

**CITY OF WARRENSBURG**  
**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

Council Letter No.

April 22, 2019

Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Council  
City of Warrensburg, Missouri

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

SUBJECT: Discussion Regarding Downtown Trees

**BACKGROUND:**

There has been much discussion recently regarding the care and maintenance of the Downtown trees. Currently there exist roughly 33 tree installation points between the railroad tracks and North Street on Holden Street and 8 on Pine Street. Initial investment for the installation of the 41 trees is estimated at \$46,637.

After installation, for the first four years, the trees must be watered twice weekly for 21 weeks during the growing season. These costs based off employee and equipment costs is \$968.30 per tree yearly for the first four years. With roughly 10 trees being installed per Downtown Phase the costs are \$9,683 per year for the first 4 years each phase.

Other yearly costs, after the first 4 years, includes fertilizer, spraying for birds, trimming, and other employee cost at approximately \$119.35 per tree. Not counting the trees missing on Pine Street, it costs \$3,938.55 to maintain the current downtown trees yearly. Additional, sweeping is also required to remove leaves during the fall.

This past winter, the ice storm damaged and broke down many limbs in the trees due to the variety (lace bark elm) to a point that staff felt they did not have the expertise required to properly prune the trees. A professional tree arborist company was contacted to determine what was the best course of action to approach for the trees. It was found that pruning could be effective for 33 trees in the downtown area with 2 possibly needing to be totally removed. The unbudgeted quote was in the amount of \$8,885.

Staff then moved forward with applying for a Department of Conservation T.R.I.M. Grant with the application being due in June and award probably in August. This would allow for the trees to be trimmed in the fall after some regrowth and before next winter's storms.

**ISSUE:**

As the trees have grown over the past years the circumference of the bases of the trees have outgrown the tree rings. Staff has been forced to remove some of the grates within the rings to allow for this growth. If allowed to continue to grow larger the trees will eventually push up the sidewalk surrounding them. The only alternative left then is the total removal of the tree and replanting. Removal could be expensive since some concrete sidewalk will be damaged and require replacement.

The most significant issue is vandalism of the trees to the point of complete destruction. Basically, all trees initially planted on Pine Street were destroyed within the first year. Attempts to replant the trees was met with the same results.

Warrensburg Mainstreet came up with a plan to protect the trees with a fabricated collar and has installed one on a replanted tree in front of Hero's. This option is still in the experimental stage so to speak.

Most recently staff was instructed to fill in the center circle of the tree grates where trees no longer exist with concrete to prevent them from becoming a tripping hazard and liability to the City. This was done so in a manner that would allow for the removal of the concrete in the future.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

As stated, there has been considerable effort and cost invested by the City for providing trees in the Downtown Streetscape Plan. Staff would request discussion and guidance as to how best to move forward on this issue.

Sincerely,

Marvin Coleman,  
Director of Public Works

cc: City Manager

Attachments: 1. Cost Breakdown