



Office of the Director of Public Works  
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## Department of Public Works Activities & Facts July 2017

**Is the Public Works Department the same as it was in 2008?      No**

Over the past 9 years the Department has seen a lot of changes in personnel, technology and operations. These changes were necessary to balance the overall budget of the City and to adapt to changing requirements at the State level. The Department suffered greatly in 2011 after the City lost a severe amount of State shared revenue and grants. Because the Department of Public Works is one of the largest Departments and because (Police & Fire) were protected under State law, Public Works took on much of the burden. To offset cuts in State revenue, the Department was forced to reduced staff levels. Reduction in staff and funds also impacted how services were provided to the public. In response, the Department has retrained staff, outsourced services that can be done cheaper by contracting and assimilated contracted work back into the department that could be done cheaper or more effectively by City staff. The following outlines the budget change from 2008 to 2017.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Budget Public Works</u>	<u>DPW impact on \$5000 tax bill</u>
2008	\$ 2,400,462	\$300.00
2017	\$ 2,685,875	\$306.75

**How many positions did the Department of Public Works lose over the past 10 years?  
1 management & 4 general labor positions**

- In 2008 the Council combined the position of Manager of Public Works & City Engineer. They went from paying two people doing two different jobs and combined it to pay for one person doing both jobs. This saved and continues to save the City roughly \$ 103,000 per year in salary and benefits. (elimination of 1 management position)
- In 2009 the DPW had a vacant position that was budgeted due to a retirement, however, that position was not allowed to be filled to offset a large error found in another Department's budget. (elimination of 1 labor position)
- In 2010, the Director of Public Works researched the historic trends on revenue and determined that past revenues did not meet expected values. In order to achieve a balanced budget with realistic revenue, the Director recommended that a vacated position in the Department not be filled. (elimination of 1 labor positions)



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- In 2011, 3 positions became available due to retirements. One position was eliminated and 2 positions were put on hold by the Council to meet State Revenue Sharing shortfalls. (lost one position)
- In 2014, the City made the change to contract out garbage collection due to the on-going capital investment needed for garbage trucks and transfer station improvements; As part of this change the two garbage collector positions were eliminated. (lost 2 positions in DPW)
- In 2016, for the 2017 budget the Department Manager requested that a position be eliminated in engineering to fund a position in DPW. (1 lay-off occurred in engineering & a position was gained in DPW)

### **With labor cuts and funding cuts, how were City services impacted?**

The budget cuts to the Department caused the Department to rethink how it was providing services. From road salt application to garbage collection, sewer cleaning to tree trimming, all services were reviewed for inefficiencies and modified to reduce cost and provide equitable service to all. Contracted garbage service reduced the significant capital cost for the replacement of garbage trucks. Curbside spring clean-up was changed to a "Drop-Off" program. Other DPW programs such as sanitary sewer cleaning, tree trimming and asphalt resurfacing needed to be restructured to provide cost savings. The City had contracted out sewer cleaning for decades but this was very costly and impacted emergency response time during severe weather events or sewer back-ups. So the department purchased a sewer jetter and trained its staff. The sewer jetter has not only saved the City 32% annually in sewer maintenance costs but has been proven to serve a multitude of functions for the Storm Water and Water Utilities. The tree trimming and tree removal programs that were done on a complaint basis were changed to a planned and annually scheduled program. Tree trimming was divided up into 5 sections and tree removal was scheduled in sections. Similarly asphalt resurfacing projects were broken up into areas to save on contractor mobilization charges.

