

DPW FORESTRY SECTION 2010 PROPOSED BUDGET

Executive Summary

1. The 2010 Proposed Budget for the DPW Forestry Section is \$11,639,678, a decrease of \$775,435 (-6.2%) from the 2009 Budget. (page 1)
2. The 2010 Proposed Budget includes the initiation of the Diversity in Urban Forestry Program. The program will recruit, train and place 30 participants in Urban Forestry careers over a 2-year period, with the first 15 trainees for the program included in the 2010 Proposed Budget. The program mirrors the Urban Forestry Specialists Training program. (page 2)
3. The 2010 Proposed Budget authorizes 255 positions for the DPW Forestry Section, 12 less than the amount in the 2009 Budget. Full-time equivalent O&M supported positions are reduced from 163.7 to 141.08. Full-time equivalent non-O&M supported positions are increased, from 24.0 to 34.5. The increase in non-O&M supported FTE positions is due to both the implementation of the Diversity in Urban Forestry trainee program and the shifting of supervisory personnel for the section's Capital projects from O&M in 2009 to the Capital budgets in 2010. (page 3)
4. The 2010 Proposed Budget includes the elimination of the Environmental Services Superintendant position. The elimination of this position is largely an organizational restructuring of the management team. The Proposed Budget also eliminates 1 of the 3 Forestry District Manager positions, increasing responsibilities for the 2 remaining District Managers. These changes will result in challenges relating to completing administrative tasks timely, reduced field supervisory capabilities, and slower responses to aldermanic and citizen requests, as well as less focus on long term goals and perform strategic planning as remaining managers necessarily spend more time attending to daily operations. (page 3)
5. The Forestry Section's operating expenditures are being increased by \$96,540 (12.9%) for 2010. The 2010 Proposed Budget also includes equipment purchases totaling \$134,000. This represents a 21.4% reduction in equipment purchases from the amount budgeted for 2009. (page 3)
6. The 2010 Proposed Budget includes 1 Special Fund, Vacant Lot Maintenance. This fund is used for vacant lot maintenance, including mowing and sidewalk snow removal. The increase of the fund from \$600,000 in 2009 to \$800,000 in 2010 represents a shifting of the fund resources between the Forestry and Sanitation functions and is based on services provided during 2008 and 2009. (page 4)

7. The 2010 Proposed Budget includes 4 capital improvement items for the Forestry Section. (pages 4-5)
- **Concealed Irrigation and General Landscaping/City Boulevards: \$462,879**
Allocates for repair of concealed irrigations systems in City boulevards, and for replacement of these systems necessitated by street paving projects. This capital account also funds replacement of landscape materials on the medians of streets that were reconstructed in the previous year. The 2010 Proposed Budget includes funding for the replacement of 52 deep taps, only.
 - **Tree Planting and Production Program: \$1,741,125**
Provides cash financing for the Forestry Section's tree planting and production capital account, a \$241,125 (16.1%) increase from the 2009 funding level. This program funds the planting of street and boulevard trees in conjunction with the construction of new streets or the reconstruction of existing streets or sidewalks. It also funds the planting of replacements for dead, diseased or damaged trees.
 - **Sustainable Boulevard Plan: \$580,000**
Funds the third and final year of the Sustainable Boulevard Plan. The Sustainable Boulevard Plan will eliminate manual activation of boulevard irrigation systems and reduce the number of flower beds in the boulevard system, and reduce the number of seasonal laborers needed to maintain the boulevards. When fully completed, Sustainable Boulevards will result in a savings of approximately \$160,000 annually in seasonal laborer, or 18 fewer city laborers hired annually in 2011 and beyond to maintain boulevards.
 - **Emerald Ash Borer Readiness and Response: \$937,000**
Initiated in 2009 to deal with the pending infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). In 2010, one-half of the City ash trees will be injected to inoculate them from the pest. The ash injections should provide 2 years of protection. In addition, public education efforts will continue to alert residents to the threat and how to protect privately owned ash trees. This effort will include assembly and distribution of Ash Borer information to 27,000 property owners in Milwaukee that have been identified as having ash trees on their property. In total, there are approximately 587,000 ash trees within Milwaukee city limits.

