



## STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor Keis and City Council Members  
FROM: Chris Heineman, City Administrator  
DATE: July 28, 2021  
RE: 2021 Deer Control Program

### **ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED:**

The City Council is asked to provide direction on if a special deer hunt should be allowed in 2021. If the City Council wishes to authorize a special deer hunt in 2021, a motion to direct staff to work with Metro Bowhunters Resource Base (MBRB) on specific details is requested.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Over the past twenty years, the City Council Little Canada has maintained a deer management program involving education and periodic removal of deer. The previously stated goals of the program are:

- To prevent starvation and disease from overpopulation of deer
- To reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents involving deer
- To preserve and protect the land of property owners
- To maintain a population at a “socially acceptable” level

Aerial survey data collected by Ramsey County Parks & Recreation indicated that the northeast part of the City (including a portion of Maplewood) showed dramatic growth in the deer population from 2003 to 2010. Control efforts were started in 2010, and the numbers appear to have been substantially reduced. City staff also reviewed best practices and consulted with other professionals regarding population control options. The results are as follows:

- 1) Fertility Control Drugs - Estimated cost is \$200 to \$500 per deer. Very labor intensive - average 8 man-hours per deer. Must be administered to high percentage of female segment to produce any results. Does not reduce current population. Future doses may be necessary. Research has not shown this to be a viable solution for urban deer issues.
- 2) Sharpshooters - This option is expensive. Pricing is likely in the range of \$200 to \$300 per deer. While this technique has proved effective in other Ramsey County areas, it was felt other options should be pursued first.
- 3) Urban Bowhunting Through Metro Bowhunters Resource Base (MBRB) - Most cost efficient and safe method for reducing urban deer populations. Bowhunters can apply and are required to pass education and proficiency tests before approved to hunt. The City, in conjunction with MBRB, can decide on hunting details to best fit specific situations. Hunting takes place during the State of Minnesota archery season.
- 4) Allow Private Hunting Through a Permitting Process and Utilizing the Bow and Arrow Deer Hunting Season – This method is used by the City of Vadnais Heights pursuant to set criteria. Given the lack of large, privately owned sites and the concerns about controlling hunter activity, this option has been employed on a very limited basis for large parcels (>25 acres).

### Annual Deer Count

<u>Year</u>	<u>Deer Count</u>
2000	18
2001	35
2003	14
2004	20
2006	54
2007	52
2008	51
2009	71
2010	81
2011	69
2012	Unable to Count
2013	36
2014	24
2015	Unable to Count
2016	21
2017	Unable to Count
2018	19
2019	38
2020	43
2021	31

#### Additional Notes:

- In 2010, a private hunt permit was granted for the Sculley property at 3000 Labore Road.
- In 2011, a private hunt permit was granted for Frattalone property at 3204 & 3205 Rice Street
- In 2012, no count was taken due to the lack of snow cover.
- For 2014, the aerial deer count of 24 was down from 109 counted in the same areas in 2011.
- In 2015, the survey did not occur due to lack of snow cover.
- In 2017, a count was not taken due to a lack of snow cover.

### Control Results

In the fall of 2009, the City contracted with Metro Bowhunters Resource Base (MBRB), a non-profit organization of bowhunters to conduct a controlled hunt in the area of St. John's Cemetery and other adjoining lands. 13 deer were removed from that area over three, two-day hunt periods that were spaced three weeks apart. The first hunt resulted in 10 deer being taken. The second yielded three deer and no deer were taken during the last hunt.

- In 2010, the hunt areas were expanded and 52 deer were taken in the designated control areas. Even with 52 deer taken and 42 of them coming from the areas in the NE part of the City, one can see from the chart previously discussed that the population only dropped from 81 to 69 in that area. Furthermore, the St. John's Cemetery Area had been hunted for two years and still had a population of 13 deer. That number was down only one deer from 2010. This indicates the need for a continued program if numbers are to be reduced and then maintained at acceptable levels.
- In 2011, 33 deer were taken from the designated deer hunt areas. We also added additional hunt areas consisting of Gervais Mill, LC Elementary (south portion) & Spooner Park, and the Frattalone Property). These areas had additional restrictions and were late season additions. No deer were taken from these areas in 2011.
- In 2012, hunt areas remained the same. Twenty (20) deer were taken in Little Canada and an additional 7 were taken in the Spoon Lake area added by the City of Maplewood.
- In 2013, 12 deer were taken from approved hunt areas. An additional eight (8) deer were taken in Maplewood in the Spoon Lake Area and Fisher's Corner.
- In 2014, a total of only six (6) deer were taken in Little Canada. An additional seven (7) deer were taken in nearby locations in Maplewood.
- In 2015, the only permit issued was for the Frattalone Property. No hunting on other sites in Little Canada was permitted.
- In 2016, no hunting was permitted within the City of Little Canada
- In 2017, a limited special hunt was permitted on the Scully property and the MBRB site. A total of nine (9) deer were taken in 2017.
- In 2018, no hunting was permitted within the City of Little Canada
- In 2019, no hunting was permitted within the City of Little Canada
- In 2020, no hunting was permitted within the City of Little Canada

It is important to state that it is not the City's intent to eradicate deer from the community. Deer are considered a valuable element of Little Canada's ecosystem. Absent natural predators, the City must consider methods of controlling the deer population at healthy and acceptable levels.

Prior to implementing the Deer Management Program, the number of citizen complaints about deer had been increasing. Residents are typically concerned that the local deer population increases the risk of car/ deer accidents or that deer are causing damage to plants and landscaping throughout the community. A significant amount of staff time was also dedicated to dealing with complaints and removing deer that had been struck by vehicles. Since the program was implemented in 2009, the deer population has dropped to more manageable levels and complaints have subsided.

### **Deer Management Goal & Objectives**

Management Goal: Manage deer populations at healthy and socially acceptable level

Management Objectives:

- Develop a management program to maintain deer populations within acceptable limits
- Maintain an overall deer population of approximately 10 deer per square mile (40 deer)
- Manage deer populations within the City so as not to exceed 20 deer per square mile
- Manage deer populations to reduce the number of car/deer collisions
- Educate residents as to the value of deer and deer habitat; minimizing nuisance problems through planting and landscaping; and the ramifications of supplemental deer feeding
- Create a uniform system for handling resident input relative to deer management
- Pass an ordinance prohibiting the feeding of deer and other wild animals/fowl