### **Why don't we have Spring Clean-up or a Fall Clean-up?**

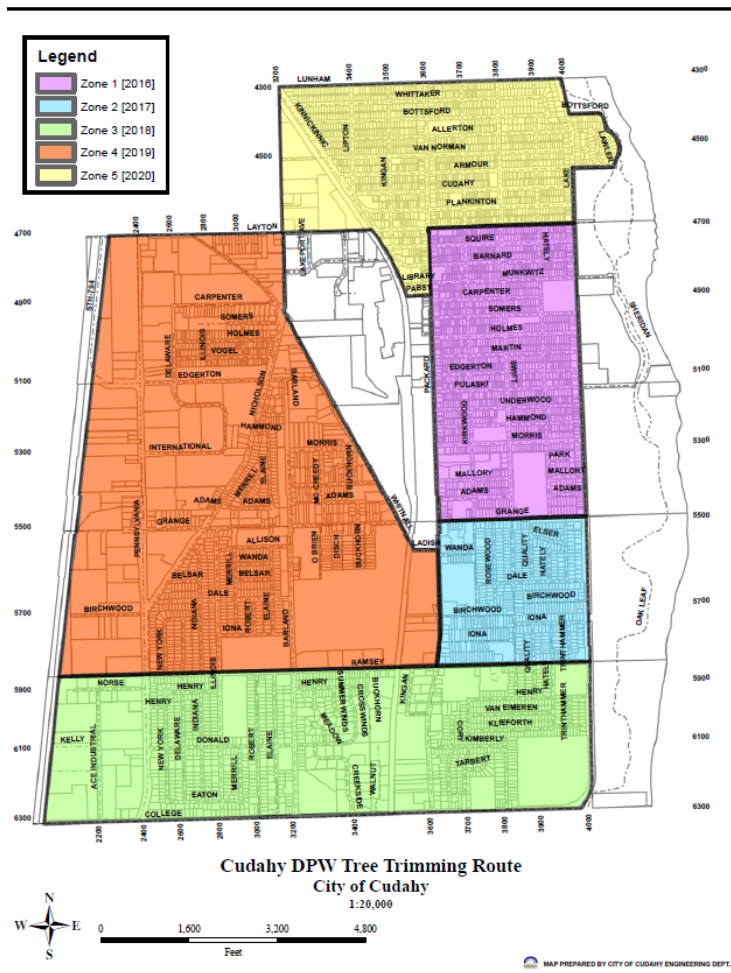
The City terminated fall curbside pick-up about 15 years ago for household junk however, the City still picks up yard waste during the November leaf pick-up. The Board of Public Works and the Council eliminated curbside spring clean-up in 2016 for several reasons. Much of it was due to the fact that it generated unwanted waste from outside the City, but the program was also very expensive and unequitable. The curbside pick-up was funded from garbage and recycling fees generated only from property owners who paid a cart fee, however nearly 40% of curbside pick-up was generated by property owners who did not pay a fee. This was the same for the Drop-Off site. 60% of the individuals who used the Drop-Off site did not pay a fee or used it to offset their business or rental properties. With the account nearing negative, the City had the decision to either get rid of spring clean-up and close the Drop-Off or limit the program to those who paid for it. So the City adapted a program available to a cart paying customer that allows them to drop off a limited amount of material at no additional cost to them.



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### So how often are the trees in the City trimmed?

Around 2013 the Department began trimming on a section basis rather than on a complaint basis; however in 2014 & 2015 this effort was challenged when the crew was required to begin the process of removing ash trees as part of the emerald ash borer inflection and maple trees due to maple decline. The Department could not keep up with both, so the City made the decision in 2017 to hire a contractor to remove trees. This allowed the Department time to concentrate on tree trimming. Below is a map of the tree trimming program.



How many trees were trimmed in the winter months of 2017?

1168 trees

How many dead or dying trees were removed?

\$ Spent

In 2016

235 trees

\$116,106.40

In 2017 from January through June

422 trees

\$167,475.00



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**How many center-lane miles of streets does the City maintain?** 59.3 miles

**Average Cost to resurface a mile of residential street?** \$ 248,092

**# of miles of streets resurfaced from 2009 to 2016** 4.1

**City funds used to resurface from 2009 to 2016** \$1,017,177

**Average cost to reconstruct a mile of residential street?** \$1,043,296

**# of miles of streets reconstructed from 2009 to 2016** 4.86

**Total spent to reconstruct roadways over 7 year period?** \$5,007,820

**City funds used** \$3,505,474

**Special Assessments paid for** \$1,502,346

**How much of the City has alleys?** 45% of the City has alleys

**Whose responsibility is it to maintain alleys?**

The City plows the alleys but repair & replacement is 85% assessable to the property owner.

**How often are the streets swept a year?**

2016	55 times	181 tons debris
2017 (Jan to July 1)	45 times	162 tons debris

**The City should put more salt down so we have bare pavements everywhere.**

The City has always had a “low salt” policy. 70% of the City’s storm sewers discharge directly into Lake Michigan. Salt does not disappear from the environment and years and years of salt discharge can become very concentrated and harmful. Communities are already finding it in well water and in some inland lakes across the State. The City has purchased equipment and has trained its staff on the application of salt on roadways to minimize the use and maximize the return. In addition to the environmental issues, salt has increased in price from 2008 to 2016, 58.4 %. That means for the same amount of salt purchase in 2008, the City is now paying \$33,240 more annually to place the same amount of material down in 2016 than we did in 2008.

	<u>Price</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>Impact on Budget</u>
	<u>Per ton</u>		<u>in 8 years</u>
Road salt in 2008 per ton	\$37.93		
Road salt in 2016 per ton	\$60.09	58.4	\$ 33,240