



**Department of Public Works
Operations Division- Forestry Services**

Jerrel Kruschke, P.E.
Commissioner of Public Works

Danielle A. Rodriguez, M.B.A.
Director of Operations

Randy Krouse
Forestry Services Manager

May 1, 2025

Dear Ald. Milele Coggs:

In response to Common Council Files #230254, DPW-Operations-Forestry Services released a Request For Information entitled “Urban Wood Transport and Utilization” on February 12th, 2025, where we sought information from sawmill/dry kiln operators, wood products producers and any other potential collaborators regarding their knowledge of the current market demand, potential wholesale value of urban wood and their capacity to transport and utilize the large quantities of urban wood produced daily by DPW Forestry crews. Unfortunately, we received no responses to our RFI. Currently, DPW-Operations-Forestry Services uses the following model for disposal of urban wood waste. We pay a contractor (Anderson Landscape and Maintenance) to transport the logs/trunks in thirty cubic yard metal roll off boxes to Kettle Moraine Hardwoods (KMH), where they assess the logs/trunks based on species, condition and size. They then use the City of Milwaukee urban wood for its best and highest use. The only cost to the City in this model is the transportation of the urban wood to KMH. KMH does not currently charge DPW Forestry a tipping fee, which is a significant cost savings to the City. They do charge 6 other municipalities and 7 private companies tipping fees. Private tree companies and other municipalities are successfully utilizing the same transportation and utilization model that we developed. Unfortunately, this may be an indication that an urban wood market does not currently exist or private companies would most likely be selling their urban wood waste to maximize their profits.

The vast majority of logs produced by DPW Forestry crews range in length from 4-6 feet. To make lumber, sawmills require a minimum of 8 feet. Another factor to consider is that approximately 5% of the City’s urban logs also contain metal, making them unusable. Our district yards are small and at most can only hold three 30-yard boxes at a time. Prompt removal and transport of the boxes is essential. At times, our crews in each district yard can fill two to three boxes per day. It is not efficient for us to handle the wood more than twice; therefore, it is necessary to have the full boxes replaced promptly, usually within 24-48 hours. The average number of boxes that were transported annually from 2021 to 2023 was 229, at an annual average of 2,652 tons of wood and at a cost in the range of \$72,681 – \$90,455 annually.

DPW-Operations-Forestry Services remains committed to seeing that the urban wood produced by the City is being utilized to its best and highest use and handled efficiently while we remain focused on the primary part of our mission which is maintaining and enhancing the safety of the public where City managed trees are concerned. We appreciate the opportunity to explore the local demand for our urban wood and always remain open to fresh perspectives and ideas.

Sincerely,

Randy Krouse
Urban Forestry Services Manager