



MEMORANDUM

To: Public Work Committee

Through: Carl S. Goldsmith, Director of Public Works *CS*

From: Eric Hendrickson, Urban Landscaping and Forestry Supervisor,
Public Works

Date: August 9, 2019

Subject: Tree replacement share cost options/potential reforestation fund sources

The Village of Lombard current practice is to replace removed parkway trees when there is room per Village spacing requirements to do so at the same address, within twelve to eighteen months. This wait time is increasing as tree mortality continues to surpass the Village's replanting efforts. The Village also plants trees in the parkway adjacent to new construction when there is sufficient spacing at the developer's cost. Finally, residents can request a tree if there is room to plant per Village spacing requirements even when a tree has not been recently removed at their address by the Village.

Trees planted as part of new construction are funded by fees collected with the building permit. The remaining trees are planted using resources from the general and hotel/motel funds, currently budgeted at \$75,000 each fiscal year. At the Village's current average installed price of \$350 this equates to 215 trees per year. In light of projected future budget shortfalls, Public Works is weighing options for modification and clarification of the planting program and funding the tree planting program.

Village staff has two recommendations for modifications of the Village ordinance in regards to the tree planting program as established in Chapter 99, Article III. The first recommendation would be to revise the ordinance to reflect current and proposed future practices. The second recommendation would be instituting a fee collected when a Village owned tree is removed for private development to fund additional tree planting to offset environmental and ecological services lost due to the removal.

Recommendation 1:

Staff recommends establishing a three-tier program for the planting of parkway trees. The first tier would be for trees removed by the Village or its contractor, where there is determined to be sufficient room for replacement trees. These trees would continue to be planted by the Village with no fees charge to the adjacent property owner. It is estimated that this would continue to encompass the majority of the trees planted each year. These trees would continue to be planted in the order that the original trees were removed subject to availability or trees and funding.

The second tier would be new trees planted at the request of adjacent property owners when sufficient spacing is determined to exist. These trees would be planted where no tree has been previously removed but the adjacent property owner desires the installation of a parkway tree. The Village would establish a \$150 fee for the installation of these trees. Once the fee has been received the trees would be placed on list for the next available planting season.

The third tier would be trees which are required due to development. These trees would continue to be planted by the Village in the next available planting season after construction and landscaping activities are completed on the adjacent parcel. Community Development would continue to collect \$350 for each required tree based upon parcel frontage. Any trees removed for the purpose of the development would continue to be entirely at the developers' cost once approved by the Village.

Some communities allow property owners to participate in a share cost program to accelerate the replanting of removed trees adjacent to their property. In these programs, the property owner pays a portion of the tree planting cost to advance the planting of a tree to the top of the list. Village staff recommends against this sort of program in the interest of continuing to provide equitable services. These programs would allow those with the means to pay the fee to receive priority service at the expense of those unable to pay the fee.

Recommendation 2:

The second recommendation is to add language to the ordinance whereby the Village would collect a fee to when developers remove a parkway tree to recoup environmental and ecological benefits lost with the tree. Currently, the Village collects \$350 per parkway tree required based upon the parcel frontage regardless of the size or number of trees removed from the parkway. Many Chicagoland communities collect fees from the developer based on the size or appraised value of the parkway trees removed in addition to the fee for required parkway plantings to offset the loss of ecological and environmental services provided by those trees. These services include oxygen production, rainfall interception and cleaning the air by removing particulate matter.

There are two main methods which are used to evaluate the tree removal fee. Both methods use the diameter of the tree at breast height (DBH - defined as four- and one-half feet above the ground) which is a standard of measurement when working with trees. From that measurement a determination of cost can be derived.

The replacement tree method calculates the number of two-inch trees which would be required to equal the size of the existing tree's DBH. The fee is then equal to the communities' average cost for a planted tree multiplied by the number of trees required. Under this scenario, if a developer removes a 16" tree, the formula for the required fee would be: $16 \text{ divided by } 2 = 8$; $8 \text{ times } \$350 = \$2,800$ fee which would be deposited into the Village's tree planting fund.

The flat fee method charges a set dollar amount per diameter inch measurement at breast height. Collected fees in the area start at around \$150 per inch DBH. If the Village were to opt for this method, a per inch DBH fee of \$175 would be equivalent to that collected in the first method. The enclosed spreadsheet provided a comparison of these two methods and the potential fees which would have been collected from trees which have been removed for development in the last few years.

Staff recommends modifying the ordinance to collect a fee calculated using the replacement tree method as described above.