Prepared by: **Rich Watt**
Legislative Fiscal Analyst
LRB
286-2253

2010 PROPOSED BUDGET – DPW FORESTRY SECTION

Summary by Legislative Reference Bureau – Research & Analysis Section

Expense Category	2008 Actual	2009 Budget	Change	2010 Prop.'d	Change
Personnel Costs	\$12,437,440	\$10,898,253	-12.4%	\$9,862,678	-9.5%
Operating Expend.	\$965,677	\$746,460	-22.7%	\$843,000	12.9%
Equipment Purch.	\$95,073	\$170,400	79.2%	\$134,000	-21.4%
Special Funds	\$667,091	\$600,000	-10.1%	\$800,000	33.3%
TOTAL	\$14,165,281	\$12,415,113	-12.4%	\$11,639,678	-6.2%
Capital	\$2,073,592	\$3,407,000	64.3%	\$3,721,004	9.2%
Positions	247	267	+20	255	-12
FTE: O&M Supported	167.7	163.7	-4.0	141.08	-22.62
FTE: Non-O&M Supported	20.0	24.0	+4.0	34.5	+10.5

Forestry Section Function

The Forestry Section, which is part of the Department of Public Work's Operations Division, has 2 primary functions. The first is maintaining a healthy City tree inventory, namely the "urban forest" of nearly 200,000 City street trees. This includes growing trees at the City nursery, planting, pruning and maintaining trees, removing hazardous and damaged trees and combating tree diseases and pests.

The second function of the Forestry Section is to carry out the Boulevard Beautification Program. This includes mowing medians, designing and maintaining flower beds, and repairing irrigation systems for the City's 120 miles of boulevards.

2010 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS AND ISSUES

Diversity in Urban Forestry Program

The Forestry Section has partnered with several groups to develop the Diversity in Urban Forestry program. The program will recruit, train and place 30 participants in Urban Forestry careers over a 2-year period, with the first 15 trainees for the program included in the 2010 Proposed Budget. The program mirrors the Urban Forestry Specialists Training program. Participants will develop skills, knowledge, and abilities related to climbing, rigging, tree identification, tree assessment and maintenance, production pruning, electrical hazard awareness, tree removal, chain saw, chipper, and lift truck use and safety, and emergency first aid, including aerial rescue.

Tree Service Levels

The City maintains a street tree inventory of 193,000 trees. The Forestry Section loses approximately 1.8% (3,500 trees) of the tree population annually to mortality and disease, and also plants a similar number of trees annually. The total number of trees in the City's inventory remains fairly constant from year to year. Twenty percent of the City's 193,000 street trees (39,000 trees) are scheduled to be pruned annually, a 5-year pruning cycle. However, record snowfall in 2007/08 created an unprecedented 20,000 tree backlog that carried over to 2009. The addition of 2 major programs in 2008 and 2009 (Sustainable Boulevards and Emerald Ash Borer Prevention) has limited options for redirecting resources to the pruning backlog. As the majority of cyclical pruning is done in the winter months, consecutive light winters or additional resources will be required to substantially erase the pruning backlog.

Tree Diversity Plan

Milwaukee's street tree population is heavily skewed by relatively few major species or genera of trees, with Norway maples being the predominant species. The lack of diversity is a result of limited nursery stock availability following Dutch elm disease which swept the Midwest in the 50's, 60's and 70's, killing hundreds of thousands of elm trees. The Tree Diversity Plan is a reforestation plan that seeks to increase and maintain broader species diversity throughout the city. Initially, personnel examined tree species on a block and quarter section basis and identified transition or replacement species to increase diversity. As the majority of trees planted in the City are produced at the City nursery, the Forestry Section is able to effectuate broader species diversity on the streets through tree selections grown at the nursery. The nursery consistently produces high quality trees at approximately ½ the cost of comparable wholesale nursery stock. Production costs for flowers reflect similar savings. The completion of a spatial street tree inventory in 2009 will allow the division to more easily track and maintain species diversity. The arrival of Emerald Ash Borer and increasing threat of future invasive pest introductions accompanying world commerce, the forestry division is moving towards greater intra-block diversity to prevent the deforestation of entire blocks.

Personnel

Total Forestry Section personnel costs of \$9,862,678 in the 2010 proposed budget are \$1,035,575 lower (-9.5%) than the comparable 2009 figure.

