

**LRB-FISCAL REVIEW SECTION ANALYSIS**

**PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE**

**ITEM 8, FILE # 040609**

**SEPTEMBER 8, 2004**

**JEFF OSTERMAN**

File # 040609 is a resolution relating to application for, and acceptance and funding of, a 2005 State of Wisconsin Urban Forestry Grant.

**Background**

1. This resolution authorizes the Department of Public Works-Operations Division to apply for, accept and fund a 2005 Urban Forestry Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
2. Grant proceeds will be used to fund DPW's efforts to build a computerized inventory of the location and health of City street trees.
3. The City of Milwaukee was awarded a similar Urban Forestry Grant for 2004. This is the first year of the grant-funded street tree inventory program, which DPW has titled "Grey to Green Street Tree Management Initiative." Approval of this resolution will allow DPW to carry out Phase II of this initiative.
4. The 2004 grant is being used to build an inventory of street trees in the downtown area that are located in "full-sidewalk" and "box-out" situations. The 2005 grant would be used to expand the inventory both geographically (to include street trees located throughout the Central Forestry District) and in terms of tree placement (i.e., trees located in all types of placement scenarios, not just "full-sidewalk" and "box-out" situations).

**Discussion**

1. This grant will allow DPW-Operations Division to continue building a Geographical Information System (GIS) database/inventory of the location and health of City street trees. The inventory will be expanded to include trees throughout the Central Forestry District, which extends roughly from Congress Street on the north to the Menomonee River on the south, and from Lake Michigan on the east to the City of Wauwatosa on the west. The ultimate goal of this multi-year initiative is to construct and maintain a citywide street tree inventory.
2. Expansion of the street tree inventory through the 2005 Urban Forestry Grant will help DPW-Operations Division achieve and maintain a healthy urban forest and to keep the street tree mortality rate at less than 1.96%.

3. Among the benefits of healthy street trees are improved air quality, lower air temperatures (and, as a result, lower utility bills), enhancement of neighborhood appearance and higher property values.
4. Grant funds would support the training of DPW staff and urban forestry interns to use the “TreeSavvy” computer software that has been developed specifically for the purpose of building street-tree inventories. Inventory data will be downloaded to a DPW database by a consultant and analyzed by DPW to determine the extent, growth rate and mortality rate of the urban forest cover, as well as the capital expenditure required per street tree.
5. Grant funds will also be used to research street tree inventory practices in other cities that have computerized inventories (Minneapolis in particular), and to study how those communities make full use of the capabilities and data of their inventory software and databases.
6. This grant encompasses the period of January 1, 2005, through December 31, 2005.

**Fiscal Impact**

1. The total cost of this grant-funded project is \$50,000, of which \$25,000 will be provided by the grantor (State of Wisconsin) and \$25,000 will be an in-kind contribution from the City. The grant amount was also \$25,000 in 2004, although the City’s contribution was slightly larger ((\$29,285).
2. Of the \$25,000 in grant funds, the largest portions will be used for:
  - Personnel costs (5 urban forestry interns) \$7,962
  - Consultant services (computer training, downloading and analysis of data) \$11,125
  - Depreciation of “tablet” PCs \$2,500
3. The City’s in-kind contribution will consist primarily of:
  - Personnel costs (forestry district manager, technical services supervisors and the urban forestry interns) \$21,588
  - Vehicle rental (3 vehicles) \$1,181

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 September 7, 2004

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