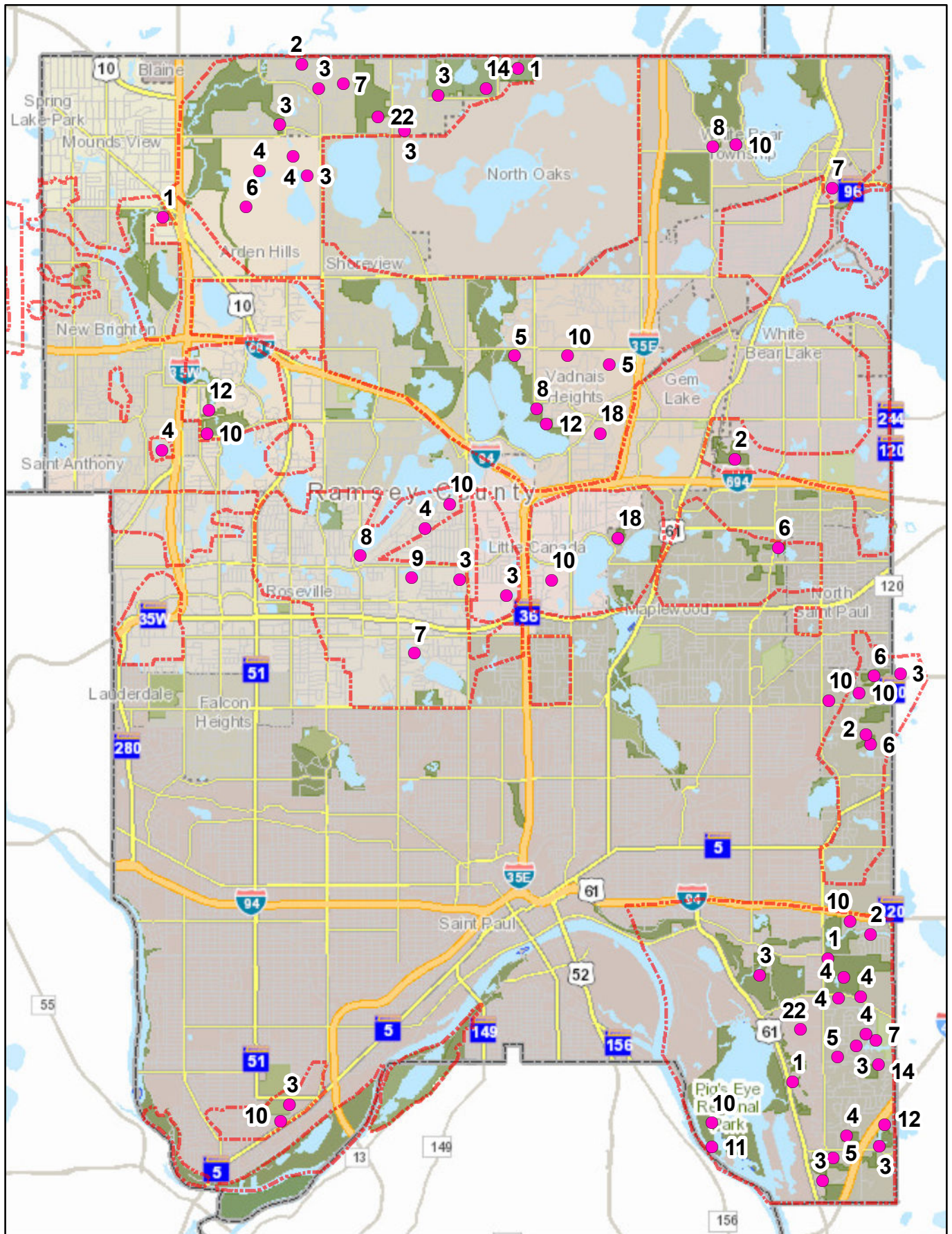
### **Management Policies**

- 1) The City will continue to contract with Ramsey County Parks & Recreation for annual aerial deer survey services. The annual survey, resident input, and the availability of suitable hunt sites shall be used as a basis for determining the extent and location of any deer removal efforts for the upcoming season.
- 2) Attempt to document all resident input, including phone calls, e-mails and letters. These shall be collected by the City Administrator and be provided to the City Council for its annual evaluation of the deer management program.
- 3) Deer removal efforts necessary to achieve City objectives shall be limited to archery and shall be conducted by the Metro Bowhunters Resource Base (MBRB) or by private property owners when they have a site at least 20 acres in size and the hunters pass appropriate proficiency criteria and abide by City hunt rules.
- 4) Deer removal operations shall be conducted on public property where practical, and on private property where conditions are conducive to archery and of sufficient size and development is limited. Combinations of parcels to yield a site of sufficient size (ideally no less than 20 acres) and with limited development are acceptable; subject to property owner consent.
- 5) Notice will be mailed prior to the first removal date to all property owners whose land adjoins a proposed deer removal site. The notice shall include the dates of all hunts for that season and contact information for deer management personnel (city staff and law enforcement).
- 6) The City will provide deer management information to its residents through the City's newsletter and website.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

If the Council wishes to authorize a control hunt in 2021, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. Based on the 2021 aerial survey count of 31 deer located within the city limits, a special hunt should be capped to meet the management objective of 10 deer per square mile.
2. The City of Little Canada partner with MBRB to conduct a special deer hunt in a limited area for a specified period of time. City staff should be directed to work with MBRB to determine the area.



Ramsey County Deer Survey 2021  
 447 deer total in survey areas  
 2/22 - 2/23

Deer 2021  
 Survey Areas 2021

