



CITY OF PARK RIDGE

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 30, 2015
TO: Mayor & Alderman
FROM: Shawn Hamilton, City Manager
RE: **UPDATE Holiday Lights Request**

At the February 27, 2015 Budget Workshop, under Alderman request, Alderman Shubert made a request for consideration to reinstitute the Holiday Lights Program. At the time of the request, using historical information, a range of \$40,000 - \$50,000 was estimated for the total expense of the program. The last time the City fully funded this program was 2009. At that meeting, there was consensus for staff to figure out the logistics of the Holiday Lights Program and bring back additional information.

I held a meeting with the Chamber and Mike McGrath, Public Works, and a previous member of the Holiday Lights Coalition. While the Chamber had involvement in some of the initial coordination efforts for volunteers, they made it clear that the Holiday Light Program was not part of their mission. Last year, the Chamber did push out a request to have businesses light the trees outside of their locations. The funding and number of volunteers for the program diminished over the past couple of years. The Chamber did put out a survey to other Chambers, where the results clearly showed that the City coordinated any Holiday Lighting. There are some cases where Chambers were involved in the lighting of a main tree in the town. 11 Chambers responded to the survey request. In speaking with some of the volunteers who have assisted in the past, they would still be interested in helping to light certain areas of Uptown, based upon the number of volunteers.

The City embarked on trying to determine the expense if the program was reinstated. Mike McGrath is working with our GIS Department and our tree inventory program to map all of the trees that would need lights, both in the Uptown and South Park. We are also mapping where power for each of the trees would come from (some at the base, central power using cords, etc). Having all of this information will help us determine how many lights need to be purchased. This work is not yet complete. However, preliminary estimates for purchasing of lights, cords, and cables is approximately \$15,000. A majority of this expense would recur annually, as lights are damaged, do not survive the season, or would be cut down to remove from the trees. In the opinion of the PW Director, the cost of replacing the lights every year is less than the cost of labor to take all of the lights down, wrap, and store properly.

Once all of the locations are mapped, the City can determine how much labor would be needed to complete the lighting. That can be completed with 1) existing PW staff through reassignment during the work day, 2) existing PW staff with OT, 3) outsource the installation and removal of the lights, or 4) hire temporary employees to hang the lights. As the mapping is not complete, these numbers also have not been completed.

At this point in the process, the only figure that we have a good estimate on is the \$15,000 for lights, cords, and cables.

Alderman Shubert is requesting funding for this program with PW coordinating the efforts to complete, and the scheduling of volunteers. If it is determined, after the FY16 budget is completed and our work done, to provide funding for this program, it can be funded through a budget amendment.

Our Mission:

THE CITY OF PARK RIDGE IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING EXCELLENCE IN CITY SERVICES IN ORDER TO UPHOLD A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, SO OUR COMMUNITY REMAINS A WONDERFUL PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK.