

2022



Legislative Reference Bureau

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DPW-FORESTRY

2022 Proposed Plan and Executive Budget Review

Prepared by: Kathleen Brengosz, Legislative Fiscal Analyst
Budget Hearing: 10:30 am on Wednesday, October 13, 2021



\$14,407,427

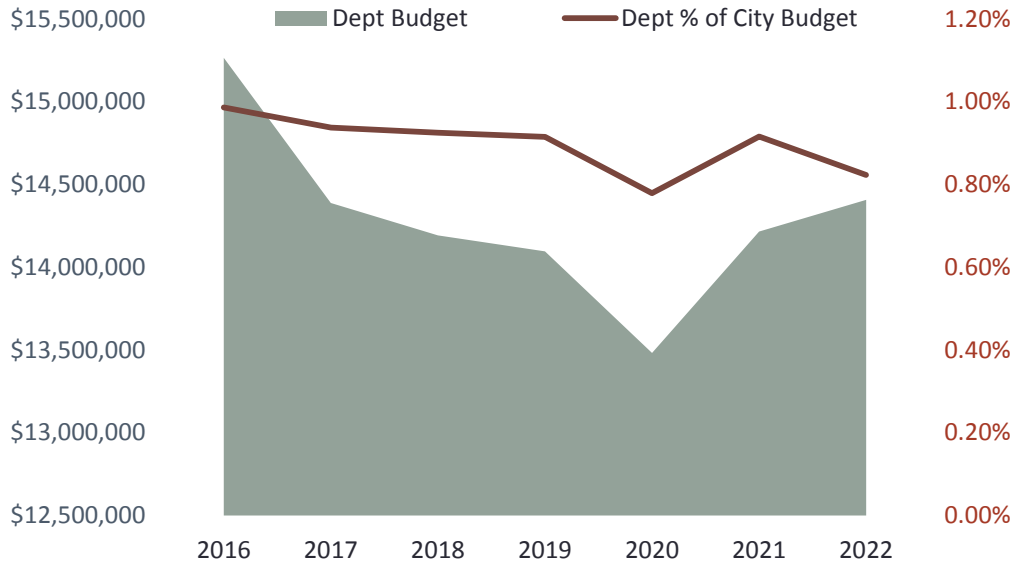
Proposed 2022 Budget

\$191,538

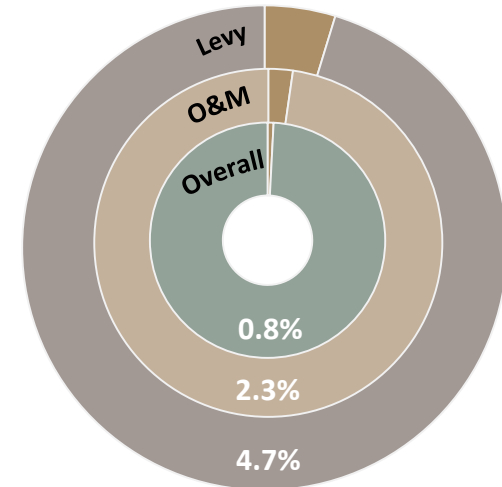
Change in Proposed Budget

1.3%

% Change in Proposed Budget



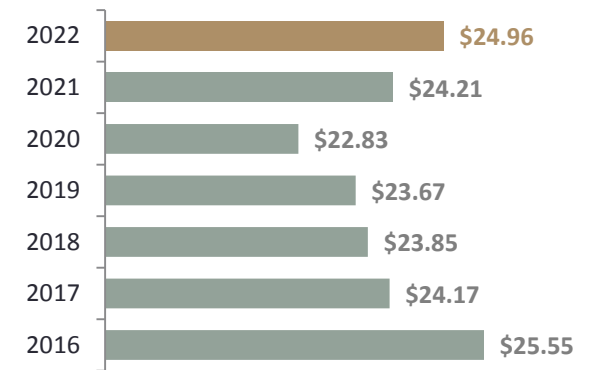
Departmental Budget Impact



Departmental Budget Appropriation Category



Budget per Capita



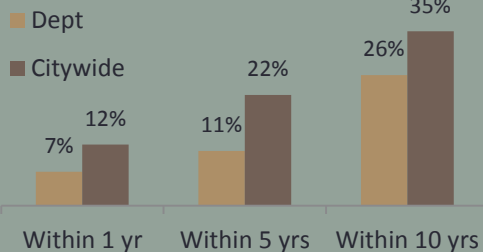
190,675

Number of Forestry-maintained street trees. Inventory is down slightly due to COVID-related backlogs.

5 years

Inspection cycle for all trees.

