

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 12, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commission

VIA: James Slaton, City Manager

FROM: Deena Drumgo, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Approval of Application for Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Community Forestry grant

SYNOPSIS: The City Commission will consider approval of FDACS grant application to enhance storm resiliency by performing preventative tree maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Commission take the following actions:

1. Approve the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Community Forestry grant application.
2. Authorize the Mayor to execute the necessary documents on behalf of the City.

BACKGROUND

In September 2022, Hurricane Ian struck peninsular Florida with extensive wind, flood, and storm surge impacts, causing significant damage to the urban forest. Hurricane Ian impacted most of Florida, with urban forest damage stretching from Fort Myers to Jacksonville. This grant program aims to restore and enhance urban forests across Florida. Its central objective is to strengthen the resilience of these forests against future storms.

The City of Lake Wales is pursuing a grant application under the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Community Forestry – Hurricane Ian Recovery (CF-HIR) Program, funded federally by the USDA and Forest Service. The City intends to pursue funding under the Tree Maintenance project category to enhance storm resiliency by performing preventative tree maintenance, including structural pruning and hazard reduction, on public trees in areas vulnerable to storm impacts. CF-HIR application preparation and submittal will be completed by Hale Innovation in coordination with the City. The application submission deadline is January 30, 2026. The maximum grant amount is \$75,000 and would require a 25% match.

The project areas will include:

- Central Avenue (Hwy. 27 to Dr. MLK Jr. Blvd.)
- Central Avenue (Scenic Hwy. to South Lakeshore Blvd.)

- Crystal Lake Park
- Spook Hill (along 5th Street)
- North 3rd Street (Lake Alta)

LAKE WALES CONNECTED PLAN ACTION STEPS

Action #	Description
13	Pursue funding/sponsorship for Olmstead streetscapes
49	Install Olmstead streetscapes focusing initially on E. Park Ave from Scenic Highway to Lake Wailes; continue implementation throughout Downtown and Northwest Neighborhood as funding is available.
59	Continue to pursue funding/sponsorship for Olmstead streetscapes

OTHER OPTIONS

Do not approve the FDACS grant application.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is a 25% match required with a \$75,000 maximum grant amount.

ATTACHMENTS

Project Location Map
Grant Application