



210217

June 10, 2021

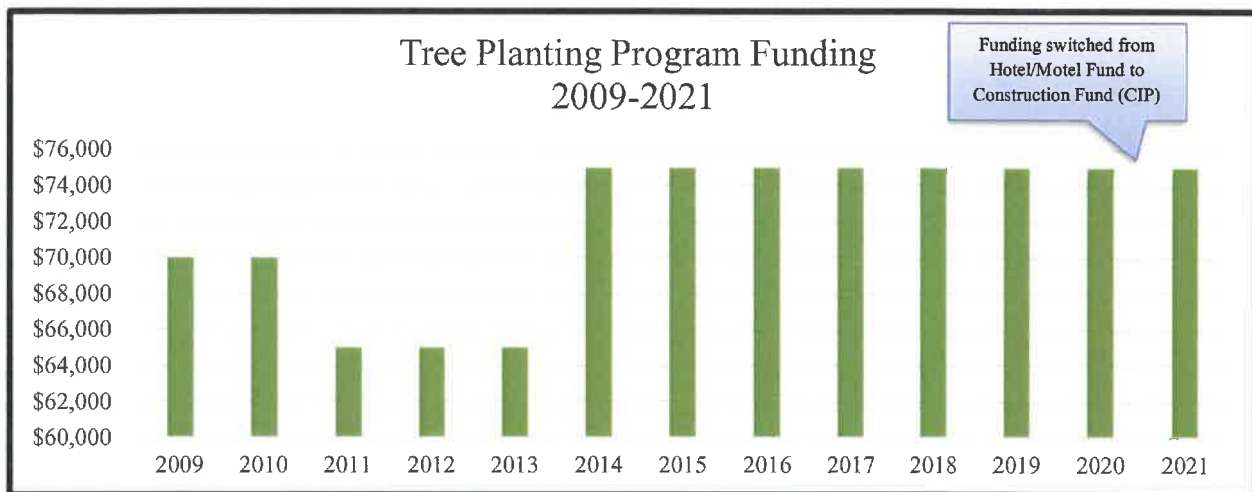
TO: Public Works and Environmental Concerns Committee

FROM: Carl Goldsmith, Director of Public Works *g*

SUBJECT: Tree Planting Program

**Background**

The Village of Lombard maintains an inventory of 18,675 trees that are located within public rights-of-way or on Village owned property. The Village funds the planting, removal and stump grinding through the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The funding level for the tree planting in the 2021 CIP is \$75,000 and is funded through the Construction Fund. The funding level has been at or below \$75,000 annually since 2009. The chart below identifies the levels of funding. Prior to 2021, the source of funding had been the Hotel/Motel Tax Fund.

