

## RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS SECTION – LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

### **Executive Summary: 2009 Proposed Budget – DPW – Forestry Section**

1. **Activities of Forestry Section:** The main activities of the Forestry Section are maintaining a healthy City tree inventory, namely the “urban forest” of 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 Forestry Section also mows medians, designs and maintains flower beds, and repairs irrigation systems for the City’s 120 miles of boulevards. It is also working proactively to address the threat of the Emerald Ash Borer. **(Page 2)**
2. **Total Expenditures:** The 2009 Proposed Budget for DPW - Forestry is \$11,895,512, a decrease of \$408,512 (-3.3%) from the \$12,304,108 funded in the 2008 Budget. **(Page 4)**
3. **Personnel:** The 2009 Proposed Budget for Net Salaries and Wages is \$7,355,399, a decrease of \$761,784 (-9.4%), from the \$8,117,183 funded in the 2008 Budget. The total number of full-time equivalent positions will decrease from 187.7 to 175.1 (-6.7%). There are 155.1 O&M FTEs, compared to 167.7 in the 2008 Budget, a decrease of 12.6 (-7.5%). There are 20 non-O&M FTEs, the same as in the 2008 Budget. **(Pages 4 & 5)**
4. **Operating Expenditures:** The 2009 Proposed Budget provides \$754,000 for Operating Expenditures, an increase of \$22,120 (3.0%) from \$731,880 in the 2008 Budget. **(Page 5)**
5. **Equipment Purchases:** There is \$170,400 in the 2009 Proposed Budget for equipment purchases. This is a \$43,400 (34.2%) increase from the \$127,000 in the 2008 Budget. **(Page 5)**
6. **Special Funds:** The 2009 Proposed Budget contains \$600,000 for city-owned vacant lot maintenance (mowing and sidewalk snow removal). **(Page 5)**
7. **Revenue:** The Forestry Section projects that it will receive \$120,000 in revenues in 2009, a decrease of \$15,000 (11.1%) from the \$135,000 in revenues in the 2008 Budget. **(Page 5)**
8. **Capital Projects:** The 2009 Proposed Budget includes 4 capital improvement items for the Forestry Section totaling \$3,407,000, an increase of \$1,445,565 (73.7%) from the \$1,961,435 in the 2008 Budget. Projects include the following: Concealed Irrigation and General Landscaping/City Boulevards, Tree Planting and Production Program, Sustainable Boulevard Plan and Emerald Ash Borer Readiness and Response. **(Pages 6 & 7)**

## RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS SECTION – LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

### **2009 Proposed Budget: DPW – Forestry Section**

Expense Category	2007 Actual	2008 Budget	% Change	2009 Proposed	% Change
Personnel Costs	\$11,675,402	\$11,445,228	-2.0%	\$10,371,112	-9.4%
Operating Expenditures	\$768,187	\$731,880	-4.7%	\$754,000	3.0%
Equipment Purchases	\$138,003	\$127,000	-8.0%	\$170,400	34.2%
Special Funds	\$0	\$0	0%	\$600,000	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,581,592</b>	<b>\$12,304,108</b>	<b>-2.2%</b>	<b>\$11,895,512</b>	<b>-3.3%</b>
Capital Programs	\$1,664,548	\$1,961,435	17.8%	\$3,407,000	73.7%
Positions	242	247	2.1%	260	5.3%

### **Activities of the Forestry Section**

The main activities of the Forestry Section, which is part of DPW's Operations Division, are maintaining a healthy City tree inventory, namely the "urban forest" of 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 Forestry Section also mows medians, designs and maintains flower beds, and repairs irrigation systems for the City's 120 miles of boulevards.

