



DEPARTMENT OF STREETS AND SANITATION  
CITY OF CHICAGO

September 27, 2019

Joseph M. Ferguson  
Inspector General  
740 N. Sedgwick Street, Suite 200  
Chicago, Illinois 60654

RE: OIG File #19-0719 Advisory Concerning Inefficiency in the Bureau of Forestry Tree Trimming Operations

Dear Inspector General Ferguson:

The Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) is constantly striving to be as efficient as possible in its delivery of City services, including tree trimming. For example, in 2019, the Department worked in partnership with Local 1001 to reinstate the Tree Trimmer title and apprenticeships to develop the workforce, reduce injuries, and increase efficiency. To continue to improve tree trimming operations, in the upcoming 2020 budget year, the Bureau of Forestry will work to develop a comprehensive tree inventory of the entire City canopy, which currently does not exist. This will provide valuable information regarding the number and location of trees as well as size and species. It will also provide information about electric wire interference within the canopy helping to inform the daily scheduling process for tree trimming and removals as well as the Department's response to weather-related events.

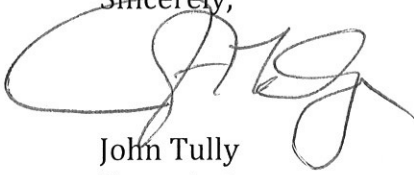
The Department appreciates the opportunity to respond to this advisory. It is important that the 2009 Monitor report, which refers to tree trimming methodology last used in 1999, be evaluated considering current systems, manpower, and priorities. Based on current operations, it is estimated that the Department would need at least 15-20 additional crews to transition to a grid-based tree trimming system on a trimming cycle of 7-10 years.

Prioritizing emergency and safety-based trims and utilizing 311 resident requests has provided a structure to address areas of need within available resources. The Department would welcome the opportunity to further discuss with OIG opportunities for increased

efficiency utilizing available resources, based on best practices and current information on the number, age, species, and size of trees citywide.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Tully', with a large, sweeping initial 'J'.

John Tully  
Commissioner  
Department of Streets and Sanitation