



CITY OF PARK RIDGE

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 26, 2014
TO: Shawn Hamilton, Wayne Zingshiem
FROM: Tony Gliot, City Forester
RE: Fiscal Year 2015 FORESTY DIVISION BUDGET

<u>Line Item Description</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>Requested FY 2015</u>	<u>(+ / -)</u>
Tree Removal	\$440,000	\$400,000	- \$ 40,000
Cyclic Tree Trimming	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$ 0
T&M/Emergency Tree Work	\$175,000	\$150,000	- \$ 25,000
Street Tree Health Treatment (Tree Spraying)	\$10,000	\$40,000	+ \$ 30,000
General Contractual (Street Tree Inventory)	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$ 0
Field Materials/Supplies	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$ 0
Reforestation	\$150,000	\$125,000	- \$ 25,000

EXPLANATION:

Tree Removal-

Due to EAB, DED, Drought, and an aging population of poor quality street trees, the number of public property trees dying or becoming hazardous continues to be abnormally high. Therefore, tree removal budgeting simply must remain elevated to keep pace with the rate of decline of the City's urban forest.

With out a fully updated Street Tree Inventory, it is difficult to accurately predict the actual amount of funding that will be needed to remove all the trees that will require removal in FY 2015. However, Staff believes \$400,000 worth of tree removal work is a realistic baseline.

It should be noted that until the majority of City Ash trees are removed, tree removal budgets will be high, and could (in any year skyrocket). However, once EAB has run its course in Park Ridge, necessary tree removal funding should decline sharply and stabilize. Additionally, completion of the comprehensive street tree inventory will enable the Forestry Division to identify tree removal trends and better predict tree removal budget needs going forward.

Cyclic Tree Trimming-

Over the last few of years, the Forestry Division has made it a priority to adequately prune all City street trees every 5 years. Committing sufficient funding to accomplish this important priority (in conjunction with updating the City's Street Tree Inventory) will lead to lower tree removal and T&M emergency costs in the near future. It also ensures all City street trees are evaluated regularly (leading to a more safe urban forest). At current trimming contract rates, the City can ensure that an adequate number of street trees are trimmed every year for \$130,000. It should be noted that Fiscal Year 2015, will be the 4th year of the 5 year plan to prune all City Street trees (greater than 6" in diameter).

T&M/Emergency Tree Work-

The actual amount of money expended each year for this budget line item is highly dependent on storms and the overall health of the City's Urban Forest Infrastructure. While Park Ridge has not yet experienced any significant storm damage events in FY-2014, the poor state of health of many City street trees alone will result in the use of virtually all of T&M/ Emergency funds allocated.

Staff understands that, in the current economic climate, budgeting to be prepared for unpredictable expenses is not always possible (given other priorities), and is therefore comfortable with a reduced budget allocation for T&M/Emergency work in FY-2015. However, just one or two severe storm events could claim the vast majority of budgeted dollars for this line item. The result would be the need to find additional funding (midway through the fiscal year) and/or the need to drastically reduce the amount of non-emergency T&M work orders.

It should be noted that, as the overall health of the Urban Forest Infrastructure improves (as a result of better tree trimming practices and removal of poor quality trees), less T&M/Emergency Tree Work funding should be necessary.

Street Tree Health Treatments-

Due to the timing of hiring a part-time Urban Forester (last summer), the Forestry Division was unable to implement the Elm Injection program, as it had intended. However, now that the part-time Urban Forester position is up and running, the \$40,000 budgeted for Street Tree Health Treatments will be put to good use, and will protect some of the City's largest and most valuable trees.

As the Forestry Division is able to compile and evaluate data on treatment success and value of this treatment program, it will be able to present its findings and recommendations for City Council discussion.

General Contractual-

This line item is intended to pay for phase 3 of the (4 phase) comprehensive update to the City's Street Tree Inventory.

Once the inventory update has been completed, the Forestry Division will examine the use of interns or other staff to maintain an updated inventory at a lower annual cost.

An updated and functional street tree inventory will make the development of comprehensive 10-Year Urban Forest Management Plan possible. Implementation of such a plan will identify goals and priorities, provide budgeting clarity, and allow the City to track progress, efficiency, and value of all Forestry Division Programs.

As the importance and value of an up-to-date Street Tree Inventory cannot be overstated, Staff will continue to investigate budget neutral means of completing this inventory ahead of schedule.

Field Materials/ Supplies-

No change in budget is requested. \$3,000 should be adequate to fulfill Forest Division Supply needs in FY 2013-14.

Reforestation-

An allocation of \$125,000 for tree planting will pay for anywhere between 380 and 420 new parkway trees. While this number will likely fall short of the amount of parkway trees that will need to be removed over the same period, the option does exist for additional monies to be drawn out of the City's Tree Bank to supplement the Reforestation Budget. The Forestry division is currently looking into this option, and will present its findings and recommendations to the City Council prior to the Fall 2015 planting season.

It will take time, commitment, and planning for the City of Park Ridge to recover from significant loss of urban forest canopy benefits, as a result of Emerald Ash Borer and an aging population of poor quality trees. Once the city's comprehensive street tree inventory is complete, the Forestry Division will be able to clearly define current and imminent street tree vacancies, and develop a cohesive strategy for systematically rebuilding the City's street tree population.

Training-

With the addition of a part-time Urban Forester (now an ISA Certified Arborist), beneficial and appropriate training will continue for both Arborists.

Membership Dues-

The City's Tree Inventory Software subscription, and involvement in relevant Urban Forestry organizations will continue.

Salaries-

The addition of a part-time Urban Forester has been a big help in reducing the response time to residents (on non-emergency issues). Budgeted Salaries for the City Forester and Urban Forester positions remain in line with expected compensation intentions for FY 2015

Potential Grant Funding-

The Forestry Division is always looking for potential grant opportunities that could benefit the management of our Urban Forest resource.

If the City is fortunate enough to receive one of these grants, I may ask that the City Council adjust line item allocations (within our proposed budget) to satisfy our grant obligations.