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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## City of Rochester temporarily relaxes tall grass and weed enforcement

April 6, 2020 – ROCHESTER, MINN. – To reduce impacts on property owners during the COVID-19 response, the City of Rochester is temporarily relaxing enforcement of Chapter 8-5. – Tall Grass and Weeds (grass taller than 12 inches) through October 2020 to allow residents who have been impacted by COVID-19 to focus on higher priorities.

Economic uncertainty caused by COVID-19 will require the Parks and Recreation Department to operate with a lean spring and summer seasonal workforce. The temporary adjustment in tall grass and weed enforcement will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to focus on core safety and maintenance activities in the parks and recreation system.

While the city still maintains an obligation to inspect and address noxious weeds, grasses and other non-noxious vegetation will be allowed to grow taller

Since lawn and landscape maintenance is allowed during the Governor's "Stay at Home" executive order, residents able to continue gardening, mowing lawns, and maintaining landscaped areas – while following all Center for Disease Control (CDC) precautions – are encouraged to do so.

The city's Forestry Division team cites the positive side of having more areas with tall grass and other vegetation is that our local pollinator populations may see a benefit in this change. They share that pollinator species are most vulnerable during May when they have returned from migration or come out of hibernation and need locally-sourced nectar to continue their life cycles and colonies.

"These small insects may seem insignificant in comparison to other global issues," says Park and Forestry Division Head Mike Nigbur, "but even small changes to minimize the impact on bees can make a big difference for our local food production and health of the environment."

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