The Emerald Ash Borer has emerged as a significant threat to the state's ash tree population. Milwaukee's street tree population contains approximately 36,000 ash trees, 18% of the street tree population, representing an asset value of \$46 million. In addition, it is estimated that there are an additional 600,000 trees on private lands. The pest has recently been found in Ozaukee and Washington Counties and Forestry is working with the state on a pest strategy with an alternative to clear cutting. Forestry is in the process of mapping Milwaukee's ash tree population, including trees on private properties and parks. The section has applied for a state grant to utilize Hyperspectral Imaging Technology for the task. In addition, as part of its Emerald Ash Borer Readiness and Response Capital Budget, Forestry will begin by injecting 16,500 trees to inoculate them from the pest. It has included \$2.4 million for 2012 - 2014 in its Tree Planting and Production Capital Budget for the anticipated replacement of 3,600 street trees killed annually by the Emerald Ash Borer.

### **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 three years for younger, smaller trees and six years for older, larger trees to every five years for all trees, for a savings of \$186,000 in 2004.

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 2006, the Forestry Section reduced the area of planted beds (annuals, perennials and shrubs) in boulevards by 10%. Eliminated beds were replaced with grass. This allowed for an additional reduction of 2.7 FTE positions.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.

8. 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:

1. Boulevards types were classified as "landmark," "gateway" and "connecting" depending on their location, historical significance, visibility and traffic volumes.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Introducing rain garden elements into boulevard segments.

### **2009 Proposed Budget**

#### **Total Expenditures**

The 2009 Proposed Budget for DPW - Forestry is \$11,895,512, a decrease of \$408,512 (-3.3%) from the \$12,304,108 funded in the 2008 Budget.

#### **Personnel**

1. The 2009 Proposed Budget for Net Salaries and Wages is \$7,355,399, a decrease of \$761,784 (-9.4%), from the \$8,117,183 funded in the 2008 Budget.
2. The 2009 Proposed Budget contains 260 positions, an increase of 13 positions (5.3%) from the 2008 Budget. However, the total number of full-time equivalent positions will decrease from 187.7 to 175.1 (-6.7%). There are 155.1 O&M FTEs, compared to 167.7 in the 2008 Budget, a decrease of 12.6 (-7.5%). There are 20 non-O&M FTEs, the same as in the 2008 Budget. The decrease in O&M FTEs includes 11.6 Urban Forestry Specialists and 1 Urban Forestry Crew Leader.
3. There are 11.6 filled Urban Forestry Specialist positions that are unfunded in the 2009 Budget. These would all result in layoffs. There is 1 Urban Forestry Crew Leader position that is unfunded but it is presently vacant. The reduction in Forestry staff will result in an extension of the pruning cycle from 5 years to 7 years and the spring/early summer mowing cycle from 7 to 10 days.

4. Passage of a higher 2009 Solid Waste Fee as requested by the Mayor, generating \$7 million more than the fee will generate in 2008, could allow for the restoration of \$223,000 to replace 4 Urban Forestry Specialists and 1 Urban Forestry Crew Leader to adjust the pruning cycle for trees from every 7 years to every 6 years.

### Operating Expenditures

The 2009 Proposed Budget provides \$754,000 for Operating Expenditures, an increase of \$22,120 (3.0%) from \$731,880 in the 2008 Budget. The major items increased include:

1. Construction Supplies, \$67,000, an increase of \$4,500 (7.2%) from the 2008 Budget of \$62,500. The increase reflects the increased costs for construction supplies.
2. Energy, \$11,000, an increase of \$3,000 (38%) from the 2008 Budget of \$8,000. The increase reflects the increased costs of energy.
3. Information Technology Services, \$6,000, an increase of \$1,000 (20%) from the 2008 Budget of \$5,000. This adjustment reflects 2007 experience plus a 6% increase.

### Equipment Purchases

There is \$170,400 in the 2009 Proposed Budget for equipment purchases. This is a \$43,400 (34.2%) increase from the \$127,000 in the 2008 Budget. The items to be purchased are 1 Hillside Mower (\$43,000), 3 Hustlers (\$84,000), 5 Work Trailers (\$38,200) and 1 Utility Trailer (\$5,200).

