



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 7, 2016

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES TREE TRIMMING BACKLOG REDUCED BY 80 PERCENT, ON TRACK TO ELIMINATE BY YEAR'S END

Efforts to Protect the City's Urban Canopy are in full swing with continued tree trimming; EAB inoculations and residential tree planting

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced that the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) has reduced the City's tree trimming request backlog by nearly 80 percent with crews on pace to completely eliminate the backlog by the end of 2016. The Bureau of Forestry has been tackling the backlog utilizing new management efficiencies including grid routing. In addition, DSS has begun seasonal Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) inoculation and residential tree planting programs.

"Being more efficient allows the City to provide more effective services across the board," said Mayor Emanuel. "By ensuring tree trim requests are answered as quickly as possible, we are saving money for our taxpayers, improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods and protecting the health and vibrancy of the urban canopy for years to come."

Today, there are approximately 6,000 open residential tree trimming requests, all of which were submitted within the 2016 calendar year. In 2014, DSS had 28,000 open requests dating back to 2012.

"To help us in our efforts, the Mayor has provided the Bureau of Forestry with additional annual resources that has supported more forestry crews, the first-ever Emerald Ash Borer seasonal workforce, and resources to plant thousands of new trees in communities throughout the City—all of which allow us to beautify neighborhoods and invest in communities," added Williams.

The Mayor also made budget investments in both 2015 and 2016 for weekend forestry work, which has also helped reduce the tree trimming request backlog.

As previously announced, later this year 10 additional crews will be redirected to the Bureau of Forestry thanks to operational savings realized in the Department's grid refuse collection system. The crews will address ongoing tree trimming requests and help completely eliminate the backlog by the end of 2016.

DSS has also begun inoculations on viable Ash trees to help fight against Emerald Ash Borer, (EAB) an exotic beetle that has obliterated tens of thousands of Ash trees across the country.

The City first kicked-off its multi-year plan to protect viable trees against the EAB in 2013. Over the past three years, the Bureau of Forestry has treated more than 61,000 trees. Crews began assessing those trees for retreatment in June, and will continue working through September when treatment is believed to be most effective.

Roughly 30,000 Ash trees will be treated this year, with an additional 30,000 anticipated for 2017.

Trees being treated will be tagged with purple markers to track the treatment cycle and create awareness in the community.

"I am extremely proud of the work being done by our crews to meet core standards of sound forestry management. These inoculations are part of our comprehensive strategy to protect our urban canopy. By investing in the maintenance and planting of new trees, the City is leaving behind a valuable resource for generations to come," added Williams.

More than 26,000 new trees have been planted by the City and the Park District since Mayor Emanuel took office.

This year, the Bureau of Forestry will plant an additional 3,000 new trees. The Chicago Department of Transportation will also plant nearly 1,000 trees through its Green Streets and other infrastructure projects.

The City is focusing tree planting in neighborhoods and community areas that have seen significant tree removals over the years and are utilizing a diverse set of tree species to help reduce the chances of Chicago being impacted by another invasive insect in the future.

For more information on the DSS Bureau of Forestry or to request a tree trim, call 311 or visit www.cityofchicago.org/streetsandsanitation.

###