. By converting tree material into wood and carbon products, Washington County will capture and store carbon in accordance with Minnesota’s Climate Action Framework and benefit the entire region by establishing a sustainable system for material recovery and utilization.
- State funds will enable the county to develop the sites needed to convert surplus tree material into lumber and carbon products that can improve soil and water quality, thereby expanding access to these products throughout the region and creating sustainable material supply chains for manufacturers to scale up processing.

## Support

- Washington Conservation District
- Partnership on Waste and Energy
- Lower St. Croix Valley Fire Department
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

## Previous Considerations

This project was submitted for consideration in 2025.

## No Action

If the state funds are not provided, residents in the region will continue to face rising tree service costs, experience polluted air due to accidental and intentional burning of wood waste piles, and miss an opportunity to capture the economic value from local trees needing removal.

## Financial Implications

- Washington County: \$5 million
- **State of Minnesota: \$4 million**

Total estimated project cost: \$9 million