Retirement Eligible



0

Change in Positions

0.0%

% Change in Positions

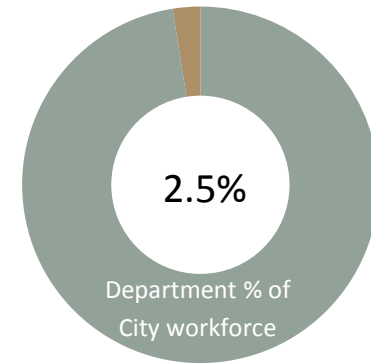
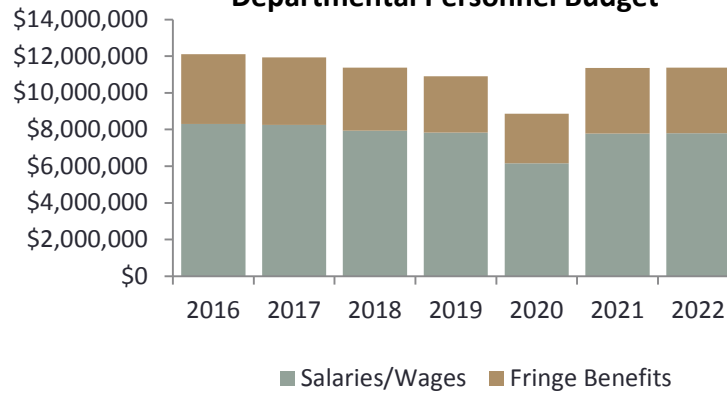
11

Current Vacancies

11

Voluntary Separations

Departmental Personnel Budget



Staffing Changes

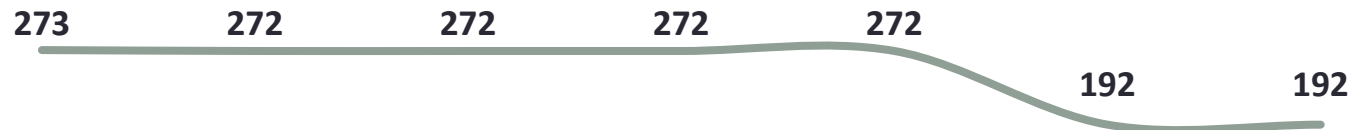
There are no staffing changes proposed for 2022.

Vacancies

There are currently 11 vacancies .

- 1 Office Assistant IV
- 1 Equipment Mechanics III
- 2 Urban Forestry Crew Leader
- 3 Urban Forestry Specialists
- 3 Urban Forestry Laborers
- 1 Greenhouse and Nursery Manager

24 UF Laborer positions were vacant last Oct.



**Department Positions
2016-2022**

91

Number of Urban Forestry Specialist positions, unchanged from 2021.

2.17

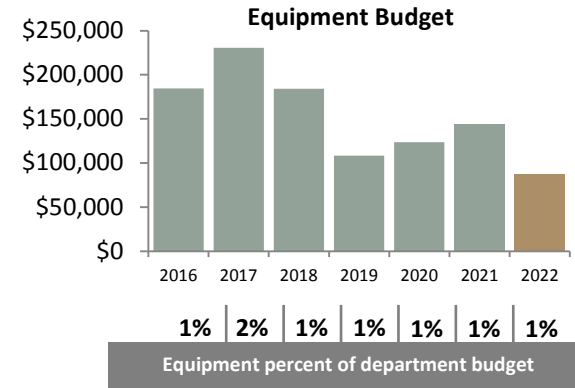
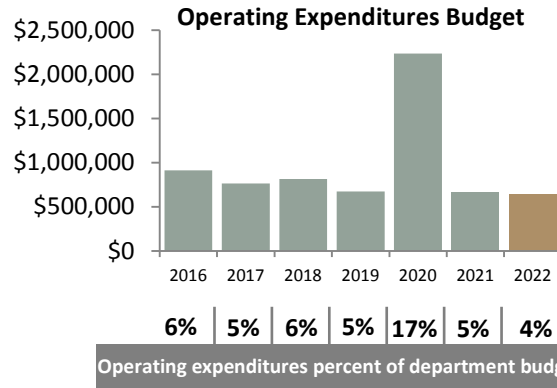
Average work hours per tree in 2021. Down from 2.98 in 2020 because only small trees are regularly pruned.

9

The number of mowing cycles for vacant lots proposed for 2022. Down from 11 in 2021.

440

Number of properties expected to be cited for hazardous trees in 2022. Citations were down in 2020 and 2021 because of COVID.



Revenue

Forestry will receive a \$27 million transfer from the Sewer Maintenance Fund to support tree production, planting and pruning.

Other revenue sources include ordered snow and weed removal and other charges related to street tree removals. Actual revenue from these sources can be highly variable.

Special Purpose Accounts

This department has no special purpose accounts.

Capital Funding

Replace Irrigation Taps	\$ 200,000
Tree Planting & Production	\$ 1,200,000
Stump Removal	\$ 860,000
Emerald Ash Borer Program	\$ 860,000
Hazardous Tee Removal	\$ 0
Total	\$ 3,120,000

All capital projects in Forestry are financed through the Sewer Maintenance Fund.