### Special Funds

The 2009 Proposed Budget contains \$600,000 for vacant lot maintenance (mowing and sidewalk snow removal). In 2008, DPW assumed responsibilities for vacant lot maintenance from the Department of Neighborhood Services.

### Revenues

1. The Forestry Section projects that it will receive \$120,000 in revenues in 2009; a decrease of \$15,000 (11.1%) from the \$135,000 in revenues in the 2008 Budget. The anticipated breakdown of Forestry's 2009 revenues are as follows:

Tree Removal Charges	\$10,000
Miscellaneous Forestry Charges	\$110,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>

## Capital Projects

The 2009 Proposed Budget includes 4 capital improvement items for the Forestry Section totaling \$3,407,000, an increase of \$1,445,565 (73.7%) from the \$1,961,435 in the 2008 Budget. Projects include the following:

1. Concealed Irrigation and General Landscaping/City Boulevards – The 2009 Proposed Budget allocates \$582,000, a \$75,000 (11.4%) increase from the 2008 funding level of \$288,000, 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.
2. Tree Planting and Production Program - The 2009 Proposed Budget provides \$1,500,000 for the Forestry Section's tree planting and production capital account, a \$392,765 (35.5%) increase from the 2008 funding level of \$1,107,235. This program funds the planting of street trees and other plants 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 and tree production at the City nursery.

The following table shows the history of and proposed number of trees to be planted in the City since 2006.

2006 Actual	2007 Actual	% Change	2008 Budgeted	% Change	2009 Proposed	% Change
3,515	3,708	5.5%	4,052	9.3%	4,690	15.7%

3. Sustainable Boulevard Plan - The 2009 Proposed Budget includes \$525,000, a \$25,000 (5%) increase from the 2008 funding level of \$500,000 to continue implementation of the Sustainable Boulevard Plan. The Sustainable Boulevard Plan will be implemented over a 3-year period. Because the Sustainable Boulevard Plan will eliminate manual activation of boulevard irrigation systems and reduce the number of flower beds in the boulevard system, the number of seasonal laborers needed to maintain the boulevards will decrease significantly following implementation of the Plan. The Forestry Section anticipates the elimination of 20 Urban Forestry Laborer (Seasonal) positions once the Plan is fully implemented. This will translate into a \$180,000-\$200,000 annual savings in seasonal staff costs. Thus, DPW projects that the \$1.65 million investment in the Sustainable Boulevard Plan will be fully recovered in 9 to 10 years.

The Sustainable Boulevard Plan has been implemented on a citywide basis, rather than in geographical phases. In other words, in each of the 3 years of Plan

implementation, each of Forestry's 3 districts (North, Central and South) are re-ordering and converting about one-third of its boulevard segments. In 2009, 860 of the new boulevard trees will be planted in addition to the changes in flower beds.

4. Emerald Ash Borer Readiness and Response - This is a new capital program initiated to deal with the pending infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer. The 2009 Proposed Budget allocates \$800,000 to this program. The \$800,000 is split between \$160,000 in Borrowing and \$640,000 in Cash Levy. At this point, it is a 6-year program. In 2009, there will be mapping of Milwaukee's ash tree population, including trees on private properties and parks. The department has applied for a state grant to utilize Hyperspectral Imaging Technology for the task. In addition, as part of its Emerald Ash Borer Readiness and Response Capital Budget, it will begin by injecting 16,500 trees to inoculate them from the pest. That is half of the treatable ash trees each year at a cost of \$600,000 annually. Forestry has also included \$2.4 million for 2012 - 2014 in its Tree Planting and Production Capital Budget for the anticipated replacement of 3,600 street trees killed annually by the Emerald Ash Borer. In addition, public education efforts will continue to alert residents to the threat and how to protect privately owned ash trees.

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