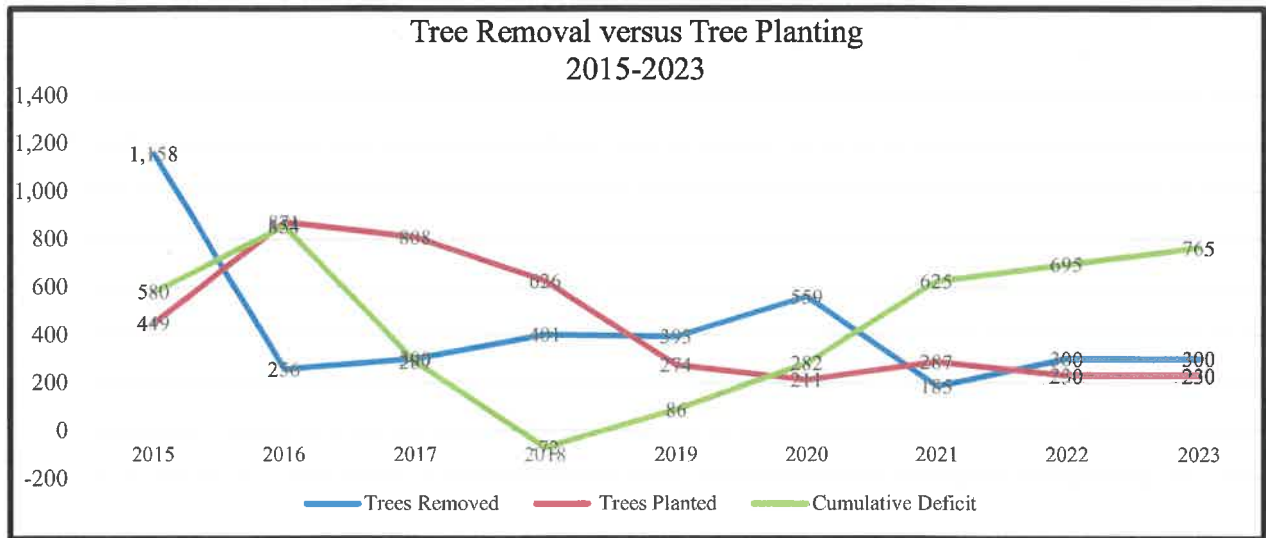


The current funding level of the tree planting program has resulted in a structural budget deficit that has led to an inverse ratio of removals to plantings. This is one of several factors that have led to a situation that staff believes should be addressed. These factors are detailed below.

The Village completed a large ash tree removal and planting program in response to the EAB epidemic in 2018. Since that time, the Village has seen a noticeable increase in the number of parkway trees removed. There are several factors that contribute to the increased number of trees removed. Among the factors are the tornado that impacted the Village on August 10, 2020. The Village removed 167 trees that were damaged due to the storm event. Additionally, the Village has seen an increase in the number of trees removed due to the condition of several species of maples. The Village has seen a steady decline in the health of Silver Maples and Norway Maples, which can be tied back to the age of the trees, as well as the changes to the climate. Roughly 50% of all trees removed by the Village in the last five years are maples.

Due to the increased rate of tree removals, the Village has fallen into a deficit position between the removals and plantings. Since 2019, the Village has removed 625 more trees than it has planted. The impact of this deficit is that the timeframe for trees to be replanted has grown from the Village’s normal timeframe of 12 months, to upwards of 3 years. The chart below tracks the removals versus plantings between 2015 and

2021. The Village anticipates that the deficit will grow to almost 800 trees by 2023. This assumption estimates the removal of 300 trees in 2022 and 200 trees in 2023. This deficit does not include plantings in any available planting spaces where a tree has not been removed.



The Village currently purchases and plants trees through the Suburban Tree Consortium (STC). Orders for the STC are submitted five (5) years in advance to ensure adequate supplies of high-quality trees are available. On average it takes 5-7 years for a tree to mature to the Village’s planting standards. The Village has contacted the nurseries used by the STC to determine if additional trees would be available to try and make up the deficit. The Village has confirmed that additional trees would be available to address the deficit. The cost of tree planting through the STC is \$350.00 per tree. In order to eliminate the deficit that exists based upon removals, the Village would need to purchase and plant 800 trees in addition to the planned plantings through 2023. A total cost estimate of \$260,000 has been identified to accommodate the increased plantings. The proposed funding of the program could come from the Construction Fund, which currently has sufficient reserves based upon the projected CIP projects included in the 2022-2031 CIP.

Staff has identified three (3) options to address the tree planting deficit. These options are summarized below:

1. Continue to fund the tree planting program at the current rate, which will result in lengthened timeframes for the planting of replacement trees.
2. Include \$220,000 in funding in 2022 to fund the planting of roughly 625 trees that will eliminate the deficit in tree removal to planting. *It is unknown at this time if the nurseries can provide sufficient trees to address this planting cycle.*
3. Increase the number of trees planted in Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 by 200 trees per planting season. This will result in an increased funding level per planting season of \$65,000. *Staff has confirmed availability of sufficient trees through the STC.*

**Recommendation**

Considering all of the factors that contribute to the deficit planting, staff recommends that the Village proceed with Option 3 to address the current planting deficit. Additionally, staff recommends that the Village include additional funding in the CIP beginning in 2024 to address the structural budget deficit. Staff recommends that the budget for Tree Planting in the CIP be increased to \$125,000 annually beginning in 2024. The additional funding will allow for the planting of roughly 312 trees annually. This will allow the Village to replace removed trees on a one-to-one ration per practice/policy.