

1. Contact Information (* required answer)

Organization Name	City of Hardin
City/Town/Community	Hardin
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Primary Contact Person	Alexandria Edwards
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Secondary Contact Person (Title, Phone number, email address)	Michael Hurff Public Works Director 406-665-9260 ext 118 publicworks@hardinmontana.gov

Part 2) Community Context & Need

Describe your community's current continuum of tree care in (a-g) below:

a) What existing urban forestry components are currently in place? (tree/park board, tree ordinance, charter, Tree City USA status, etc.)	The City of Hardin does not currently have Tree City USA status or a dedicated tree or urban forestry board. The City does, however, have a Parks and Playgrounds Committee within the City Council that provides oversight of parks and public recreational spaces. While the City does not have a formal urban forestry program, several existing municipal code provisions address trees, landscaping, and vegetation. These include provisions for tree preservation and landscaping within planned unit developments, landscaping requirements for certain commercial and industrial developments, landscaped setbacks in mobile home parks, and regulations governing trees, shrubs, and other vegetation that may obstruct visibility at intersections, alleys, and driveways. Hardin's code also recognizes trees and landscaping as components of community development, open space, buffering, and public safety. Trees are considered as part of certain public right-of-way improvement and permitting processes, providing an additional point of connection between tree care and the City's infrastructure. These provisions demonstrate that the City already has several pieces of an urban forestry framework, although they are dispersed throughout the municipal code rather than incorporated into a comprehensive tree ordinance or management program. Overall, Hardin's current continuum of tree care can be characterized as developing. The City has existing policies, regulations, and a municipal committee that provide a foundation for stronger urban forestry practices, but it does not currently have a dedicated tree board, comprehensive public tree inventory, formalized public tree management program, or Tree City USA designation. The City has an opportunity to build upon these existing components by establishing clearer responsibility for public trees, developing consistent planting and maintenance practices, and creating a more coordinated community tree-care program.
b) Who manages public trees? (public works, parks, mayor, clerk, volunteer, tree/park board)	Public trees are maintained by the City of Hardin Public Works department.
c) Whether you have a tree inventory, when was it last updated and its current format? (GIS, TreePlotter, TreeKeeper, spreadsheet, paper, etc.)	The City of Hardin does not have a tree inventory.
d) Recent urban forestry activities/projects within last 5 years.	The City of Hardin has begun identifying urban forestry as an important component of community development and quality of life. The City's 2021 Growth Policy and Downtown Revitalization Plan identifies, under Tourism and Placemaking Goal 3, the goal to "Improve the experience of being in Hardin by investing in history, art, and trees" (p. 41). The plan further recommends coordinating with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) to identify resources and grant opportunities to establish an urban forestry program. Although a dedicated urban forestry program has not yet been established, the City has continued to recognize the importance of trees and landscaping through its planning and community development efforts. The City's existing municipal code includes provisions addressing tree preservation, landscaping, vegetation, and open space, providing a foundation for future urban forestry activities. The City and its residents have expressed interest in developing a more coordinated system for caring for, maintaining, and expanding Hardin's community tree resources. A 2018 Community Needs Assessment, led by former Mayor Joe Purcell, references the need for tree care and maintenance. The City's current efforts are focused on building upon these existing policies and community interest to establish a more formal and sustainable approach to urban forestry.

e) Any recent tree related challenges (challenges with tree board recruitment, storm damages, hazard concerns, drought stress, signs of pests/disease)	The City of Hardin has experienced significant weather-related challenges affecting community trees within the past five years, including a severe hail storm and microburst that caused damage to trees and other community infrastructure. These events highlighted the vulnerability of the City's existing tree canopy to severe weather and the need for consistent assessment, pruning, maintenance, and replacement of damaged or hazardous trees. The City also faces challenges associated with not having a formal urban forestry program or dedicated tree board. Tree-related maintenance and hazard concerns are addressed as they arise rather than through a comprehensive community tree inventory or coordinated management plan. This can make it difficult to systematically identify aging, damaged, or potentially hazardous trees, prioritize maintenance, and plan for replacement and long-term canopy health. Developing a coordinated approach to tree care would help the City better prepare for future severe weather events while supporting the long-term health and resiliency of Hardin's urban forest.
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f) Primary support requested (check all that apply)	Tree inventory, Tree care and management plan
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Note: Communities may propose multiple activities, but final scope will be based on available budget and overall project feasibility

g) Additional capacity support requested (check all that apply)	Establishing or rejuvenating a tree board, Create or update guiding documents such as a tree board charter and tree ordinance
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Part 3) Project Scope, Feasibility & Impact

a) Explain why your community needs support for the activities and/or trainings for any of the procedures selected above.	The community of Hardin needs support to develop a community Tree Inventory and Tree Care & Management Plan because neither currently exists. Hardin has an established population of community trees, with trees that have been part of the community for generations. City records indicate that trees were planted along Crawford Avenue as early as 1922, with additional trees purchased in 1935. As this existing tree canopy continues to age, the City needs a better understanding of the location, condition, species, maintenance needs, and potential hazards of its community trees. In 2026, for example, a mature tree on Center Avenue in front of Harriet's restaurant was removed, highlighting the need for a systematic approach to assessing and managing aging trees. The City also recognizes the need to establish a Tree Board and update or develop guiding documents to provide long-term structure for community tree care. Currently, Hardin does not have dedicated urban forestry staff, a tree inventory, a formal tree-care management plan, or a tree board to guide these efforts. The community has expressed interest in caring for and expanding its tree canopy, but the City has not had the financial resources or specialized urban forestry expertise necessary to establish a comprehensive program. Grant support would provide the technical assistance, planning, and organizational foundation needed to move from addressing tree issues as they arise toward a proactive, coordinated approach to tree care and management.
b) Estimate the scale of work needed for consultant, contractor and/or tree planting support for the primary activity(ies) you selected. Typical funding amounts are between \$4500-\$6000 for consultation/contractor time and tree purchases.	The 2017 Urban Forest Resource Analysis for the State of Montana reported 1,000 inventoried trees in Hardin. Based on the typical consultant cost of \$700 per 150 trees, it is estimated that the Tree Inventory will cost approximately \$4,700. Additionally, the project would include a Tree Care and Management Plan estimated at \$1,500. Total project cost is estimated at \$6,200.

