



THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP

The Woodlands, TX

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MEETING DATE: 7/25/2012

SUBJECT MATTER: Accelerated Tree Removal Schedule and Related 2012 Budget Amendment for tree removal

BUDGET IMPACT:

	2012 Current Budget	2012 Proposed Budget	Budget Adjustment
Tree Removal	\$1,171,600	\$1,944,240	\$ 772,640
June 12 Storm	\$ 0	\$ 132,760*	\$ 132,760
Reforestation	\$ 668,000	\$ 380,000	\$(288,000)
Equipment & Irrigation System Expansion	\$ 200,000	\$ 0	\$(200,000)
Total	\$2,039,600	\$2,457,000	\$ 417,400 Budget Amendment
Accelerated Removal by October		\$ 78,000	\$ 78,000
Debris Management		\$ 310,000	\$ 310,000
			\$ 805,400 Budget Amendment

* = Amount represents contracted tree removal services requiring budget adjustment. Total expense for June 12 storm is projected to be \$222,728.

The Board of Directors received a briefing on a recommended Budget Amendment at the July 19th Workshop meeting. The Executive Summary indicated an additional \$772,640 would be needed to complete the removal of the projected number of dead trees by the end of the year. The Board requested a review of costs to accelerate the removal to be completed as soon as possible for consideration at the Regular Board meeting. Staff has prepared the following for consideration:

The earliest the projected remaining trees could be removed is October, provided 3 additional qualified contractors could be retained and operating by August 15th and additional dead tree identification and tagging resources are provided. Currently tree tagging is performed by staff and in order to identify and assign trees for removal for the accelerated program, professional services from a company such as American Forest Management would be required. Additional temporary administrative support staff would also be required to help manage tree removal data, accounting and completed work verification.

Six weeks of professional services and administrative support is estimated to cost \$78,000.

This accelerated program includes a change in current tree removal operations from a “Demand and Tag” process to a “Tag and Sweep” process. Currently, staff tags trees based on resident requests staff identification/observation and priority level. Trees are only removed if they are tagged. The “Tag and Sweep” process will have tree taggers in an area tag all the dead / dying trees in that area to be removed. Contractors will still remove only tagged trees; however, all tagged trees in that area will be removed instead of individual trees from multiple and repeat locations.

Another approach instead of contracted professional tree tagging services is to re-assign parks staff from other divisions to the Forestry Crew to perform tree tagging. This would reduce the accelerated cost approximately \$63,000 but result in delaying or deferring routine maintenance tasks performed by the Parks Crews. To ensure routine maintenance is handled in a timely manner, additional contractors would be required to perform the routine maintenance tasks, such utilizing a contractor to install playground fall surfacing material which may cost an estimated \$39,000 above the budgeted \$74,000 for the project.

There may be unintended consequences from accelerating the tree removal schedule and of particular concern is where tree debris can be removed to and dumped. The current work schedule and volume of debris generated with the existing 7 contractors and their related dump sites has the regional debris removal sites at or near capacity. Adding five additional contractors using the same dump/receiving sites may overload the sites during the next three months. We do anticipate the capacity of the area debris removal sites to be over 100%.

In the event debris removal sites stop accepting commercial debris, the Township could secure a site, clear it if needed and establish a debris removal/processing operation. This may cost up to \$310,000: property rental/ short term lease = \$120,000; site clearing = \$55,000; Debris processing, grinding, and hauling = \$135,000.

A temporary site within or in close proximity to The Woodlands would be desired, which will increase the overall tree removal production time by decreasing drive times to the current debris removal sites. There may be sites owned by the County or The Woodlands Land Development Company or others available at no charge. Sites in close proximity to residential neighborhoods would not be ideal. Another possible site could be the sports fields Site A on Gosling Road – if that project was to advance. That site could be cleared for the temporary debris removal site then developed for sport fields.

If this debris removal site situation occurs and no alternative debris removal site(s) is secured or developed, the options are: halt all tree removal work until sites re-open; remove trees and stack debris on sides of roads for future removal.

RECOMMENDED BOARD ACTION:

The following recommendation is based upon the current schedule.

Approve a 2012 budget amendment for tree removal by amending the following line items:

- \$ 772,640 increase **Tree Removal** for expenditures related to 2011 drought
- \$ 132,760 increase **Tree Removal** for expenditures related to June 2012 storm
- \$ 50,000 increase **Tree Removal** to provide contingency for remainder of year

- \$(288,000) decrease **Forestry**
- \$(100,000) defer **Capital Project for Water Trucks** until 2013
- \$(100,000) defer **Capital Project for Neighborhood Entry Irrigation** until 2013
- \$(250,000) transfer funds budgeted for **Contingency Expense** to Tree Removal
- \$(103,700) transfer savings in **Contracted Park & Pathway Maintenance** to Tree Removal
- \$(63,700) transfer funds budgeted for **I-45 Beautification Program** to Tree Removal
- \$(50,000) transfer funds budgeted for **Economic Development Consulting** to Tree Removal

An optional budget amendment related to accelerating the removal schedule.

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- \$ 132,760 increase **Tree Removal** for expenditures related to June 2012 storm
- \$ 50,000 increase **Tree Removal** to provide contingency for remainder of year
- \$ 78,000 increase **Tree Removal** to accelerate the removal schedule
- \$ 310,000 increase **Tree Removal** for debris site development contingency
- \$(288,000) decrease **Forestry**
- \$(100,000) defer **Capital Project for Water Trucks** until 2013
- \$(100,000) defer **Capital Project for Neighborhood Entry Irrigation** until 2013
- \$(250,000) transfer funds budgeted for **Contingency Expense** to Tree Removal
- \$(103,700) transfer savings in **Contracted Park & Pathway Maintenance** to Tree Removal
- \$(63,700) transfer funds budgeted for **I-45 Beautification Program** to Tree Removal
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The adjustments to the line items listed above will fund the requested budget amendment except for expenses related to accelerating the tree removal schedule totaling \$388,000. It is recommended that the \$388,000 of expenditures be funded by favorable variances in 2012 sales tax revenue, projected to total \$3.9 million.

If the Board desires to accelerate the removal schedule, it is recommended to authorize the President/ General Manager to execute tree removal contracts with three additional qualified companies complying with current Board awarded competitively bid unit prices and terms; and to execute a professional services agreement for hazard/dead tree tagging services; and to authorize additional temporary administrative support services; and if deemed necessary by the President / General Manager, authorize the funding and development of a debris removal site and related leases, rents, contracts and service agreements.