Grants

Forestry has 2 on-going grant-funded projects to remove and replace a total of 1,350 ash street trees with alternative species.

Removals have been completed on the 2019 Improving Resiliency of Milwaukee’s Street Trees grant. Replacement tree planting began in fall 2021. The grant project period has been extended through December 31, 2022.

There has been no activity on the 2020 Replacing Ash Trees to Fight Climate Change grant. There has been no activity to date. The department will request an extension through December 31, 2023 due to the continued impacts of COVID-19 and the August storm response.

12,177

Trees pruned so far in 2021, up from 8,092 in 2020 but down from 14,481 in 2019.

36.9%

Percentage of Norway Maple trees in the street tree inventory.

3,869

Street trees removed in 2020. On average 2% of trees are removed and replaced each year.

34%

Tree replacement ratio in 2020. The 5-year average prior to 2020 is 83.%.

COVID

The COVID-19 outbreak required DPW to reprioritize and concentrate its workforce on essential services. The pandemic also delayed the recruitment of Urban Forestry Laborers. Some Forestry operations were delayed causing unanticipated year-end backlogs for pruning, stumping and tree planting.

Tree Pruning

In 2021, the department began a new tree maintenance program. The department will inspect all trees every 5 years. Trees that are smaller than 12" in diameter will be pruned every 5 years. Trees that are larger than 12" in diameter will be pruned as needed and as scheduling allows.

Concentrating pruning efforts on smaller trees will encourage the development of proper branch structure. Better branch structure helps street trees tolerate the harsh conditions of the urban environment.

This maintenance program replaced the previous program which pruned all trees on a regular cycle. Since 2005, when the pruning cycle was 5 years, the pruning cycle has lengthened each year as resources did not keep up with demand. By 2020 the pruning cycle was effectively 12 years.

Storm damage incidents have increased as the pruning cycle was extended.

Stumping

The department estimates that it can remove approximately 1,800 stumps each year with its existing staff. The Proposed Budget Includes \$500,000 for contracted stump removal. The expected 2021 year-end backlog will be about 4,800.

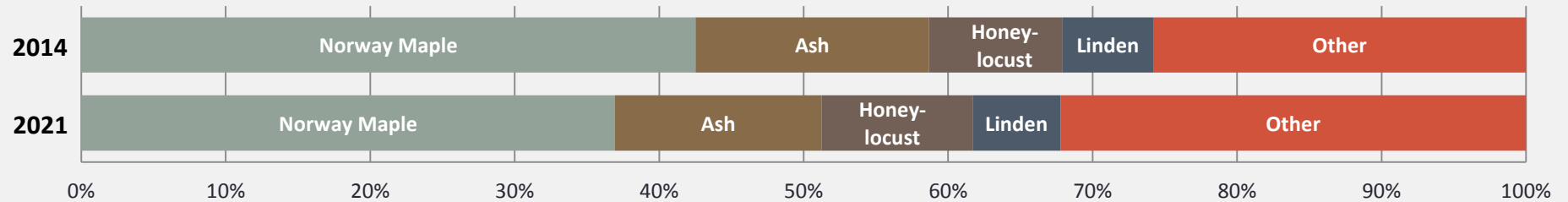
Historically, the backlog had averaged around 400 stumps – approximately 10% of the annual tree planting. The backlog began to grow around 2010. Even with the support of contractors, the department has struggled to keep the backlog at a manageable level. Reductions in Urban Forestry FTE's, reductions in funding for seasonal employees, vacancies, participation in snow and ice control operations, and COVID- related delays are contributing factors. A storm this summer caused the unexpected loss of 600 trees, adding to the backlog.

Because new trees are generally replanted in the same location, if the stumps are not removed in a timely manner, tree replacement will be delayed. The 2021 year-end backlog is greater than the number of trees that the department requested for planting in 2022.

Training Crew

The most recent training crew began August 9, 2021. The crew consists of 16 Urban Forestry Arborist Apprentices, including 4 former Urban Forestry Laborers.

Change in Street Tree Distribution



Hazardous Tree Removals

The arrival of EAB has significantly increased the number of hazardous trees on private property. Since 2014, 1,735 properties have been cited for hazardous ash trees.

Also since 2014, 542 (31%) of property owners using City contractors for hazard tree abatement have elected the extended payment option. The average deferred cost per property is unchanged at \$1,350.

The Hazardous Tree Removal capital account has a balance of \$158,960. No funding is provided in the Proposed Budget.

Contracted Work

The Proposed Budget continues to fund City-owned lot maintenance with a contract workforce.

The abatement of privately-owned trees cited for violation of the hazard tree ordinance will continue to be performed through a contract workforce with cost recovery through special assessment.

Tree planting and workforce training for the “Improving Resiliency of Milwaukee’s Street Trees” grant will be done using a contracted workforce in 2022.

