



## Interoffice Memo

990050

**To:** Chairperson & Public Works Committee  
**From:** Stan Rickard, Director of Public Works  
**Date:** March 2, 1999  
**Subject:** Tree Planting Policy/Procedure

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Over the last two construction seasons, the Engineering and Forestry Divisions have been discussing ways to improve the quality and service of tree planting for capital projects. Listed below is the current procedure for procuring trees for CIP projects.

### Current Procedures

- Forestry is notified of the scope and limits of a project.
- Forestry inventories the project area and gives Engineering a quantity estimate for tree removal and replacement.
- When the construction documents are at 50% complete or greater, Forestry is given a copy and asked to identify all dead, diseased or hazardous trees. Forestry is also asked to provide a tree replacement schedule with recommended species based upon site characteristics.
- When the documents are at 98%, Forestry is asked to participate in a final review. Engineering incorporates final comments concerning tree removal and replacement and any necessary landscaping changes.
- Once the project is awarded, Forestry and the Resident Engineer (RE) mark all trees for removal.
- Prior to tree planting, Forestry goes out to the nursery with the landscaping sub-contractor and tags the trees for planting.
- Prior to planting, the RE and the Forester mark the placement of the trees (spacing and species).
- Once the trees are planted, the Forester inspects them and creates a punch list for the RE.
- Forestry signs off on the job as complete once all punch list items have been addressed.

This process works well internally. There is good communication and cooperation between the divisions. However, at times there are problems administering the contract as intended. Some recurring problems with the general contractor/landscaping sub are listed below:

- Many times, the general contractor does not award a landscaping sub-contract until late in the project. With a late sub-contractor award, many tree species are not available and the Village has to settle for a less than optimal selection. Typically, the Village will not wait until the next planting season to request the desired trees. Not planting all the trees at the same time is perceived by some residents as preferential treatment (i.e., neighbor "A" got his tree because he knows someone).
- The quality of trees at some nurseries is marginal, especially late in the season.
- The cost of a tree ranges from approximately \$15.00 to \$150.00 higher per tree. Engineering has reviewed tree cost data for six large roadway reconstruction jobs and found that, on the average, the Village is paying about \$41.00 more per tree by using a general contractor than it would using the tree consortium. Typically the Village plants between 200 and 300 trees a year. By implementing the proposed program the Village can save between \$8,200 and \$12,300 per year. The cost analysis is attached to this memo.

### **Proposed Process**

As an alternative to the current method of tree replacement/enhancement for capital projects, Forestry and Engineering propose to use the current contract with the *West Central Municipal Conference Suburban Tree Consortium* to plant trees in capital project areas. As a member of the Consortium, the Village receives high-quality trees specifically grown for street-tree use. Because of the high volume of trees sold through the Consortium, member communities are able to obtain these high-quality trees at a relatively low price. Beginning in the Spring of 1999, the Consortium will be using four nurseries instead of one to ensure that sufficient quantities will be available to meet the needs of the member communities. Orders will still be placed five years in advance so the Forestry Division will know what species will be available and what the cost will be. But by utilizing all four nurseries, the Village will have the flexibility to make last-minute additions as the situation warrants. Using the *Street Tree Inventory*, the Forestry Division can determine how many open spaces are in a given CIP, what species are needed, and calculate an estimated cost to fill all of those open spaces.

Through conversations with Consortium officers, there are sufficient quantities of trees currently available so that this program could be implemented as early as Spring 2000. In the unlikely event that the Consortium could not supply adequate quantities, the Forestry Division could obtain additional trees from other sources and have them planted by our current landscape contractor. As mentioned above, with four nurseries supplying trees, there should be no problem securing sufficient quantities to meet the needs of future CIPs.

### **Procedures That Would Remain The Same**

- Forestry would still be informed of projects scheduled in the CIP.
- Forestry would continue to work with the RE concerning tree removal.

### **Recommended New Procedures**

- Forestry would replace the trees through the Consortium instead of using the general contractor's landscaping sub.
- Trees would be planted during the growing season following the completion of the project.
- Tree budgets would still be charged to the capital projects and a line item would be created in the CIP for tree replacement.

### **Benefits**

- Saves the Village money.
- Quality of the planted trees is higher.
- Forestry concentrates on one planting contract with one vendor instead of multiple contracts with multiple contractors.
- A line item in the CIP lets the elected officials and the public know how much money is dedicated to maintaining a healthy tree population.

Please comment on these proposed changes. Public Works anticipates placing this item on the March 18, 1999 Board of Trustees agenda.