1. The number of Forestry Section positions is reduced from 267 for 2009, to 255 in the proposed 2010 budget. Full-time equivalent O&M supported positions are reduced from 163.7 to 141.08. Full-time equivalent non-O&M supported positions are increased, from 24.0 to 34.5. The increase in non-O&M supported FTE positions is due to both the implementation of the Diversity in Urban Forestry trainee program and the shifting of supervisory personnel for the section's Capital projects from O&M in 2009 to the Capital budgets in 2010.
2. The decision to eliminate one of the 3 Forestry District Manager positions will increase area responsibilities for the 2 remaining District Managers. Forestry will continue operating from 3 facilities. As the District Managers also serve as snow duty managers, the vacant snow duty slot will need to be filled by another DPW manager. Operations impacts include challenges completing administrative tasks timely, reduced field supervisory capabilities, and slower responses to aldermanic and citizen requests.
3. The 2010 Proposed Budget includes the elimination of the Environmental Services Superintendent position. The elimination of this position is largely an organizational restructuring of the management team. Forestry impacts accompanying the loss of this position will increase administrative and management responsibilities for the Forestry Services Manager. Coupled with the loss of one Urban Forestry District Manager, forestry management will be challenged to focus on long term goals and perform strategic planning as remaining managers necessarily spend more time attending to daily operations.

Operating Budget

The 2010 proposed budget provides \$843,000 for Operating Expenditures, an increase of \$96,540 (12.9%) from the 2009 Budget.

Equipment Purchases

The 2010 Proposed Budget funds Forestry Section equipment purchases totaling \$134,000. This represents a 21.4% reduction in equipment purchases from the amount budgeted for 2009. The items to be purchased in 2010 are:

Hillside mower	\$54,000
Hustler mower (2)	\$58,000
John Deere Gator (utility vehicle)	\$15,000
Computer workstations (4)	\$ 7,000

Special Funds

The 2010 Proposed Budget includes \$800,000 for one Forestry Division special fund:

1. Vacant Lot Maintenance - This fund is used for vacant lot maintenance, including mowing and sidewalk snow removal. In 2008, DPW assumed these responsibilities from the Department of Neighborhood Services. The increase of the fund from \$600,000 in 2009 to \$800,000 in 2010 represents a shifting of the fund resources between the Forestry and Sanitation functions and is based on services provided during 2008 and 2009.

Capital Projects

The 2010 Proposed Budget includes four capital improvement items for the Forestry Section:

1. Concealed Irrigation and General Landscaping/City Boulevards – The 2010 Proposed Budget allocates \$462,8790 for repair of concealed irrigations systems in City boulevards, and for replacement of these systems necessitated by street paving projects. This capital account also funds replacement of landscape materials on the medians of streets that were reconstructed in the previous year. The 2010 Proposed Budget includes funding for the replacement of 52 deep taps, only.
2. Tree Planting and Production Program - The 2010 Proposed Budget provides \$1,741,125 cash financing for the Forestry Section’s tree planting and production capital account, a \$241,125 (16.1%) increase from the 2009 funding level. This program funds the planting of street and boulevard trees in conjunction with the construction of new streets or the reconstruction of existing streets or sidewalks. It also funds the planting of replacements for dead, diseased or damaged trees.
3. Sustainable Boulevard Plan - The 2010 Proposed Budget includes \$580,000 in capital funding for the third and final year of the Sustainable Boulevard Plan. The Sustainable Boulevard Plan will eliminate manual activation of boulevard irrigation systems and reduce the number of flower beds in the boulevard system, and reduce the number of seasonal laborers needed to maintain the boulevards. When fully completed, Sustainable Boulevards will result in a savings of approximately \$160,000 annually in seasonal laborer, or 18 fewer city laborers hired annually in 2011 and beyond to maintain boulevards.

4. Emerald Ash Borer Readiness and Response - This capital program was initiated in 2009 to deal with the pending infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). The 2010 Proposed Budget allocates \$937,000 to this program. In 2009, a map of Milwaukee's ash tree population was produced, including trees on private properties and parks. In 2010, one-half of the City ash trees will be injected to inoculate them from the pest. The ash injections should provide 2 years of protection. Milwaukee's ash injection program is not an effort to preserve ash trees in perpetuity, but rather a means for managing public safety risk accompanying an EAB outbreak with least impact to other forestry operations by allowing staff to dictate the removal and replacement schedule for ash street trees. This strategy also preserves tree canopy and its associated benefits during the transition period.