Please use the guidance below to estimate your project scope:

- A) Tree inventory:** Estimated number of public trees to be inventoried. Typical consultant cost is approximately \$700 per 150 trees inventoried. Cost may be lower or higher depending on how much data collection support your staff or volunteers can provide.
- B) Tree Care and Management Plan:** Typical consultant cost: approximately \$1500 for leading the development of a management plan.
- C) Pruning:** Estimate the number of medium/large trees needing pruning, including species and priority locations. Typical contractor cost: approximately \$400-\$1200 per tree, depending on volunteer or staff assistance with cleanup.
- D) Hazard Removal and replacement:** Estimate the number of hazard trees needing removal and identify priority locations. Typical contractor cost: approximately \$700-\$3000 per tree, depending on volunteer or staff assistance with cleanup. Please also estimate the number of replacement trees you would like to plant.
- E) Species diversification planting:** Identify priority planting sites and estimate the number of trees you would like to plant. Explain how the trees will be cared for in their first 5 years including watering and structural pruning. Typical projects support 5-15 trees, depending on species, size, and supplies needed. Please indicate whether you need support purchasing supplies (fencing, stakes, mulch, trunk guards, waterbags, etc.).

c) Please list staff, volunteers, or partners who will participate in the project.	Alexandria Edwards, Project Manager, City of Hardin. Project Manager. Michael Hurff, Public Works Director, City of Hardin. Public Works support. Andrew Lehr, Finance Officer/City Clerk, City of Hardin. Grant Administration. Jeremey Krebs, Alderman, City of Hardin. Parks and Playgrounds Committee Chair. Andrea Berry, MSU Extension Agent, Big Horn County. Inventory Volunteer. Kim Caprata, Community Member. Inventory Volunteer.
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d) Explain in detail what type of training or capacity support that your staff, tree/park board, volunteers or community require. See part 2 (g) above.

The City of Hardin will need training and capacity-building support to establish or rejuvenate a tree board and to develop the guiding documents necessary to implement the proposed Tree Inventory and Tree Care & Management Plan. The inventory and management plan will provide the City with important information about the condition, location, species, and maintenance needs of its public trees; however, the City also needs the organizational structure and knowledge to use that information effectively over the long term.

Training will help City staff, tree board members, volunteers, and community members understand how to use the tree inventory and Tree Care & Management Plan to establish priorities for tree maintenance, pruning, removal, replacement, and future planting. Participants will learn how to interpret inventory information, identify priority needs, develop realistic maintenance schedules, and use the plan to guide annual tree-care activities and budgeting.

The City will also need assistance establishing or rejuvenating a tree board that can provide ongoing community involvement and oversight of the City's urban forestry efforts. Training will address appropriate board structure, member roles and responsibilities, meeting procedures, volunteer engagement, and coordination between the tree board, City staff, and the community. This will help ensure that the inventory and management plan do not become static documents, but instead serve as active tools for managing Hardin's public trees.

In addition, the City will need technical assistance in creating or updating guiding documents, including a tree board charter and tree ordinance. These documents will establish the framework for carrying out the recommendations identified through the tree inventory and management plan, including responsibilities for tree care, decision-making, maintenance, planting, and long-term management of public trees.

This capacity support is particularly important because Hardin currently does not have a comprehensive tree inventory, Tree Care & Management Plan, or active tree board. The project will therefore build both the information and the institutional capacity needed to manage the community's aging trees. The ultimate goal is to equip City staff, board members, and community volunteers with the knowledge, tools, and structure necessary to use the inventory and management plan to make informed decisions and sustain a proactive tree management program beyond the grant period.

e) How will you ensure the maintenance and sustainability of the project, and move towards the next step in your continuum of tree care based on this support?

Maintenance and sustainability of the project will be ensured through the establishment or rejuvenation of a City tree board and the formal adoption of the Tree Care & Management Plan by the City of Hardin. The tree board will help oversee implementation of the plan, support ongoing tree care priorities, and keep the City's tree inventory and management recommendations current.

City Council adoption of the Tree Care & Management Plan will also provide a framework for incorporating tree maintenance, removals, replacements, and future planting into the City's annual budgeting and Capital Improvements Planning processes. This will help transition tree care from a reactive, individual-project approach to a coordinated, long-term program.

The inventory and management plan will provide the City with the information needed to prioritize future maintenance and investment based on tree condition, risk, location, and community needs. As the City builds this capacity, it can move to the next step in its continuum of tree care by implementing the plan, maintaining the inventory, establishing regular inspection and maintenance practices, and identifying future resources for tree planting, replacement, and ongoing care.

By signing below, I certify that the information provided in this application is accurate and that our organization/community is committed to implementing this project if awarded funding.

Signature (electronic signature accepted)  Signed