In addition, public education efforts will continue to alert residents to the threat and how to protect privately owned ash trees. This effort will include assembly and distribution of Ash Borer information to 27,000 property owners in Milwaukee that have been identified as having ash trees on their property. In total, there are approximately 587,000 ash trees within Milwaukee city limits.

Departmental Revenues

The Forestry Section projects that it will receive \$130,000 in revenues in 2010, a \$10,000 increase of revenues budgeted for 2009. Revenues are generated through the sale of plant material from the nursery, charges for removal and replacement of trees damaged by auto impacts, and administrative fees for encroachments and hazardous tree removals.

Historical Information

1. With the 2004 Budget, Forestry converted 40% of the boulevard flower beds from annuals to perennials. This was expected to produce long-term savings in boulevard maintenance costs. Also, the tree-pruning cycle was changed from every 3 years for younger, smaller trees and 6 years for older, larger trees to every 5 years for all trees.
2. In 2004, the Forestry Section made two significant management-level position changes. First, the "City Forester" and "Sanitation Superintendent" positions were eliminated and replaced by the "Environmental Services Superintendent." Secondly, the grant-funded position of "Environmental Policy Analyst" was created. This position is responsible for securing new environmental grants for the City, as well as for developing policies and coordinating environmental efforts within DPW. Presently, it is 0.75 grant funded and 0.25 O&M funded.

3. Through a combination of increased capital funding and greater availability of trees grown at the City nursery, the Forestry Section was able to increase the number of trees planted from 2,731 in 2003, to 3,607 in 2004 and 4,290 in 2005. However, in the 2006 Budget, Forestry began funding its tree production program from the same capital account that funds tree planting. As a result, tree-planting activity was reduced; 5.5 FTE positions were cut and the number of trees planted fell to 3,515 for 2006.
4. In 2005, a working group was created consisting of Forestry staff as well as elected officials, outside landscape professionals and representatives from business associations and neighborhood groups in order to develop a more systematic approach to boulevard maintenance and to insure the long-term sustainability of Milwaukee's boulevards from both fiscal and environmental perspectives. The working group met several times in 2005, as did several policy and technical subgroups that reviewed current boulevard-related policies and procedures.
5. In May 2006, DPW-Operations Division released a 2006 Boulevard Plan for the City of Milwaukee that set forth the findings and recommendations of the working group. A Sustainable Boulevard Plan capital project was included in the 2007 Proposed Budget that represented an effort to implement some, but not all, of the recommendations contained in the 2006 Boulevard Plan. The Common Council deleted the plan in its review of the 2007 Budget.
6. In 2006, the department began work to develop public private partnerships to preserve the city's boulevard system through a new Gateway Signage Program. Businesses are able to sponsor a gateway sign, for \$45,000 to \$65,000, depending on the size of the sign. One third of the funds are used to support boulevard maintenance and install gateway landscaping around the sign. The department estimates that 40 to 45 sites could feature gateway signage.
7. A Sustainable Boulevard Plan capital project was again included in the 2008 Proposed Budget. The department held a series of public meetings to solicit public reaction to the plan. The Plan was adopted as part of the 2008 Budget. The Plan's key elements included:
 - Boulevards types were classified as "landmark," "gateway" and "connecting" depending on their location, historical significance, visibility and traffic volumes.
 - Flower beds were to be removed from "connecting" boulevards and shade and ornamental trees planted on these "connecting" street segments as a means of reducing maintenance costs while growing the City's tree canopy to improve air-quality and reduce storm water runoff. However, many recently renovated flowerbeds were to remain on connecting boulevards.
 - Enhancing planting beds at key street intersections ("landmark" and "gateway" locations) through the use of a mix of annuals, perennials, shrubs, native plants, decorative edging and automated irrigation systems.
 - Introducing rain garden elements into boulevard segments.

Prepared By: Rich Watt
Legislative Fiscal Analyst
LRB
286-2253